

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES

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Executive Editor

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Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi : An Evaluation

Mohammed Mohibullah Siddiquee

Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi is a history of Dhaka and was written by Nawab Nusrat Jang, the Naib Nazim of Dhaka. It is not only the first local history¹ in Bengal, but also the first history ever written on the city of Dhaka. Further, it is not merely a history of the rise and growth of the city, it also deals with some aspects of the history of Bengal from the time of Akbar (1556-1605) till the time of composition of the book. Therefore, the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* has got its own importance and needs proper evaluation. The present article is an attempt to fulfil this object.

The Book

Nawab Nusrat Jang wrote the history of Dhaka in Persian and entitled it "Tarikh-i-Jahangirnagar² urf Dhaka." In this book he emphasised on two aspects of Dhaka's history. First, brief political and administrative history of the city from the time of Akbar to his time, and second, various Mughal monuments of Dhaka. Several manuscripts of the book are available in the libraries of the Dhaka University and Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. Later on, Syed Abdul Ghani alias Hamid Mir in an article, also written in Persian language, added the life and works of Nawab Nusrat Jang and the history of Dhaka from Nusrat Jang to Nawab Ghaziuddin Haidar, the last holder of the title. The book was edited by Harinath De under the title of *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* and published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta³. But while editing the book, Harinath De also added the article of Sayd Abdul Ghani. This book has given rise to misconception. Modern scholars believe that the title of the book and also of the article of Hamid Mir was *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*⁴, but it was not actually so. Moreover, Hamid Mir did not write a separate book as suggested by some⁵, rather he wrote an article to include the history of the Naib Nazims, from the time of Nawab Nusrat Jang. This article is included

in the edited text of Harinath De, and since he entitled the book as *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, we have also adopted this title to avoid misconception among modern scholars.

The Author

When the Muslims conquered Bengal, in the beginning of the 13th century, Muslim society also began to take shape⁶. During the first century and a half, Bengal assumed the status of an independent sultanate. With extinction of the sultanate and the conquest of Bengal by the Mughals, it became a *subah* (province) of the Mughal empire. Islam Khan, subahdar of Bengal (1608-1613) made Dhaka the capital of the province and rechristened it as Jahangirnagar in 1610. But Prince Azim-ush-Shan shifted his capital from Jahangirnagar to Azimabad, Bihar (now in India) in 1703. As a result, Jahangirnagar lost its status as a provincial capital, but she remained the head quarters of the eastern part of the subah, which later on came to be known as Dhaka province. To look after the administration of this part of the province, the post of Naib Nazim was created⁷.

Dhaka was governed by the Naib Nazims from 1717 to 1843. The names of the Naib Nazims have come down to us through modern researches and need not be repeated here⁸. But we should begin with Jesarat Khan, to whose family our author belonged. Jesarat Khan was appointed the Naib Nazim of Dhaka by Alivardi Khan in December 1755 and he lived in Dhaka permanently. Jesarat Khan continued to hold the office of Naib Nazim even when Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal after the fall of Nawab Sirajuddawlah in 1757. After Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim became the Nawab of Bengal who recalled Jesarat Khan to his court in Munger. Jesarat Khan moved down from Munger to Calcutta when Mir Qasim suffered a defeat at the hand of the English. When the East India Company received the Diwani of Bengal in 1765, the members of the Calcutta Council requested Jesarat Khan to return to Dhaka and to take over as Naib Nazim. His monthly salary was fixed at rupees five thousand, he was given the title of Nawab⁹ and was granted a sanad. Nawab Jesarat Khan died in 1779 and was succeeded by Muhammed Khan, his grandson through his daughter. He was given the title of Nawab Hashmat Jang, and was appointed on the same terms and conditions as those of his maternal grand father. He had already started to function with the approval

of the East India Company and Warren Hastings from the last days of Nawab Jesarat Khan. For long seven years Hashmat Jang was the Naib Nazim of Dhaka and died in 1785¹⁰.

Syed Ali Khan, another grand-son of Nawab Jesarat Khan and brother of Nawab Hashmat Jang received the title of Imtiaz-uddaulah Nasirul Mulk Syed Ali Khan Bahadur Nusrat Jang and was appointed the Naib Nazim of Dhaka on 2nd February, 1785 (The 23rd Magh 1192 Bangla Sal)¹¹. Very clever and sagacious Nawab Nusrat Jang exercised his full power with perestige and dignity. He was liked by all people irrespective of caste and creed. English dignitaries of Dhaka also maintained a good relationship with him and in most cases they paid due consideration to his decisions. His brother Sham-suddaulah Syed Ahmed Ali Khan was married to Badrunnisa, the daughter of Nawab Mubarakuddaulah, the Nazim of Murshidabad which added to his prestige and dignity¹².

For long 37 years Nawab Nusrat Jang was Naib Nazim of Dhaka. He was sober, gentle and possessed a good moral character. He used to speak pleasantly with the poor and the rich people and the people of all age groups; he loved the destitute women and the poverty stricken people. He was a good calligrapher and taught the art of calligraphy to the students. He was a pious man. His daily routine included the reading of the holy Quran, Tasbih-Tahlil, Wazifa (chanting in praise of God) and offering prayer regularly. Though he belonged to Imamia Mazhab (Shia), he had a great respect to Hazrat Shah Muhammad, Pir Sahib of Maghbazar, a contemporary sunni Muslim saint. Nusrat Jang died of diarrhoea in 1822 (10th Zulqada, 1237 A.H.)¹³.

The Date of Composition

The author does not give the date of composition in his book, so hitherto the date of composition was unknown and Harinath De, the editor also could not furnish the date. Fortunately Abdul Karim discovered an account of Dhaka dated 1800 in the India Office Library, London. It was written by John Taylor, the then Commercial Resident of Dhaka and appended it to a letter to the Board of Trade at Calcutta. Dr. Karim writes : "Herewith goes for publication an earliest known account of some historical and economic aspects

of the district of Dacca by John Taylor, the Commercial Resident of Dacca, towards the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. The account with a forwarding letter dated 30th November, 1800 and a postscript dated 2nd November, 1801, forms the volume no. 456F of the India Office (now Commonwealth Relations Office, London) Records in the Home Miscellaneous series. The volume is entitled, "Account of the district of Dacca by the Commercial Resident Mr. John Taylor in a letter to the Board of Trade at Calcutta dated 30th November, 1800 with P. S. 2nd November 1801, and inclosures (sic), in reply to a letter from the Board dated 6th February 1798 transmitting copy of the 115th paragraph of the general letter from the Court of Directors dated 9th May, 1797 inviting the collection of materials for the use of the Company's Historiographer." The title of the volume explains the origin and purpose of the account of Dacca¹⁴. In his forwarding letter John Taylor cited *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* as a source for his "Account of Dacca." Again Dr. Karim writes : "One of the sources was the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* of Nawab Nusrat Jang, the Naib Nazim of Dacca from 1785 to 1822. The *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* has come down to us. But the date of composition of the book was hitherto unknown. The author of the *Tarikh* also informs in his preface that he had undertaken to write the book at the request of one of his English friends. The name of this Englishman was also hitherto unknown. The present report and the forwarding letter, however, help to resolve both the problems. The date of composition of the *Tarikh* may be put in between John Taylor's receipt of the Board's letter dated 6th February, 1798 and the submission of his report with a forwarding note dated 30th November, 1800. The book may have been completed towards the end of 1799 and the Englishman in question was John Taylor himself"¹⁵. So we may now confirm that the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* was written towards the end of 1799 and he wrote this book to furnish information to John Taylor¹⁶.

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE BOOK

After offering praises to God and Darud to His Prophet, the author says that he understood the writing of the history of Dhaka, the Mughal capital, at the request of an English officer, but the name of the officer is not given¹⁷. The book suffers from defective chronology¹⁸. The author cites the title of two books as his sources.

They are *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri* of Mutamad Khan and *Alamgirnama* of Muhammed Kazim¹⁹. Then he says that Dhaka was occupied by the Mughals during the reign of Akbar. In Akbar's time, during the subahdari of Shahabaz Khan, Dhaka was a thana, and Syed Husain was its Thanadar. So the statement is correct²⁰. Before this, the author says, the country was under the Afghans. He refers to Akbar's sending Raja Man Singh to subdue the Afghans, but does not refer to other sipahisalars or generals who had been sent by Akbar²¹. The author refers to the appointment of Subahdar Islam Khan. The date given is the 7th year of Jahangir, 1021 A.H. (1611-12)²². This date is wrong, actually Islam Khan was appointed subahdar of Bengal in 1016 A.H. (1607-08). The author then says that Khwaja Usman Afghan was defeated by Islam Khan with the aid of Shujaat Khan. This statement is true, but the date of Usman's defeat is 1021 A.H. (1612). So the author takes the date of the defeat of Usman to be the date of Islam Khan's appointment. The author also gives the names of Usman's two brothers, Wali and Umar who surrendered to the Mughals. He could not give the names of all brothers, now we are known that Usmans were five brothers — Sulaiman, Usman, Wali, Malhi and Ibrahim²³. Usman had no brother named Umar. Then the author says that during the subahdari of Islam Khan, Dhaka was named Jahangirnagar and Chittagong was named Islamabad²⁴. Though the statement about Dhaka is correct, in the case of Chittagong it is not. Chittagong was named Islamabad during the reign of Aurangazib after its conquest by Shaista Khan²⁵. The author also says that Islam Khan conquered Assam and Kamrup. In fact Islam Khan conquered Kamrup but not Assam²⁶.

Under the heading Qutubudidn Khan Kobah the author does not write anything about him. He was in fact a subahdar under Jahangir during 1606-07²⁷. Then he discusses the rebellion of Rahim Khan Afghan and Subha Singh of Chitwa-Barda in Midnapur district during the subahdari of Ibrahim Khan (1690-97)²⁸. The author says that Ibrahim Khan was subahdar under Shah Jahan²⁹, but he was actually a subahdar under Aurangzib. It is not known whether he took the account of the rebellion from Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Banglah* or Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riaz-us-Salatin*, he does not mention these books, but the discussion is surprisingly lengthy, and he could give a

real picture. So it seems very probable that the author took the help of both these books.

Under the heading Azim-ush-Shan, the discussion on the rebellion of Rahima Khan and Subba Singh has been continued³⁰. Under the heading Murshid Quli Khan the author refers to his general administration, revenue administration and the trading activities of the European Companies. But the discussion is very short and does not cover more than one page. It seems that the author could not lay his hands upon any reliable source of the time of Murshid Quli Khan. Murshid Quli Khan's career, character and administration are found in Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Bangalah* and *Riaz-us-Salatin* of Ghulam Husain. Both the books have come down to us³¹. The author says that Ihtisam Khan³² was appointed Naib Nazim of Dhaka, Islamabad (Chittagong), Raushanabad (part of Tippera) and Sylhet³³, but Rawshanabad was not occupied by the Mughals, during the time of Murshid Quli Khan. It was occupied during the nizamat of Shujauddin Muhammad Khan³⁴. The activities of the European Companies has also been discussed very briefly in a few sentences.

Under the heading Shah Shuja the author only refers to the war of succession, i. e. his war against Aurangzib, his defeat and flight³⁵. In about ten lines the whole affair has been discussed, so that here the author does not give any good information. This is surprising, because the author says that he consulted the *Alamgirnamah*; in which however, the subject has been discussed in details. Again he refers to the appointment of Moazzam Khan (Mir Jumla) as the subadar of Bengal. Under the heading Muazzam Khan (Mir Jumla) the author discussed his wars in Assam and his death at Hajiganj, near Narayanganj on way to Dhaka. Then the author says that Muazzam Khan's dead body was interned first at Nabiganj (Qadam Rasul, opposite Narayanganj), but according to his last desire his coffin was later removed to Najaf and was buried near the tomb of Hazrat Ali³⁶ (The 4th Caliph of Islam). This is a new information and is not known from other sources. But the information appears to be correct because as a Shia, Mir Jumla might have left instruction to intern him in the holy city of Najaf.

Under the heading "the successors of Jafar Khan Nasir (Murshid Quli Khan)", the author only refers to the appointment of Shuja-

uddin Mohammad Khan, son-in-law of Murshid Quli Khan to the subahdari of Bengal. Shujauddin Mahammed Khan was then deputy subahder of Orissa. Then he says that after the death of Mahammad Khan, after twelve years rule, his son Sarfaraz Khan became the subahdar. During his time Ghalib Ali Khan was appointed deputy subahdar of Dhaka³⁷. The author says that Ghalib Ali Khan was a son-in-law of Sarfaraz Khan. This is a new information and is not found in any other source. But this appears doubtful because, in other sources including the English records, the name of the son-in-law of Sarfaraz Khan who became deputy subahdar of Dhaka was Syed Murad Ali³⁸. The author also writes about the death of Sarfaraz Khan in a battle against Alivardi Khan.

Then the author discusses the subahdari of Alivardi Khan. He gives the history of the rise of Alivardi Khan from the deputy subahdari of Patna to the subahdari of Bengal in a few sentences. Then he writes about Alivardi's administration, particularly the appointment of his nephews as deputy subahdars of Dhaka, Patna and Orissa; his fight against Mirza Lutfullah (Murshid Quli Khan II), the deputy subahdar of Orissa, during the time of Sarfaraz Khan and his fight against the Marathas. The accounts of those events are more or less correct and are known to us³⁹. It appears from this part of his history that he could consult Alivardi's history such as Yusuf Ali's *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang*, though he does not mention it. The author writes in short the history of Sirajuddaoula, but simply refers in one sentence the defeat of the Nawab in the hands of the English⁴⁰. He also refers to the accession of Mir Jafar and Mir Qasim one after another to the masnad of Murshidabad, but the account is very short⁴¹. The author also refers to the naib-nizamat of Jesarat Khan, Hashmat Jang and himself. These accounts are also very short.

In the last part of the book the author refers to some Mughal buildings. He refers to Hussaini Dalan, the Muqim Katra, Kertalub Khan's Mosque (Begum Bazar Mosque), Chawkbazar, the Lalbagh tomb (Bibi Pari's tomb), Mir Jumla's fort opposite Narayanganj, the Bara Katra, the Idgah, the Chota Katra and the Lalbagh fort. The Mughal building of Dhaka have been discussed in some modern works, such as Hakim Habibur Rahman's *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, S.M. Taifoor's *Glimpses of old Dhaka* and A.H. Dani's *Dacca, a record of*

its changing fortune. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* gives only one new information about the date of construction of Husaini Dalan. It says that the building was built by Prince Azam Shah, subahdar of Bengal, 1678-79. Modern scholars have given different dates for its construction. Hakim Habibur Rahman says that a small taziakhana had been in existence from an unknown date and that Nawab Nasrat Jang erected a magnificent building to which later repairs had been made by Nawab Ahsanullah of the present Nawab family of Dhaka⁴². Charles D'oyly⁴³ and James Taylor⁴⁴ are of the opinion that Husaini Dalan was built by Mir Murad during the time of Prince Azam Shah. That Nawab Nusrat Jang did not construct the Husaini Dalan is evident from his own book *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*. The history of the other buildings in the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* are known to us from modern books cited above.

John Taylor in his account says that he wrote the following subjects on the basis of the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*⁴⁵.

- (1) An account of the public buildings at Dhaka.
- (2) An account of the malbus khas (royal apparel or the finest muslin of Dacca) sent to the Mughal emperor annually during the viceroyalty of Murshid Quli Khan.
- (3) An account of the first settlement of Europeans at Dacca.

But only the first account is found in the published version of *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* edited by Harinath De and nos. 2 and 3 are not found in it.

Conclusion

As said above, the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* is a local history. The first attempt of writing local history was made by the English. While appointing the Supervisors of the districts in 1769, the Company gave them instruction to write local history of their jurisdiction. But in fact, these unacquainted, inexperienced linguistically disqualified officers failed to compile any local or district history of Bengal. The Company, however, did not give up the attempt. Towards the closing years of the 18th century, the Company again instructed their Commercial Residents to collect information and to compile the history of their jurisdiction. The origin of the composition of *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* lies in this instruction of the Company. John Taylor, the Commercial

Resident of Dhaka, in course of collecting information, requested Nawab Nusrat Jang to help him by supplying information. The Nawab complied with his requests by sending him a booklet, the history of Dhaka. This is *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, the subject matter of this article. Later on the Company took a bolder step. They commissioned F. H. Buchanan in 1807 to make tours to different districts and to compile reports about them. His reports were sent to the East India Company House in 1816 and its first volume was published from Calcutta in 1833 after his death.

Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi is the first local history ever written in Bengal. The credit goes to Nawab Nusrat Jang and not F. H. Buchanan, a European servant of the East India Company as some scholars suggest.

NOTES

1. Beyond dictionary meaning, local history may be defined as the historical description of a locality based on history, geography, statistical accounts, trade, commerce, land revenue, customs, traditions, culture, political and economic life of the people of a locality. For definition of local history see Jhone L. Hobbs, *Local History and Local Library*, (London 1962), pp. 1-6
2. Dhaka was named Jahangirnagar when it was made the capital of Bengal during the subahdari of Islam Khan Chishti.
3. *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. II, No. 6. (Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal 1911), pp. 121-153.
4. S.N.H. Rizvi (ed.) *East Pakistan District Gazetteers Dacca*. (Dacca : East Pakistan Govt. Press, 1969) p. 354.
5. *Ibid.*
6. For an interesting study see A. Karim, "Muslim Religious Movement in Bengal in the Thirteenth Century" in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, Dec. 1989.
7. A. Karim ; "The chronology of the Early Naib Nazims of Dacca", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. VIII, No. I, 1963, pp. 67-72.
8. Abdul Karim, *Dacca, the Mughal Capital* (Dacca : Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1964). p. 26.
9. Munshi Rahman Ali Taish, *Towarikh-i-Dhaka*, Trans. into Bengali by A.M.M. Sharafuddin, (Dhaka : Islamic Foundation, 1985), p. 121.

10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Dr. Abdul Karim, "An Account of the District of Dacca, dated 1800", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. VII, No. II, p. 289.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.
16. It may be remembered that *Riaz-us-Salat*, the first chronological and complete history of Bengal in the Muslim period was written by Sayyid Ghulam Husain Salim at the request of one English officer, George Udney. Now we know that the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, the first local history was also written at the request of an English officer, John Taylor.
17. Now we know that the English officer was John Taylor, the Commercial Resident of Dhaka.
18. The subject is discussed in the following order :
 - (i) Islam Khan's Subhadari
 - (ii) Qutubuddin Khan
 - (iii) Shahzada Azimush Shan
 - (iv) Murshid Quli Khan
 - (v) Shah Shuja
 - (iv) Muazzam Khan (Mir Jumla)
 - (vii) Successor of Jafar Khan Nasiri (Murshid Quli Khan)
 - (viii) Alivardi Khan.
 - (ix) Sirajuddowla.
 - (x) Jcsarat Khan, Nazim of Dhaka.
 - (xi) Hashmat Jang, ,, ,,
 - (xii) Nusrat Jang, ,, ,, (the author)

But according to the correct chronology, the discussion should have been in the following order :

- (i) Qutubuddin Khan.
- (ii) Islam Khan.
- (iii) Shah Shuja.
- (iv) Muazzam Khan (Mir Jumla)
- (v) Azimush Shan.
- (vi) Murshid Quli Khan.
- (vii) His successors.
- (viii) Alivardi Khan.
- (ix) Sirajuddowla.

- (x) Jesarat Khan, Naib Nazim of Dhaka.
- (xi) Hushmat Jang, " " "
- (xii) Nusrat Jang, " " " (the author)

It should also be noted here that the author does not give a connected account of Dhaka, so the names of many subahdars have been left out.

19. Harinath De (ed.). '*Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*' published in the *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. II, No. 6, (Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911). p. 121 (hereafter *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*).
20. Abul Fazal, *Akbarnamah*, Vol. III, tr. H. Beveridge, (New Delhi : Rare Books, reprint, 1973,), p. 659.
21. The names of all governors of Bengal under Akbar are given below :
 - (a) Munim Khan (1574-75)
 - (b) Husain Quli Beg, Khan Jahan (1575-78)
 - (c) Muzaffar Khan Turbati (1579-80)
 - (d) Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Khokah (1582-83)
 - (e) Shahbaz Khan (1583-85)
 - (f) Sadiq Khan (1585-86)
 - (g) Wazir Khan (1587)
 - (h) Said Khan (1587-94)
 - (i) Man Singh Kachhwaha (1594-1606)
22. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, p. 121.
23. Jadu-Nath Sarkar (ed.) *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, (Dacca : University of Dacca, 1948), p. 279.
24. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, p. 121.
25. Jadu-Nath Sarkar (ed.), *Op. cit.* ; p. 381.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 247-288.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
28. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi.*, p. 122 .
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid*, pp. 123-25.
31. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin* Eng. Trans. by Abdus Salam (Delhi : Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, Reprint 1975), and Munshi Salimullah, *Tarikh-i-Bangala*, ed. by S.M. Imamuddin (Dacca : Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1979).
32. Dr. A. Karim, *Op. cit.* ; p. 307 (note).
33. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, p. 125.
34. Jadu-Nath Sarkar (ed.) *Op. cit.* ; p. 426.

35. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, p. 126.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Dr. A. Karim, *Op. cit.* ; p. 307 (note).
39. K. K. Datta, *Alivardi and His Times* (Calcutta ; University of Calcutta, 1939).
40. *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, p. 134.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Hakim Habibur Rahman : *Asudgani Dhaka* (Dacca : Manzar Press, 1946), pp. 142-45.
43. Charles D'oyly, *Antiquities of Dhaka*, (London, 1824-30), p. 3.
44. James Taylor : *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* (Calcutta : Military Orphan Press, 1840) pp. 90-91.
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Against God, Government and the Grain : The Dissent of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar

Priti Kumar Mitra

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) is usually depicted as a reformer fighting for the rights of Hindu women and receiving co-operation of the British colonial government in this struggle. But historically his mission of change involved a much broader conflict that put him in confrontation with, apart from the Hindu social orthodoxy, the monotheist dogma of the Brahmos as well as the British colonial administration. This fact is usually overlooked and the scope of Vidyasagar's dissent remains seriously unclarified. The present paper seeks to highlight Vidyasagar's confrontation with the British establishment in his efforts to serve his countrymen. Throughout his stormy career Vidyasagar remained a steadfast dissident and in his own lifetime earned the epithet 'bidrohi' or rebel. An unknown admirer wrote in 1883 : "Mahātmā Vidyasagar is the foremost rebel [sarbapradhān bidrohī] of Bengali society. Mahātmā Ram Mohan Roy was the first rebel, [and] after him the large-hearted Vidyasagar is to be noted by the term bidrohi."¹

1

The first and most fundamental element in the dissent of the "Foremost Rebel" was his early dissociation from the idea of divinity so prevalent in the country's tradition and so much of a concern at the time by virtue of the noisy preachings of Brahmo and Christian zealots. With Akshay Kumar Datta, Vidyasagar stood against the resurgent Vedānta in the eighteen-fifties². Although he had seriously studied Vedānta at the Sanskrit College in a two-year programme and topped the list of successful examinees in 1838 seizing the first prize — a bunch of Sanskrit texts on Hindu law ; the study

of Nyāya right thereafter must have corroded his respect for Vedānta, if any. In the wake of Akshay Datta's anti-Vedāntic movement within the Brahmo fold Vidyasagar started a similar crusade in the education department.

In his long report on the Sanskrit College submitted to the Secretary of the Council of Education on December 16, 1850, Vidyasagar dismissed the polemical Vedāntic text *Khandana* and the anti-Buddhist theistic text *Tattva Viveka* as abstruse and diffuse and recommended their immediate deletion from the College curricula³. In his response of August 29, 1853, to the report of Principal J. R. Ballantyne of Benaras Sanskrit College on the Calcutta Sanskrit College, Vidyasagar categorically stated :

That the Vedānta and Sāṅkhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute. These systems, false as they are, command unbound reverence from the Hindus. Whilst teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence.

He recommended J. S. Mill's *Logic* as the remedy of the intellectual damage likely to be caused by Vedānta and Sāṅkhya⁴.

As to the significance of this opinion of Vidyasagar, a modern scholar has made the following observation : "To declare publicly that the Vedānta is a false system of philosophy is the most daring act of the daring Vidyasagar..... By that one single utterance he has struck at the root of India's age-old prejudice and egotism."⁵ On this question of Vedānta he, along with Akshay Kumar Datta, clashed with the Brahmo orthodoxy and Debendra Nath Tagore denounced them and some other members of the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*'s Paper Committee as 'atheists.'⁶ Tagore's son Dwijendra Nath has accused Vidyasagar of agnosticism, a position Dwijendra Nath hated most⁷. On the other hand, Positivist Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya has categorically declared that Vidyasagar was an atheist (nāstik). Bhattacharya confirms that Vidyasagar was not satisfied with the Nyāya rationalization of God as the author of the Five Elements as found in the *Kusumanjali* of Udayanāchārya⁸.

Vidyasagar's aversion to spirituality had been already manifest even in his boyhood. At eleven he was duly initiated with Brahmanic

spirituality through the Vedic sacrament of *Upanayana*. As usual he was thoroughly trained in the *Gāyatrī* mantra, the famous Rig Vedic hymn, a Lord's Prayer for every Brahman, on which Ram Mohan Roy had written a long commentary. However, due to lack of interest he quickly forgot the little 29-syllable *mantra* and kept pretending its inarticulate recitation through bodily gestures only, while sitting in prayer at the stipulated times ! He was soon caught to be thoroughly beaten by his orthodox father who compelled him to recapture the elusive *mantra* by withdrawing drinking water from the defaulting son.⁹ The highhanded treatment of the irascible father did restore the *mantra* to the son's indifferent memory but could not make him any religious. Throughout his life Vidyasagar carefully shunned organized religion and its God. In 1851 he published *Bodhoday* [Rudiments of Knowledge], a science primer for children, naturally without any reference to God in it. Many Hindus were shocked and years later theist Bijoy Krishna Goswami (1841-1899), the zealous Vaishnava-Brahmo, directly complained to the author. Courteous Vidyasagar agreed to include God in the next edition of the book and he kept the promise only with a little aphorism that is said to have been uttered by Debendra Nath Tagore years before.¹⁰

A great skeptic of all time about divinity Vidyasagar was definitely a non-believer in *karma* and the other world. At the sad news of a steamer accident in the Bay of Bengal near Puri, Orissa, that killed several hundred men, women and children, he emphatically expressed doubt about the existence of a benevolent Deity watching over the world.¹¹ Clearly, he was not willing to accept the traditional Indian (including Buddhist and Jain) explanation of the incident through *karma*. Vidyasagar also ridiculed the idea of the other world in a light conversation with Lalit Mohan Chatterji, a great-grandson of Ram Mohan Roy, who was a reputed *yogi* highly interested in the other world.¹² At Benaras, where he went to see his ailing father, Vidyasagar declared that he did not believe in the holiness of the city or its deity, the Viśveśvar Śiva,¹³ although he mechanically performed all religious duties in connection with his parents' religiosity and later death.¹⁴ When frustration overtook him in 1869, Vidyasagar desired, in letters to his parents, complete retirement from all activities and relationships but never sought refuge with God.¹⁵ Six years later Vidyasagar wrote his last will distributing all his wealth among some fifty related

and unrelated individuals (nearly three-fourth of them women) and several institutions, but did not assign a penny for any religious work.¹⁶

When God was completely abandoned, Vidyasagar inevitably substituted man (more correctly woman) as the sole object of his attention and interest. This immaculate humanism¹⁷ in his case was, however, combined with a lucid humanitarianism in the context of his country's immense poverty, social injustice and intellectual destitution. Akshay Kumar Datta did not seek God because he was enamoured with nature, and Vidyasagar's compassion for fellow human beings prevented him from seeking God beyond the horizons. Both developed the same apathy towards God for slightly different reasons — Vidyasagar for his humanism and Datta for his naturalism.

2

From this position of service to man Vidyasagar, as an educationist, planned to spread useful modern education among the ignorant of his country through radical curricular and organizational reform. Apart from his specific disapproval of Vedānta and Sāṃkhya, he cherished a pretty low opinion of the traditional Indian philosophy in general in comparison with modern European thought. Once asked about his impression of Hindu philosophy, Vidyasagar replied: "I think the philosophers have failed to explain what was there in their minds¹⁸." This charge of unclarity was combined with the more serious charge of inadequacy and incompatibility with modern scientific knowledge: "Most part of the Hindu systems of philosophy do not ally with the advanced ideas of modern times."¹⁹ Far sterner was his view of Indian mathematics, a field generally held to have been highly enriched by ancient Hindus: "The fact is, the study of Sanskrit mathematics is not only nearly useless in itself but it interferes largely with other studies and engrosses a great deal of time and labour." On the other hand, if the subject is pursued in English, "in less than half the time ... an intelligent student will acquire more than double the amount of sound information that he could obtain by the most perfect acquaintance of all that exists in the Sanskrit language on the subject."²⁰

As a remedy for the inadequacy of the Indian intellectual tradition Vidyasagar prescribed simultaneous study of Indian and European

philosophy and science in Sanskrit and English languages, respectively. However, the purpose was not to develop any synthesis out of the two : "It is not possible in all cases, I fear, that we shall be able to show real agreement between European science and Hindu shastras."²¹ Moreover, any such attempt to reconcile Indian and European knowledge was bound to fail due to the incurable obscurantism of the Brāhmanic intellectual orthodoxy in India :

They are a body of men whose longstanding prejudices are unshakable They believe that their shastras have all emanated from omniscient Rishis and, therefore, they cannot but be infallible. When ... any new truth advanced by European science is presented before them, they laugh and ridicule. Lately a feeling is manifesting [sic] among the learned of this part of India ... that when they hear of a scientific truth, the germs of which may be traced out in their shastras, instead of showing any regard for that truth, they triumph and the superstitious regard for their own Shastras is redoubled ... I cannot believe that there is any hope of reconciling the learned of India to the reception of new scientific truths.²²

In these circumstances the real purpose of Vidyasagar's proposal to set up a comparative programme of Indian and European studies was to help students determine the limitations of traditional Indian disciplines : "Young men thus educated will be better able to expose the errors of ancient Hindu Philosophy" ²³ Beyond this immediate objective was the grand long-term goal of enriching Indian vernaculars with European knowledge : "Such a training is likely to produce men who will be highly useful in the work of imbuing our vernacular dialects with the science and civilization of the Western world."²⁴ However, since the Indian vernaculars were not equipped with proper linguistic apparatus to receive advanced intellectual inputs from the West, the cultivation of Sanskrit was indispensable to develop the vernaculars into rich and expressive languages capable of carrying modern knowledge.²⁵

3

Vidyasagar had definite plans to reform Indian education and he attempted to apply them first to his own institution, the Sanskrit College. In these efforts he received repeated opposition from his superiors and

succeeded only partially. He joined the Sanskrit College in April 1846 as its Assistant Secretary with definite ideas of reform : "that I might be enabled to remove the impediments which I knew existed to the pursuit of effectual study and be instrumental in introducing new and efficient methods....."²⁶ Within a few months he drafted a detailed plan of the envisaged reform designed to set up a programme of education "likely to produce men who will be highly useful in the science and civilization of the Western world."²⁷ The plan was submitted in September 1846 to Rasamay Datta, the unimaginative part-time Secretary of the Sanskrit College. Although highly appreciated by Secretary G. T. Marshall of the Fort William College, the plan was turned down by jealous Datta who also started harassing his young colleague in a hundred ways. Disgruntled to the extreme, Vidyasagar tendered his resignation in April 1847 "finding my hopes of being useful frustrated" and because "there were circumstances of disgrace super-added."²⁸

In his explanatory letter to Secretary Datta, Vidyasagar also mentioned as one of the sources of his vexation the undue interference of the Principal of neighbouring Hindu College in the smooth running of the Sanskrit College. The Principal used to frequently remove furniture from Sanskrit College for use in his own institution to the great inconvenience of students and embarrassment of teachers of Vidyasagar's institution, but Datta had failed to find a remedy for this improper practice of the European boss of the English school. In fact James Kerr, the Hindu College Principal, was a haughty racist who applied double standards of treatment to Indians and Europeans, and Vidyasagar had already an occasion of friction with him. As Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College he once visited Kerr in his office on business. But the contemptuous Briton who was seated on a chair with his booted feet on the table neither received the coloured visitor nor offered him a seat nor removed his feet from the table. Vidyasagar quietly bore the mistreatment at the time but remained on the look out for an opportunity to pay Kerr back in his own coin. He did not have to wait long as Kerr needed to see him for some official purpose soon thereafter. On receiving Kerr's card Vidyasagar quickly removed all chairs from the office save his own, put his slippered feet on the table and then called Kerr in. The offended Briton complained to Secretary F.J. Mouat of the Education Council. Being asked for an explanation Vidyasagar wrote :

I thought that we (i. e., natives) were an uncivilized race quite unacquainted with refined manners ... I learned the manners, of which Mr. Kerr complains, from the gentleman himself, a few days ago, when I had an occasion to call on him. My notions of refined manners being thus formed from the conduct of an enlightened, civilized European. I behaved myself as respectfully towards him, as he had himself done [towards me].²⁹

It is reported that Mouat was pleased with Vidyasagar's spirited answer and appreciated his sense of self-respect and ordered Kerr to see Vidyasagar and settle the matter gently.³⁰ Three years after Vidyasagar's resignation from the Assistant Secretaryship Mouat invited him to accept the position of Professor of Belles-Lettres in the Sanskrit College. Vidyasagar demanded the powers of a Principal as precondition of his acceptance of the offer. With an understanding that his demand will be fulfilled he joined his *alma mater* on December 5, 1850, and in seven weeks became its Principal, a new position that combined the powers of the abolished offices of Secretary and Assistant Secretary. In three years (1851-1854) the Principal completely overhauled the institution's whole system — opening it to all respectable Hindus instead only Brāhmins and Baidyas, introducing Sunday as weekly holiday in place of lunar holidays, introducing fees for admission and tuition, renovating the teaching of Sanskrit language and literature with simplified syllabi, and, most importantly reorganizing an enlarged English department that administered compulsory English courses and even comprised a mathematics section replacing Sanskrit mathematics.³¹

Apparently the government seemed cooperative with Vidyasagar's programme of reform but they actually cherished misgivings about the radical reformer's innovations. Curiously, the Council of Education invited Principal James R. Ballantyne of the Benaras Government Sanskrit College to visit and report on the Calcutta College. Ballantyne's report (August, 1853) appreciated Vidyasagar's abilities but suggested fundamental changes in the curricula in favour of unveiling the "real agreement" between Indian philosophy and European science.³² It provoked protest from Vidyasagar who, in a strong letter to Mouat, rejected the idea of agreement between Hidnu Śāstras and European science, and, instead, sought the aid of "sound philosophy"

from modern Europe to dispel the influence of Vedāntic spirituality on the pupils' mind.³³

An objective analysis of the Vidyasagar-Ballantyne controversy shows the very fundamental difference between the principals. While Ballantyne was a typical orientalist, "a happy hunter of resemblances between the Western sciences and Hindu shastras," Vidyasagar proved to be an "stern materialistic reasoning," rejected the spiritualist philosophies of both India and Europe as well as the idea of resemblance.³⁴ Moreover, Vidyasagar's severe criticism of his own class, the traditional Sanskrit scholars, shows the other side of his struggle. We have quoted above at length his comment on the obscurantist Brahmanic intellectual orthodoxy in India on which researcher Benoy Ghose has made this observation: "To be the head of an institution named Sanskrit College and to hold this language [sic. opinion ? view ?] about the old Sanskrit-educated intelligentsia was nothing short of being heretical in those days."³⁵ Thus Vidyasagar was engaged in simultaneous struggles against both the colonial government and the indigenous priestcraft to fulfill his plan of a new and revolutionary education.

Despite Vidyasagar's strong arguments in support of his own plan the authorities, as a matter of policy, upheld Ballantyne's views and Mouat ordered Vidyasagar to carry out the changes prescribed by the Englishman including utilization of the help books written by the latter, and remain in constant correspondence with him ! Vidyasagar clearly saw that the order amounted to "a degree of interference" and could make his position "unpleasant" in the college if he was "forced to adopt a plan of study which I cannot approve of or in being obliged to communicate to a fellow principal — on the progress of my classes, conditions ... few educated Englishmen will ... submit to." In a hastily written reply dated October 5, 1853, Vidyasagar clearly told Mouat that for the success of the plan lately introduced by himself in the college "I must ... to a considerable extent be left unfettered ... " While he was ready to use some of Ballantyne's publications but "if compelled to adopt all his compilations without reference to my own humble judgement as to their utility and value ... [to] the Institution over which I have the honour to preside my occupation is gone."³⁶

At this threat of resignation the Council changed its position and gave Vidyasagar a free hand in the College's affairs. This was

however a temporary compromise that gave Vidyasagar some three years of relatively free time during which his activeness in the spread of vernacular education as well as in social reform was seen at its highest brilliance. During this time he also enjoyed the valuable friendship and cooperation of Frederick J. Halliday, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (1854-1858), with whom Vidyasagar had had close acquaintance, since the days of his employment in the Fort William College in 1841. Halliday held a very high opinion on Vidyasagar and was so much impressed by his unique personality that as L.G. he even relaxed standard rules for dress to admit Vidyasagar in the Governor's House in simple Indian dress at the latter's insistence. From the beginning of 1854 the two were collaborating to develop a scheme of reorganizing vernacular education through the establishment of a number of model schools. Halliday became L.G. in May 1854 and decided to materialize the scheme under Vidyasagar's supervision. In July the famous Wood's Despatch heralded a new liberalism of British policy of education in India. Work under the Despatch began in January 1855 and the Education Council was replaced by a Director of Public Instruction. Halliday recruited Vidyasagar in May 1855 as Assistant Inspector of Schools for South Bengal entrusting him with the realization of their joint scheme.

4

But before this Vidyasagar had already inaugurated in January 1855 the greatest of his struggles — the movement for remarriage of Hindu widows. The question had been an open one since the days of Ram Mohan Roy's *Ātmīya Sabhā* (1815-1819). In the thirties and early forties of the nineteenth century the Derozians had discussed it exhaustively in their journals so much so that a number of British legal administrators in India had deliberated on the subject. *Bengal Spectator*, the famous Derozian journal, carried in April and July 1842 two key articles that reviewed the problem of widow remarriage and even suggested a line of action for a movement to press the reform. There was actual correspondence among such social organizations as the British Indian Association, the *Dharma Sabhā* and the *Tattvabodhinī Sabhā*, although without any result. Already in the forties there were numerous groups upholding different positions regarding the question — the Derozians and the *Dharma Sabhā* represent-

ing respectively the extreme left and extreme right opinions in the wide spectrum.³⁷

Vidyasagar inherited this tradition of deliberations and controversy and transformed it into a sustained movement in the middle of the fifties and in this venture enlisted the valuable cooperation of Akshay Kumar Datta and several Derozians. In August 1850 the first issue of the reformist monthly *Sarbasubhakari Patrika* [Journal of the All-Welfare Society] carried Vidyasagar's article "Bālya Bibāher Dosh" [Vices of Child Marriage]. Identifying child marriage as one of the causes of large incidence of early widowhood in Bengal, he depicted the plight of young Hindu widows in the most touching language. In a fit of overflowing compassion the young author has categorically complained against "cruel Śāstric injunctions and popular customs" and has appealed to conscientious people for bringing them to the trial of reason.³⁸ However, his countrymen were apparently not as amenable to reason as they were to the Śāstric injunctions. Therefore, Vidyasagar remained on the look out for some Śāstric directive in favour of remarriage of widows.

Toward the close of 1854 he came across such an injunction in the *Parasara Samhita*, a Smṛiti text of considerable antiquity :

Nashṭe mṛite prabrajite klībe cha patite patau

Pañchaswāpatsu nārīṇāṃ patiranyo vidhīyate.³⁹

[Vidyasagar's own translation : On receiving no tidings of a husband, on his demise, on his turning an ascetic, on his being found impotent or on his degradation — under any one of these five calamities, it is canonical for women to take another husband.]

It was the same piece of Śāstric authority as had been used in the *Bengal Spectator* articles of July 1842. Vidyasagar wrote a short dissertation entitled *Bidhaba Bibhaba Prachalita Haoa Uchit Kina* [Whether or not marriage of widows should be introduced] that came out in January 1855 and immediately created a great stir in the country. In the 25-page tract Vidyasagar, deciding that the majority of his countrymen were subservient to the Śāstras and would never listen to reason, sought to prove that in the present age remarriage was the only remedy of widowhood according to the *Dhormasastras* of which the *Parasara Samhita* was the only appropriate scripture for the present time. Before the concluding appeal to the people's conscience

he also briefly mentioned some rational arguments in support of his proposal.⁴⁰ The curious pamphlet was received with unprecedented enthusiasm and the first two thousand copies were grabbed up in less than a week and 13,000 more copies were sold within the next few weeks.⁴¹

The orthodox *pandits* immediately responded to the sturdy tract in four or five pamphlets of much inferior worth. The English and Bengali press of Calcutta was almost overtaken by the ensuing controversy. Akshay Kumar Datta reprinted Vidyasagar's tract in his *Tattvabodhini Patrika* in February 1855 and himself wrote a powerful editorial in support of it in the next issue. In his article Datta complemented Vidyasagar's Sāstric arguments with nine arguments of pure reason without any reference to the Sastras. To conclude the brilliant article Datta has moved from reason to an extremely emotional appeal to human heart.⁴² Thus the two friends, the two greatest skeptics of the nineteenth century, collaborated in the widest social reform movement of the century.

The controversy raged for months and a formidable amount of literature was accumulated in Bengali, English and Sanskrit. A rich crop of poems, satires, farces, dramas, tales and sketches grew out of the furore. As the orthodox continued to bring out more and more rejoinders against Vidyasagar, their patron, the rich and influential Radha Kanta Deb, called Vidyasagar to a debate with his opponents. Vidyasagar won the day⁴³ but the opposition did not subside at all. Deb's Dharma Sabhā and the Hindu Dharma Rakshinī Sabhā [Association for Protection of the Hindu Religion] of Jessore issued vehement protests. Then Vidyasagar came up in October 1855 with a 140-page second tract refuting in sober language all arguments of his numerous opponents. In this book he noted with regret and bewilderment that local customs and superstitions were even a stronger authority than the Sāstras in India. He concluded the tract with a rare expression of compassion for the oppressed women of India and a general charge of irrationality, heartlessness and lack of ethical sense against their male counterparts.⁴⁴

Vidyasagar knew that merely verbal victory without legal measure will not work. On October 4, 1855, he submitted a petition to the Government of India requesting an enactment in favour of remarriage of Hindu widows. It carried 988 signatures including his own. By November a Widow Remarriage Bill was prepared for discussion in

the Legislative Council. The step quickly turned the movement into an all-Indian one. Petitions kept pouring in from different parts of India. Most of these were against the proposed law. The Hindu orthodoxy in Bengal was shot into hyperactivity. Some twenty petitions bearing no less than 50,000 signatures were sent to the Government. Ninety percent of these people were opposed to the bill and only ten percent supported Vidyasagar. The most formidable petition was the one sponsored by Radha Kanta Deb and signed by 36,763 signatories. A second petition was drafted on behalf of the Brāhmanic intellectual orthodoxy — the professional *pandits* of Bengal. The main argument of these petitions was that remarriage of widows was against Hindu law, custom and religion, and its legalization would lead to wide-ranging social, legal and economic problems. In their several petitions the orthodox Brāhmins of South India reminded the British authorities of their earlier promise of not interfering in Hindu religion and customs and hinted at serious political consequences.⁴⁵

On the positive side there were quite a few supportive petitions including one from Poona, one from the *pandits* of Secandrabad and several from Calcutta and different Bengal districts. Most interesting was the one drawn up by the Derozians and endorsed by 375 signatures. Seeking a more radical enactment it asked for provisions of a complete civil marriage with a registration clause, a joint declaration by the wedding couple, and an agreement to prevent subsequent polygame on the part of the groom. These assorted petitions delayed the passing of the law but could not prevent it. After protracted deliberations the Legislative Council passed the bill into Act XV of 1856 on July 19 and it became law with Governor-General Canning's assent on July 26, 1856. It formally removed the legal disabilities of remarriage of Hindu widows but did not incorporate the Derozian amendments.

Soon after the law was passed Vidyasagar proceeded to put it into practice — a decision to engage in a headlong fight with Hindu social orthodoxy. He started arranging marriages of young widows paying for them from his own pocket and taking the risk of social persecution, hooliganism and legal harassment. On the occasion of the first widow remarrying an ex-colleague of Vidyasagar (December 7, 1856), Derozian Ram Gopal Ghosh along with other prominent intellectual and social leaders of Calcutta was seen assisting Vidyasagar. More widow remarriages followed under Vidyasagar's supervision and protection. In eleven years (1856-1867) he arranged as many as sixty widow

remarriages and spent the staggering amount of Rs. 82,000.00 on these occasions in total, drowning himself under huge debts. There was actually a move in 1867 to raise funds to help the beleaguered philanthropist pay off the debts. But Vidyasagar disapproved such solicitations and refused the proposed assistance, although he was grateful to those who helped him voluntarily.⁴⁶

Opponents of Vidyasagar having failed to prevent the law now took to social persecution and physical molestation. It is said that Vidyasagar himself was threatened with physical assault and conspiracies of assassination did take place. His father hired him a fierce club-man to serve as his bodyguard.⁴⁷ Vidyasagar's associates in this campaign of remarriage of widows as well as the families involved in such marriages were also victims of all kinds of threats and hooliganism.⁴⁸ On the other hand, many of Vidyasagar's friends also miserably failed him and backtracked of their promises. A number of such 'friends', although affluent, educated and socially respectable, betrayed shameful lack of integrity and failed to make promised contributions to his widow remarriage fund.⁴⁹ Even his own relatives turned against him and threatened excommunication. Relations with his own family were also strained in connection with a widow remarriage and in 1869 Vidyasagar left forever the village of his birth in disgust. The following year his only son, Narayan Banerji, exalted his father by marrying a widow but the relatives became even more alienated than ever.⁵⁰

Vidyasagar was also mortally shocked by the dishonesty and shameless opportunism of some of the grooms involved in widow remarriages sincerely arranged and paid for by him. In the name of marrying widows these swindlers indulged in polygamy while masquerading as bachelors! Others went polygamous after marrying the widows. Their aim was to grab the cash and valuable gifts Vidyasagar used to present to the couples at the weddings. Cheated and disillusioned to the extreme, he then started making the groom sign an undertaking to the effect that he would remain monogamous and provide financial support to the wife in case of breach of faith.⁵¹ He must have now regretted his failure to appreciate the Derozian amendments to the Act of 1856 and attempted vainly to include Hindu widows in the purview of the civil marriage Act of 1872 passed under the auspices of Keshab Chandra Sen and his group of Brahmos.

The old crusader's frustrations were extreme. The one who had abandoned God long ago to embrace man as the sole companion of his life had no one to turn to when man deceived him. In extreme bew-

ilderment he turned his back on civilization and its practioners in Calcutta and, whenever found opportunity, ran away from the delusive city to Karmatar in South Bihar in search of humanity, pure and perfect, in the 'savage' Santhal tribals.

5

Besides widow remarriage, the other major social reform Vidyasagar fought for was abolition of polygamy, particularly the bizarre polygamy of the Kulīn (high-born) subcaste of Bengali Barāhmans. In less than three months of his petition for remarriage of Hindu widows, he submitted a similar petition to the government asking for a law prohibiting polygamy (December 27, 1855). He also used his influence on the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* to publish articles exposing evils of polygamy. The *Patrika* carried two such articles in March and August 1856. It also published several articles welcoming widow remarriages under the new law from December 1856 through July 1858.⁵² It had originally reprinted Vidyasagar's two pamphlets on widow remarriage in 1855. This zeal of Vidyasagar to transform the *Patrika* into an organ of social reform rather than religion and spirituality outraged the Brahmo orthodoxy. Its leader Debendra Nath Tagore had been away on a spiritualist tour of Northern India since October 1856. Returning in November, 1858, he was shocked at Vidyasagar's 'misuse' of his holy journal. Particularly widw re-marriage was a thing which he never reconciled himself to. Within six months, Tagore compelled Secretary Vidyasagar to dissolve the *Tattvabodhinī Sabhā* and hand its assets over to the Brahmo Samāj. And the *Patrika* he entrusted to the editorship of his minor son Satyendra Nath (17).⁵³ The Brahmos never reconciled themselves to Vidyasagar's humanist style of purely secular service to man aimed explicitly at his comfort on this earth. A classic criticism of such philanthropic activities without reference to religion is an article, "Śikshitagaṇ o Dharmer prati Audāsīnya" [The Educated Class and Their Indifference Toward Religion], in the June 1870 issue of the *Patrika*.⁵⁴

However, Vidyasagar's initiative against polygamy did not catch momentum because of the government's preoccupation with the Revolt of 1857 when their relations with Vidyasagar also lost much of its previous cordiality and warmth. In fact, from this time on Vidyasagar had to face an increasing noncooperation from the British authorities in India in both his educational and social reform efforts. Limitation of space

prevents us from detailing this protracted and not-too-wellknown confrontation between the patriot-philanthropist and the colonial government. We shall, however, note a few major facts to illustrate this often-neglected dimension of Vidyasagar's dissent.

6

As Assistant Inspector of Schools for South Bengal, Vidyasagar became Lieutenant-Governor Halliday's right hand man in revamping vernacular education. Between August 1855 and January 1856 he established as many as twenty "model schools" for experiment in four districts near Calcutta. Then for training teachers for these and other schools he also opened a Normal School at the Sanskrit College with Akshay Kumar Datta as the Head Master. However, between Halliday and Vidyasagar stood the Director of Public Instruction, a proud young civilian, W. Gordon Young by name. Young soon felt uneasy with his over-influential Indian subordinate and disliked the speed with which Vidyasagar was multiplying model schools. Determined to make Vidyasagar aware of his inferiority in rank, Young kept insisting on strict formality in all official matters thus challenging Vidyasagar's unhindered authority in the Sanskrit College. Young also attempted to damage Vidyasagar's publication business by proposing publication of school text books through the School Book Society.⁵⁵

In his determined hostility to Vidyasagar, Young joined hands with the former's rival, Principal Suttcliffe of the Presidency College [new name for the Hindu College since 1855], and other British officers against the lone native who enjoyed the blessings of the Lieutenant-Governor. However, Halliday, imaginative and self-willed though he was, could not go much beyond the limits set by the colonial system in the country. When the position of Inspector of Schools fell vacant early in 1857 he recruited a mediocre Briton (April 1857) instead of promoting dedicated and superactive Vidyasagar. Naturally, Vidyasagar felt discriminated against on racial grounds. Then in August 1857 the government decided to acquire the Sanskrit College-Presidency College building for housing troops fighting the 'Mutiny'. Vidyasagar opposed the plan while Suttcliffe cooperated with Young who obliged Vidyasagar to move his institution in a hurry to two rented houses.⁵⁶

The *pandit*'s exasperation was complete. On August 29 he informed the D. P. I. and the L. G. that he wished to retire from public service very soon. But Halliday intervened to dissuade him from the decision and Vidyasagar postponed a formal letter of resignation for a year which he devoted to working for the spread of female education. Relying on verbal encouragement from Halliday, who in turn was working in turn with assurances in Wood's Despatch (1854) and other letters from London, Vidyasagar plunged in the stupendous task of setting up rural girls' schools in the four districts he presided over as Special Inspector. Between November 24, 1857, and May 15, 1858, he founded as many as 35 girls' schools in different villages. But then the government of India interrupted to discourage the programme by refusing to support the schools with financial assistance. Vidyasagar fell in a great trouble since he owed to the school instructors Rs. 3,439.20 for wages. Correspondence lingered on for months among different authorities regarding the responsibility of the money. The government of India as well as the authorities in England were unwilling to support female education in the colony that was inflamed at the moment with an army rebellion.

In these circumstances Vidyasagar tendered his resignation on August 5, 1858, ostensibly on health ground but also mentioned "the absence of all further prospects of advancement and the want of that immediate personal sympathy with the present system of education..."⁵⁷ In a quasi-official letter to Halliday on September 15 he explained more clearly the reasons of his resignation :

I frequently felt it disagreeable and inconvenient to serve [the] Government under existing circumstances and ... I considered the present system ... of Vernacular Education ... a mere waste of money ... I often met with discouragement in my way. I saw ... no prospects of advancement and more than once I felt my just claims passed over.⁵⁸

Halliday refused to admit these grievances of Vidyasagar,⁵⁹ but accepted his resignation regretting that the *pandit* retired "somewhat ungraciously."⁶⁰ On November 3, 1858, Vidyasagar finally left the Sanskrit College, handing over the charge to his successor E. B. Cowell after nearly eight years of service. In his resignation letter to Young, Vidyasagar had promised that

although my direct official connection with the education and enlightenment of my countrymen will have ceased, I ... hope that my remaining years will still be devoted to the advancement of a great and sacred cause in which my deep and earnest interest can only close with my life.⁶¹

He kept the promise quite literally. Although eventually (January 1859) the government took the responsibility for Rs. 3,439.22 in arrear wages for the girls' schools but flatly refused to support them on a permanent basis. When the government abandoned such a noble cause, undaunted Vidyasagar shouldered the burden himself. He opened a fund for the beleaguered schools with contributions from well-to-do Calcuttans. Not only did the 35 school survive, but even new schools for girls were set up with private support.⁶²

In fact, Vidyasagar was one of the fathers of female education in India. He had cooperated with Drinkwater Bethune in the establishment of the first girls' school in 1849 and remained associated with it all through. Bethune died in 1851 and his school became a government institution in 1856 with Vidyasagar as honorary secretary of its managing committee. Although he paid considerable attention to the school, insurmountable social prejudice blocked the progress of the school even in the 1860s. The cause of female education, however, received a new impetus in 1866 when Mary Carpenter, a British philanthropist, reached Calcutta and started working for it. In 1867 she proposed radical changes in Indian female education and received hearty cooperation from progressive Brahmos. Vidyasagar, when asked by the Government, however, opposed her plan to set up a Female Normal School in the Bethune School on the ground of social unpreparedness. Still the government upheld Carpenter's view and went ahead with the Normal School plan and a complete reorganization of the Bethune School. The School Committee under Secretary Vidyasagar refused to work under the new scheme and was dissolved by the government in January 1869. But Vidyasagar proved a prophet three years later when the new Lieutenant-Governor, George Campbell (1871-1874), abolished the good-for-nothing Female Normal School in January, 1872.

In spite of the Government's apathy, female education progressed under private patronage and Vidyasagar's dream began to

come true in late seventies and the eighties of the nineteenth century when women made their appearance in higher education also. In 1878 Kadambini Bose passed the school final examination and was followed by other young women. The Brahmo orthodoxy was alarmed at this prospect of higher education of Indian women and in March 1881 the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* argued against such education on the silly ground that academic degree programmes are too intellectual for women and detrimental to their motherly faculties.⁶³ However, disappointing the orthodox Brahmos Kadambini Bose earned a B. A. degree in 1883 and proceeded to study medicine. In 1884 Chandramukhi Bose earned an M. A. with honours in English from the Calcutta University. The news elated the old and ailing Vidyasagar who hastened to honour the bright young lady by presenting a copy of Cassel's *Illustrated Shakespeare* with a very sweet and inspiring letter.⁶⁴ After Vidyasagar's death on July 29, 1891, educated Indian ladies founded a memorial committee and raised a handsome sum to enable the Bethune School authority to found a scholarship in the name of their greatest well-wisher, Vidyasagar.⁶⁵

Although Kadambini and Chandramukhi received university degrees to the great satisfaction of Vidyasagar, the British government did not like to see many Indians getting higher education. In the name of promoting basic education the British, after the revolt of 1857, were clearly reluctant to support higher education. When asked for an opinion in 1859, Vidyasagar opposed the idea arguing in favour of higher education.⁶⁶ With the onset of British "New Imperialism" since 1870 the British colonial authority was out to suffocate higher education in India. Conservative Lieutenant-Governor Campbell was a determined enemy of higher education as well as a niggardly practitioner of economy. He demoted a number of first grade colleges to the second grade so that they could no longer offer degree programmes.

One of these downgraded institutions was the Sanskrit College itself which Campbell sought to reduce to real insignificance. In order to ostensibly save Rs. 650.00 per month he arbitrarily abolished three professorships — two of English and one of Smriti or Hindu Law. Before taking the drastic step the government had sought Vidyasagar's opinion regarding the Smriti case. Opposing the government's opinion Vidyasagar expressed the view that the study of Hindu law deserved a full pro-

fessorship at the best institution of Sanskrit Study in the city. As usual, ignoring the old *pandit's* opinion Campbell went ahead with his programme, but the relevant government publication gave an impression that Vidyasagar had supported the action. Vidyasagar immediately protested to the L.G.'s private secretary as well as published a clarifying letter in the *Hindu Patriot* a leading English-language daily of Calcutta.⁶⁷

Although Campbell fully exonerated Vidyasagar through his private secretary, he was chagrined enough to react sharply. Many of Vidyasagar's publications were soon removed from the list of textbooks prescribed by the government for schools in Bengal. The measure sharply affected his income and Vidyasagar was compelled to cut down the stipends that he used to allot to a large number of poor individuals and families. This also affected the monthly support he gave to his father and brothers.⁶⁸

More important than this personal confrontation with Campbell was Vidyasagar's silent crusade against British hostility towards Indian education as embodied in the Metropolitan Institution, the greatest monument of Vidyasagar's educational efforts. In the very years the British were endeavouring to cut down higher education in India Vidyasagar built up this great school of higher study as if challenging the colonial rulers.

Shortly after his retirement from public service he joined the managing committee of the newly established Calcutta Training School gradually becoming its sole director in 1868. By that time the school, under the new name Metropolitan Institution, emerged as one of the best schools in Calcutta. Under Vidyasagar's management it later developed fast into an undergraduate college of enormous size and fame in the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century. Vidyasagar spent all his energies and resources in his later years in this institution and in a silent competition with the racist-colonial government proved his extraordinary abilities. Indeed, the Metropolitan Institution was the first school of higher education in modern India whose founders, managers and teachers were all Indians. The tenacious educationist triumphantly proved that Indians were no inferior to Europeans in educational administration as well as teaching, including the teaching of English. Vidyasagar's old rival, Principal Suttcliffe of the Presidency College, said : "The *pandit* has done wonders !"⁶⁹ Thus, Vidyasagar pioneered

the establishment of private colleges in India and the Metropolitan Institution became the model for all such schools later. Among the famous students of this institutions were Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy (1861-1944), Brahma Bandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907), and Surendra Nath Dasgupta (1885-1952).

7

As in education, the British remained apathetic to Vidyasagar's social reform programme in his later years. His petition to the government requesting abolition of polygamy by law (December 1855) was followed by as many as 128 similar petitions signed by thousands of people. On the other hand, Radha Kanta Deb duly submitted a petition in defense of Hindu polygamy. Indeed the anti-polygamy movement was far more popular than the one for remarriage of widows. Early in 1857 a draft bill was also readied for introduction in the Council when the 'Mutiny' prevented all further action on the subject. After the 'Mutiny' the government, ascribing the calamity partly to Indian reaction against earlier measures of social reform, became particularly apathetic to government intervention in social matters. A group of Indians also thought on similar lines and opposed the idea of allowing the alien government to interfere in society and religion in the name of reform. However, the reformists did not abandon the idea of abolishing Kulīnist hypergamy through government action. The issue was revived in the mid-sixties. Applications started pouring in from 1863 and Vidyasagar himself joined a deputation to Lieutenant-Governor Cecil Beadon (1862-1867) on February 1, 1866, to urge for legal prohibition of Hindu polygamy. Beadon's government was sympathetic to the issue and requested the government of India to take immediate steps. However, the latter government, as a matter of policy, refrained from taking serious interest in the matter and rather claimed that the majority of educated Bengalis were not sincerely against polygamy.⁷⁰

Acting under the direction of the government of India, Beadon's government appointed a Committee of Inspection consisting of two Englishmen and five Indians including Vidyasagar. The Committee's report (February 7, 1867), while recognizing the existence of the evil fully, failed to recommend even a declaratory act against the practice on the ground that it would disappear with the spread of education and

better social consciousness. Vidyasagar, however, recorded his dissenting comment in the following words: "I do not concur in the conclusion come by the other gentlemen of the Committee. I am of opinion that a Declaratory Law might be passed"⁷¹ No law was, therefore, passed. Vidyasagar realized that the days of British sense of benevolence were over⁷² and now the empire was their foremost concern. So turning his back on the government he started writing extensively on the subject in order to arouse public opinion against the abusive practice of polygamy. Already in 1866 he drafted a booklet on polygamy. When a reform association of Calcutta showed interest in the anti-polygamy movement in 1871, Vidyasagar published a revision of the 1866 booklet with a view to help progressive association. In this treatise he not only arrayed an amazing amount of Śāstric evidence, but also reinforced it with startling statistical data on Kulīn polygamy in the Hugli district as collected by himself.

The crucial eighteen seventies had set in. It was the time when British "New Imperialism" coincided with Hindu revivalism and neo-Hinduism. Therefore, Vidyasagar, encountered a renewed onslaught from the revitalized Hindu orthodoxy. Taranath Tarkabachaspati, a *pandit* who had supported Vidyasagar in 1866 in his campaign against polygamy, now turned an opponent and wrote a booklet in Sanskrit in the revivalist style to defend polygamy. A number of other *pandits* also wrote similar tracts and often in language devoid of all decorum. Vidyasagar's rejoinder came in a longer book (April, 1873) that refuted all the Śāstric and secular arguments advanced by the orthodox. But the main target of attack was, of course, Tarkabachaspati himself. Discomfited as he was, Tarkabachaspati responded in abusive Bengali only to be vanquished again by two sarcastic pamphlets (May and September, 1873) written by Vidyasagar under a pseudonym.

Revivalism and neo-Hinduism were gaining ground fast and early in the 1880s Vidyasagar had to face a renewed attack on widow remarriage. This time it was mainly the *Jasohar Hindu-dharmarkshini Sabha* [Jessore Association for Protecting the Hindu Dharma] that spearheaded the new attack. Old and ailing Vidyasagar who had not written for more than a decade picked up his pen against and produced under pseudonyms three sharp polemics (1884-1886) against a number

of orthodox *pandits* such as Braja Nath Bidyaratna, a spokesman for the revivalist Jessore Sabha.

8

On the other hand, the British attitude towards Vidyasagar remained as stiff as it had been since his resignation from government service in 1858 as a result of his conflict with the colonial bureaucracy. The government did consult him on many occasions but, as we have seen, it seldom accepted his views. Sometime in the sixties a British judge of the Supreme Court found a Bengali defendant guilty of forgery and sentenced him to deportation. However, at the time of giving the verdict the judge accused the entire Bengali people as a race of forgers and false witnesses. Vidyasagar assembled five thousand educated Bengalis to protest the racist attack on their countrymen. They sent a written protest to London as a result of which the authorities asked the Viceroy to admonish the capricious judge.⁷³

After the confrontation with Lieutenant-Governor Campbell in 1872 (pp. 30-31 above) Vidyasagar's connection with the government was practically cut off. In 1874 he again collided with the colonial system in a different situation of racial discrimination. On January 28 he was denied entry to the Indian Museum, Calcutta, with his indigenous slip-pers (called *Taltalar chati*) on while people with European shoes were easily admitted. In response to Vidyasagar's written protest the British authorities concede to admit him with any dress, but the affronted *pandit* demanded a removal of the racist rule altogether, not just an exception of it for himself. The British refused to capitulate and Vidyasagar never approached the Museum again. The question was hotly discussed in the Calcutta Press for several months and added fuel to the ongoing confrontation between renewed British imperialism and newly awakened Indian nationalism.⁷⁴

The British authorities, who were so apt to bestow titles of honour abundantly on collaborators and decadent feudalists, persistently failed to recognize in similar manner Vidyasagar's service to his country. However, on the eve of Viceroy Lytton's (1876-1880) grand neo-imperialist display, the 1877 *darbar* of Delhi, Lieutenant-Governor Richard Temple of Bengal issued a certificate of honour (January 1, 1877) recognizing Vidyasagar's work in the widow-remarriage movement and

his role as a leader of progressive Indians, but without any reference to his astonishing contribution to the cause of Indian education. This late and niggardly gesture of gratitude did by no means remove Vidyasagar's disillusionment with the British colonial administration. An 1877 report says that he had completely stopped visiting people in power.⁷⁵ Three years later Lytton's government imposed a C. I. E. [Companion of the order of Indian Empire] on Vidyasagar who had never been known helping out British imperialism in India. The old man was unwilling to accept the offer in the neo-imperialist context. After much persuasion he relented but shunned the presentation *darbar* to formally receive the title.⁷⁶ In 1887 the Government of India awkwardly proposed a 'Mahamahopādhyāy' [a honorific for distinguished Sanskrit scholars] title only to be rebuffed by the 67-year old ailing educationist who had been universally known by the name Vidyasagar [Ocean of Learning] for nearly fifty years.⁷⁷

In the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century Vidyasagar became a veritable misfit between neo-imperialism and neo-Hinduism. He encouraged the establishment of Indian Association (1876) but did not accept its presidency. In 1883 when Surendra Nath Banerji was imprisoned in the context of an agitation against a British judge's order to bring a Hindu idol to court, Vidyasagar presided over a large meeting to protest Banerji's arrest and British interference in Hindu religious life.⁷⁸ In 1891, the government again sought his opinion about the age of consent. Opposing the government plan to impose an age of consent (to conjugal sex) for married minor girls Vidyasagar suggested a law prohibiting husbands to have sex with wives before their first menses. As usual, the British ignored his advice and passed the Age of Consent Bill in 1892 after Vidyasagar's death in July 1891.

Vidyasagar dominated his age as a social and educational reformer and a moral exemplar. These roles brought him in conflict with powerful Hindu, Brahmo and British orthodoxies. The struggle was long and bitter and Vidyasagar emerged out of it as the greatest dissenter of the Bengal Renaissance. This fact added to the sublimity and dramaticity of his noble career. However, Vidyasagar did not win the battle as Hindu widows continued to remain unmarried. Kulin polygamy disappeared without the legal steps proposed by him, and illiteracy was to reign over his countrymen for many decades to come. Vastly

frustrated in his plans to transform society and impart new values in it by sheer individual efforts the "Lonely Prometheus"⁷⁹ died a wearied hero four weeks before his 72nd birthday. But his humanity had received recognition long ago from the century's greatest poet Michael Madhusudan Datta who dedicated the most perfect of his poems, the *Birangana Kabya* [Poems of the Heroines], to "our good friend the Vidyasagar ... a splendid fellow ... the first man among us."⁸⁰

NOTES

1. Original Bengali quoted in Kīran Sankar Maitra, "Bidrohi Vidyasagar" in Haripada Chakrabarti, (ed.) *Vidyasagar Smaranika* [Vidyasagar Memorial Volume], (Raja Rammohanpur, West Bengal : North Bengal University, 1974), p. 144. Translated.
2. For details of the controversy between the Brahma leader Debendra-nath Tagore on the one hand and Akshay Kumar, Vidyasagar and their associates on the other in late forties and early fifties see Debendra Nath Tagore, *Atmajibani* [Autobiography], ed. Satish Chandra Chakrabarti, 4th ed. (1898, Calcutta : Viswabharati Granthalay, 1962), pp. 368-72, 378-79, 411-14 ; and Ajit Kumar Chakrabarti, *Maharshi Debendranath Thakur*, 150th anniversary ed., (1916, Calcutta : Jijnasa, 1971), pp. 138-46, 193-96.
3. The report is reproduced in Arabinda Guha [Indramitra], *Karunasagar Vidyasagar*, [Vidyasagar the Ocean of Compassion] (Calcutta : Ananda Publishers, 1969), pp. 710-19. The reference is to pp. 716-17.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
5. Pramatha Nath Bisi (ed.), *Vidyasagar-Rachanasambhar*. [Collected works of Vidyasagar], 4th ed. (Calcutta : Mitra and Ghosh, 1964). Introduction ["Vidyasagar"], pp. vi-vii. Translated.
6. Debendra Nath Tagore, *Atmajibani*, pp. 411-12.
7. Bipin Bihari Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga* [Old Topics], 3 instalments in one Vol. (Calcutta : Bidyabharati, 1966), p. 293.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.
9. Sambhu Chandra Bidyaratna, *Vidyasagar-Jibancharit O Bhramaniras* [Life of Vidyasagar and Elimination of Errors] (1891, 1895), rep., (Calcutta : Bookland, 1962), pp. 29-30.
10. Tagore, *Atmajibani*, p. 29.

11. Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay, "Vidyasagar ki Nastik Chhilen?" [Was Vidyasagar an Atheist?] in Azharuddin Khan and Utpal Chattopadhyay (eds.), *Vidyasagar Smarak Grantha* [Vidyasagar Memorial Volume], (Midnapore, West Bengal : Vidyasagar Saraswata Samaj, 1974), p. 309.
12. Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga*, p. 131.
13. Bidyaratna, *Jibancharit*, p. 203.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-05, 210-17, 219-21.
15. Letters to mother and father in November and December 1869 reproduced in Benoy Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj* [Vidyasagar and the Bengali Society], Vol. 1, enl., 2nd ed., (Calcutta : Bikshan, 1964), pp. 103-04, 106-07.
16. The will has been reproduced fully in Bidyaratna, *Jibancharit*, pp. 318-24.
17. Benoy Ghose, a foremost scholar of nineteenth century studies and a major interpreter of Vidyasagar, has called him 'humanist pandit.' See Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 1, pp. 35-48.
18. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. by Swami Nikhilananda (1942), (New York : Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1977), p. 101.
19. Guha, *Karunasagar*, p. 717.
20. "Notes on the Sanskrit College," (April 12, 1852), reproduced in *ibid.*, pp. 723-24.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 731.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 731-32.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 717.
24. Vidyasagar's 1846 reform proposal for the Sanskrit College quoted in Benoy Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, (Calcutta : Bengal Publishers, 1959), p. 17.
25. Guha, *Karunasagar*, p. 727. Also see Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, "Samskrita Bhasha O Sahitya Bishayak Prastab," [An essay on the Sanskrit Language and Literature] reproduced in Asru Kumar Sikdar and Debesh Roy, *Vidyasagar : Nirbachita Rachana : Sahitya O Samaj*, [Vidyasagar : Selected Works : Literature and Society], (Raja Rammohanpur, West Bengal : North Bengal University, 1971), p. 178.
26. Vidyasagar's explanatory letter to Secretary Rasamy Datta dated May 3, 1847. Reproduced in Guha, *Karunasagar*, p. 705.
27. See note 24 above.
28. Guha, *Karunasagar*, p. 705.
29. Subal C. Mitra, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar : A Story of His Life and Work* (1902), rep., (New Delhi : Ashish Publishing House, 1975), pp. 162-63.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
 31. Brajendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, 4th ed. No. 18 in *Sahtiya-Sadhak-Charitamala*, vol. 2, (Calcutta : Bangiya-Sahitya-Parishat, 1948), pp. 29-32.
 32. Ballantyne's undated report reproduced in Benoy Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, p. 442.
 33. Vidyasagar's letter of September 7, 1853, to Mouat reproduced in *ibid.*, pp. 445-51.
 34. Benoy Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, Delhi : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, (1965) p. 49. Vidyasagar rejected Berkeley's philosophy because of its proximity to Vedantic notions. See his letter to the Council of Education in response to Principal Ballantyne's report, Guha, *Karunasagar*, pp. 730-31.
 35. Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 47.
 36. Vidyasagar's reply to Mouat's order reproduced in Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 452-54.
 37. Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, pp. 76-80. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 165-70. For the two *Bengal Spectator* articles see Benoy Ghose (ed.), *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra* [Social Portraits of Bengal in Periodicals], 5 Vols. (Calcutta : Bikshap Grantha Bhavan, 1963), 3:77-80, 90-92.
 38. "Balya Bibaher Dosh," reprinted from the first issue of the *Sarbasubhakar Patrika* in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 3:335-41.
 39. *Parasara-Smriti*, IV:30. According to M. Winternitz, *Parasara* is "one of the more important and relatively older" of the Smriti texts on Hindu law. See M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 3, Part 2, [trans. Subhadra Jha], (Delhi : Motilal Banarasidass, 1967) p. 566. P. V. Kane assigns *Parasara* to "some period between the first and the 5th century [sic] of the Christian era." See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharma-sastra*, Vol. 1, Part 1, 2nd ed. (Poona : Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1968), p. 464.
- The author of *Parasara-Smriti* calls himself a "modern" and prescribes rules for the *Kali* or 'modern' age-rules that often deviate from those found in other Smritis (e. g., Manu) which he aptly assigns to earlier ages. The text's peculiarities caught the attention of the progressive thinkers of the nineteenth century as is attested by the fact that Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya (1840-1932), a Positivist follower of Vidyasagar, translated it into English in 1887. See Winternitz, pp. 566-67.)

40. The pamphlet as republished in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*. (February, 1855), reproduced in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:141-53.
41. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 174-75.
42. Akshay Kumar's article 'Bidhaba Bibaha' [Widow Remarriage], *Tattvabodhini Patrika* (March, 1855). Reproduced in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:153-62.
43. Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, pp. 84-85.
44. Vidyasagar's second tract on the widow remarriage issue, partly reproduced in *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, November 1855. Reprinted in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:163-70.
45. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 193-99.
46. Vidyasagar's letter to the *Hindu Patriot* dated June 26, 1867, as reproduced in Guha, *Karunasagar*, pp. 783-84.
47. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 214-15.
48. See reminiscences of Raj Narayan Bose and Sib Nath Sastri, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 216-19.
49. See Vidyasagar's letter to Durga Charan Banerji, one of his creditors and father of Surendra Nath Banerji, reproduced in *Ibid.*, pp. 225-26.
50. Vidyasagar indignantly defied the relatives' threat of excommunication. See his letter to his third brother, Sambhu Chandra, reproduced in Vidyaratna, *Jibancharit*, pp. 200-01.
51. The path of undertaking as drafted by Vidyasagar is reproduced in Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, p. 228.
52. These articles are reproduced in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:170-204.
53. Tagore, *Atmajibani*, p. 308; Ajit K. Chakrabarti, *Maharshi Debendra-nath*, p. 221; Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:604-06.
54. The article reproduced in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2: 435-40, particularly see pp. 437-38.
55. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 63-66.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67. Also Santosh Kumar Adhikari, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal*, (Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1980), p. 36.
57. Vidyasagar's letter of resignation reproduced in Subal C. Mitra, *Iswar-chandra Vidyasagar*, pp. 339.
58. The letter is reproduced in *Ibid.*, pp. 341-42.
59. Halliday's letter to Vidyasagar, September 15, 1958, reproduced in *Ibid.*, p. 344.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

61. Letter of resignation, *Ibid.*, p. 338.
62. Brajendra N. Bandyopadhyay, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar*, p. 72.
63. *Patrika's* article "Prakrita Strisiksha," [Real Female Education] is reprinted in Ghose, *Samajchitra*, 2:462-66.
64. Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasaga*, pp. 74-75, For Vidyasagar's letter to Ms. Bose, see Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 1, pp. 97-98.
65. Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 75.
66. Brajendra N. Bandyopadhyay, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 90.
67. This letter dated June 8, 1872, is reprinted in Guha, *Karunasagar*, pp. 793-94.
68. Subal C. Mitra, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 599 ; Bidyaratna, *Jibancharit*, p. 216.
69. Brajendra N. Bandyopadhyay, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 96.
70. Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 3, pp. 238-41.
71. The whole document is reproduced in Guha, *Karunasagar*, pp. 772-83.
72. Vidyasagar expressed his disillusionment with British benevolence in his first book on polygamy published in 1871. See its relevant portion, "Saptam Apatti," [The Seventh Objection], in Sikdar and Roy, *Nirbachita Rachana*, pp. 104-05.
73. Bidyaratna, *Jibancharit*, p. 214.
74. Radha Raman Mitra, *Kalikatay Vidyasagar* [Vidyasagar in Calcutta], (Calcutta : Jijnasa, 1977), pp. 33-34. Relevant documents reproduced in Guha, *Karunasagar*, pp. 799-802.
75. Dwaraka Nath Gangopadhyay, "Iswarchandra Vidyasagar" in *Nababarshiki*, (1877). Reproduced in Ghose, *Vidyasagar O Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 1, pp. 182-88.
76. Subal C. Mitra, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 629.
77. Radha Raman Mitra, *Kalikatay Vidyasagar*, p. 44.
78. Suresh Chandra Moitra, "Banglay Navya-Hindubad O Iswar-Chandra Vidyasagar," [Neo-Hinduism in Bengal and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar] in Chakrabarti, *Vidyasagar Smaranika*, p. 138.
79. The term "Lonely Prometheus" is borrowed from Amallesh Tripathi, *Vidyasagar : The Traditional Moderniser* (Calcutta Orient Longman, 1974), Chap. VIII.
80. Madhusudan's letter to Raj Narayan Bose. Letter No. 74A in Kshetra Gupta (ed.) *Kabi Madhusudan O Tanr Patrabali* [Poet Madhusudan and his Letters] (Calcutta : Grantha Nilay, 1963), p. 159.

Changes in Non-agricultural Activities : The Subsidiary Means of Livelihood in Colonial Rangpur, 1870-1940

Md. Mahbubur Rahman

Introduction

In South Asian rural society all peasants cannot maintain their families with agricultural income alone. Hence some sections of the village community engaged themselves in non-farm activities of various kinds on a part time basis. Rangpur was no exception.

During colonial rule changes occurred regarding the number of those depending partially on non-agricultural pursuits. Evidences show that while 12 percent of the population of Rangpur earned subsidiary income from non-agricultural activities in 1809¹ the percentage increased to 15 in 1901² and 20 in 1931³. The main reason for this change was that the population was multiplying⁴ and landholdings were being divided and subdivided.⁵ Consequently, income from land was not sufficient for many families. Therefore, some people had to add to their agricultural income by non-agricultural activities. As a result, they searched for other occupations.

Our evidence reveals that among non-agricultural pursuits some changes had taken place. Old occupations — e. g., silk weaving, opium manufacturing, Indigo making, paper manufacturing, jute fabrics etc. — had disappeared by the end of nineteenth century. Some occupations — e. g., fishing, carpentry, blacksmithery, oil-pressing, etc. — continued. New occupations — petty trading, government jobs, etc. — had come into being to some extent.

In this article I shall discuss some of those non-agricultural activities — those which were continued and those in which significant changes had taken place. At the end, some characteristics of the non-agricultural activities in this district will be pointed out.

1. THOSE WHICH DISAPPEARED

1.1 Silk weaving

During Muslim rule, silk was among the products of Rangpur.⁶ The Muslim peasantry was engaged in silk manufacturing.⁷ In 1809 there were 41 looms under operation.⁸ But in 1872 there was none, although in the southern parts of the district the cultivation of mulberry was carried on to some extent till the last quarter of the nineteenth century, 'but the cocoons were chiefly exported in a raw state to Bogra and Rajshahi.'⁹

The cause of the extinction of silk manufacture in this district was as follows. In Rangpur reeling of silk was conducted by Government firms in small filatures in the silk producing areas.¹⁰ The mulberry cultivators received advance from these firms for cultivating mulberry, while the silk producers could sell their products to these firms which exported it. But in the mid-1850s these Government firms began to experience tough competition from European countries, where considerable progress was being made in the scientific rearing of silk worms as well as in methods of reeling which improved the quality of silk and diminished production cost in comparison to that of Bengal. As a result, the local firms in Rangpur were compelled to close their silk filatures by 1853,¹¹ and consequently, the silk weavers had to stop their production. The Collector reported :

The producers now find no sale for silk in the District [sic] they are too poor to export it themselves.¹²

As silk reeling was closed down, some weavers 'took to ordinary cultivation' and some Muslim weavers continued to manufacture some coarse silk cloth of the *endi* variety for home consumption.¹³ The thread was spun by women at home from the cocoon of a worm, that feeds on the castor-oil plant ; and was then made over to the weaver who was paid a few annas or a rupee for his labour.¹⁴

1.2 Handloom weaving

The indigenous cotton industry was declining towards the end of the nineteenth century, owing to the competition of imported clothes. There were 3,500 weavers in 1881 ; 2,000 in 1890 and only 750 in 1901.¹⁵

Weaving did not, however, appear to be the exclusive occupation of any of the weavers. It was carried on as a supplementary occupation, agriculture being their main pursuit.¹⁶

Cotton cloth was manufactured here only for local consumption and not for export from the district. The yarn which was used in the manufacture of cotton fabrics was all imported. The finished products were taken to the numerous *hats* (village market) for sale. There was no weaving industry in this district which produced finer quality of fabrics. No cotton fabric of special excellence, such as Dhaka Muslin or Santipur cloth, was manufactured here and therefore there was no export.¹⁷

The Collector suspected that the cotton weaving was gradually dying out (by the end of the nineteenth century) and any attempt to resuscitate it was not likely to bear fruit.¹⁸

1.3 Opium and Indigo manufactures

Opium and Indigo were grown and manufactured in this district from the earliest times and were an important source of income.¹⁹ The opium industry was discontinued early in the nineteenth century.²⁰ The reason was the extinction of opium cultivation in the district probably because the cultivation of other crops became, by that time, more profitable than opium.

Indigo used to be manufactured largely in the Nilphamari Sub-division. The produce of the larger factories was usually taken down to Calcutta for sale. The product of the petty planters was sold to local carpet-weavers, who required it 'to colour their thread'. Some *Bhutia* (inhabitants of Bhutan) traders took some to Tibet. The dye obtained from an acre of indigo was about 6 seers. Its value in the village market was 'regulated by the prices obtained at the periodical sales' which took place in Calcutta.²¹

Due to frequent frictions between European planters on the one hand and peasants and Zamindars on the other all the indigo factories had passed into Indian hands by 1870.²² But from the 1890s the synthetic dye made in Germany began to compete and soon the local indigo factories had to be closed.

1.4 Paper manufactures

This was another important industry that disappeared. In 1872 there were 130 factories,²³ but during the census of 1901 only six persons were returned as being engaged in paper making.

The paper manufactures were worked at a very small scale, the biggest of them not being able to prepare more than one ream per

diem. Jute was used as a raw material for making paper.²⁴ This paper was of a coarse kind and was used by the people for book-keeping in the district courts, for writing notices, etc. About half of the paper made was used locally, the remainder was exported to Bogra, Rajshahi and Jalpaiguri.²⁵

The paper makers complained to Hunter that they had formerly earned a respectable livelihood by the manufacture of white paper. But English paper had driven the local article off the market, leaving them no other course of action than to confine themselves to the manufacture of the coarser type. 'The industry disappeared towards the end of the nineteenth century'.²⁶

1.5 Jute fabrics

Jute was used in the manufacture of gunny-bags. G.C. Dass counted 22 villages in the northern part of the district where the manufacture of gunny-bags was carried out.²⁷ He reported that manufacture was done exclusively by women, 'especially Hindus of the Rajbunsee caste who twist the thread and weave the bags at their leisure hours'.²⁸ The number of total workshops was not more than 1,100, and approximately 50,000 maunds of jute were used in a year.²⁹ As regards its marketing, Dass reported :

A small portion of this manufacture is used for local consumption preparing bags used by native traders who carry their traffic on bullocks, and the rest is exported to Calcutta by the Mahajans of Devigunge where there is an extensive mart for gunny-bags.³⁰

But with the development of manufacturing industry at Dundee and other places it was found more profitable to export raw jute than to produce gunnies on the hand loom. Thus jute manufacturing experienced a rapid decline.

1.6 Carpet weaving

This was carried on to some extent in the vicinity of Rangpur town. The industry was introduced by Mr. Nisbet, the Collector in 1830. The weavers were all Muslims. The carpets were known as *Satranjis*, made of cotton, on coloured patterns and had long been a speciality of this district.³¹ Cotton was supplied from the Garrow-Hills.³² Thus the manufacture 'flourished as long as cheap supply of cotton from the Garo Hills was available'.³³

Towards the end of the nineteenth century 'cotton clearing machines were introduced in that district (Garo Hills) and consequently, the commodity began to be exported to Calcutta' and ultimately the scarcity and high prices of cotton in Rangpur caused the fall of carpet weaving here. Finally, 'some weavers took the business to Dacca in the last quarter of the nineteenth century'.³⁴

1.7 Miscellaneous

At Barabari in Lalmonirhat *thana* (police station), a few families subsisted by carving ivory and buffalo horn.³⁵ They used to prepare fine ivory combs, chessmen, boxes, toys, etc.' Due to falling off in the supply and consequently dearness of ivory tasks the manufacture died out by the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1907-1908 there were only six families in Panga (Lalmonirhat) who carved ivory.³⁶ G.N. Gupta mentioned in his survey report that he 'saw some fine specimens of ivory thrones for gods made by the Rangpur artists'.³⁷

2. INDUSTRIES WHICH CONTINUED

2.1 Manufacture of pottery

Pottery industry supported a much larger population than any other industry. Its products constituted by far the cheapest domestic vessels for the great mass of the village people, and some products were the best for domestic purposes. Thus for cooking rice, an earthen *handi* (vessel) was always preferred to the vessels made of metal. The reason was that the cooking of rice in an earthen *handi* always gave a much better taste than when cooked in the metal *handi*. There were also other kinds of articles made by the village potters for which there was no substitute in the market. Moreover, brass-metal articles and even enamelled or aluminiumwares were beyond the purchasing power of the poor villagers. As a result, the manufacture of earthenware continued unabated.

The production of pottery was a home industry in which all family members, even children, were involved. The distinguishing feature was that the industry was exclusively carried on by the *kumbhakar* or *kumar* (potter) sub-caste. Members of other communities had not taken to it. The method of production remained unchanged. Sand and clay, which were available free of cost, were the raw material.³⁸ Although the articles produced were not artistic, they served their purpose quite satisfactorily and, moreover, they were very cheap. Potters were found all over the rural areas. Their products were also

available in every rural *hat*. The reason for this decentralisation was that these things could not bear hazards of long transport as they were liable to breakage. Moreover, as they were not very valuable in great bulk, it was not profitable to transport them over long distance.

As these articles were generally sold in the neighbourhood, their marketing was very simple and *mahajans* had little scope to exploit the workers involved in it. As a result the economic condition of the potters was generally much better than that of the workers in most of the other cottage industry of the district.

2.2 Blacksmithery

Most of the larger villages had blacksmiths, who were usually Hindus. A blacksmith usually produced and repaired agricultural implements and household utensils. No iron was smelted in this district, and all the iron and steel used in the industry was imported.

The blacksmith generally made things when ordered for, and was therefore, not much troubled about marketing. Like the potters, the blacksmiths were independent of the *mahajan* and were comparatively well off. A blacksmith used to charge cash for the work he performed. The charge for a plough share was 3 *annas*, and 'an equal amount for fixing it to the plough'.³⁹ An ordinary blacksmith earned about Rs. 15 a month during the working season (1908).⁴⁰

As regards the occupation, G.C. Dass made the following observation :

This profession is not confined to any class of sect or tribe in this district, but any person who has learned the work can open a shop; in the generality of cases the ironsmith's shop is little distant from the village with a view to avoid conflagration and to secure easy access to the peasants who remain in the fields.⁴¹

2.3 Manufacture of brass and bell-metal

Brass and bell metal utensils were manufactured in the Nilphamari and Kurigram Sub-divisions and were of different sizes and weights to meet the requirement of the people.⁴² These articles were very commonly used by almost all classes of people except the very poor who could not afford to purchase them. This manufacture continued as there was no direct foreign competition. These utensils were so bulky that import would involve high costs for transport. The products generally used broken utensils, obtained at a cheap rate, as raw material. A class of men called *paikars* (intermediate-dealers) travelled to the villages,

collected broken and old utensils and sold them to the *mahajans*.⁴³ The latter got them melted down and made into new utensils by artisans. Finished articles were principally sold at *melas* (village-fair) and sometimes at the neighbouring *hats*.⁴⁴

At the beginning of the twentieth century, an indirect competition did exist in the form of aluminium and enamelled ironware, but the competition was not very sharp. Orthodox Hindus had a strong prejudice against these imported wares which they believed to be made of impure materials. People liked brass-metal utensils because they were very durable. Moreover, when the enamelled or aluminium items were broken they were absolutely useless ; but when brass utensils were worn out, they still had a value, as they could be re-used as raw material in the production of new articles.⁴⁵

In this industry, the majority of the workers had no direct dealings with the consumers. They were at the mercy of the *mahajans*, who supplied them with the required metal and took away the finished ware from them after paying them wages at fixed rates per seer. In many cases, there was another class of middlemen, *beparis*, between the workers and the *mahajans*. In this case, the *bepari* took away the metal and money from the *mahajans*, gave them to the artisans and had the manufactured products carried to the *mahajans*. Under these conditions, the *bepari* in his turn paid lower wages to his employees and received as his own earning the surplus that remained. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a worker could not on average earn more than Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 a month, which was only just sufficient to manage on.⁴⁶ Gupta stated that 'their lot is the harder, because in this industry only the able-bodied males can take a share, and the other members of the family, are of no assistance'.⁴⁷ He also reported that, 'while this is the general condition of the labourers (artisan), the *mahajans* make a profit of over 25 per cent on their money'.⁴⁸

2.4 Carpentry

Most of the larger villages has carpenters. As little furniture was used in the huts, a carpenter's work consisted mostly in shaping ploughs, making cartwheels and building boats. The making of *dhenkis* (wooden husking implements) for husking rice, *ghanis* (wooden oil-pressing machine) for the oil mill, and *kharams* (wooden sandle) were other aspects of the village carpenter's occupation.⁴⁹ When

corrugated iron as roofs for houses began to be used at the beginning of the twentieth century, the carpenter's opportunities for employment increased. Boat-building as an industry was not developed in the district. The number of boat-builders was very small at the beginning of the twentieth century. 'The requirement of the people were met from adjoining district'.⁵⁰

Carpenters were employed both as hired labour and on contract or on piece rates. If they were employed as hired labour, cash wages were paid along with some supplement like tobacco, tiffin, and a meal.⁵¹ If they were employed on contract or on piece rates they did get any supplement. In this case, in the 1870s they charged 'eight annas for the plough, eight annas for the yoke, four annas for the *ish* (rod of plough) and two annas for fixing the *ish* to the plough'.⁵²

Sometimes a carpenter was a cultivator in season and worked at his trade during the off season.⁵³

2.5 Oil-pressing

Since mustard oil was the favourable cooking oil in rural areas, oil pressing was an important business. Oil production was carried on by means of the local *ghani* (oil press).⁵⁴ It was operated from sunrise to sunset during the peak season, November to February, and for shorter periods during the rest of the year. It needed constant supervision in which all members of the household except the smallest children took an active part. The quality of the oil was highest during the winter peak season because it was made from newly harvested mustard seed.

The *kulu* (oil-presser) sold the oil and cake either in the nearest *hat* (weekly market) or directly to the consumer. The oil was demanded by all classes of people for domestic use while oil cake was generally purchased by the cultivators to be used as fodder or manure.

During the British period no oil mill was established in Rangpur, hence the local oil presser faced no competition.

2.6 Fishing

As fish was an important daily food of the rural people, fishing was an important occupation which was generally followed by a number of Hindu sub-castes. A few fishermen were Muslims. Both among the Hindus and the Muslims fishing was regarded as a degrading occupation and the sub-castes engaged in fishing were 'low in the social system'.⁵⁵

In 1872 'the proportion of the inhabitants living by fishing' was more than 'one-twentieth of the total population of the district'.⁵⁶ The preponderance of fishing as a profession was explained by the District Census Report of 1891 in the following way :

These figures are easily explained by the fact that the river Brahmaputra runs along the eastern boundary of the district for about 100 miles. The river Tista has an even larger course within this district. In addition, there are the swamps in all parts of the district, some of which are very extensive.⁵⁷

Fishing was carried on 'either by individual, or by a combination of fishermen, working under a middleman, who takes the lease of fishery, and supplies the boats and nets necessary for carrying on the business, while the fishermen supply the labour'.⁵⁸

In most part of the district the professional fishermen had to pay 'a duty to the proprietor of the estate through which the stream passes'.⁵⁹ The usual method of dealing with fisheries was 'to let them out in *ijara* (lease) to a contractor who grants a *meadi* (periodical) lease to a group of fishermen charging them at a fixed rate for every fishing trip of every net that they use'.⁶⁰ The rates and method of assessment differed in almost every estate.⁶¹

Fishermen seldom dealt directly with the public, but generally sold their catch to caste of middlemen called *nikaris* (also called fisherman) who carried it to the market and sold it there. The fishing trade thus employed a large number of people besides actual fishermen.

Fishermen as a class were not prosperous, and most of them earned less than the cultivators among whom they lived. Therefore most of them had to supplement their earnings from their profession by taking to agriculture during the non-fishing season. The main reason for their poverty was the fact that the profits from fishing were 'swallowed up by the middlemen and proprietors of fisheries'. In this regard a proverb says : *Nikarir kane sona, Jaliar parane tena* (a middleman wears gold earrings and a fisherman wears rags). It was estimated in 1910 that while the average monthly income of a *ijaradar* (lease-holder) was from Rs. 20 to Rs. 200, the income of an actual fisherman was only from Rs. 7 to Rs. 20.⁶²

Comparing the conditions of the fishermen in 1910 with that in 1890, Kiran Chandra De reported that 'the fishermen are much

worse off now than they were twenty years ago'.⁶³ He attributed the 'decline in the circumstances of the fishermen in the Bengal districts' chiefly to the decrease of fish supply'.⁶⁴ He added :

'There is evidence to show that the fisheries of eastern Bengal are not so productive as they were before. No doubt the price of fish has increased considerably, but so as the cost of living and the rent of fisheries, as well as the number of members of the fishing castes'.⁶⁵

To free the fishermen from the 'trammels of the middlemen', Kiran Chandra De, who was the Registrar of Co-operative Credit Societies in the early twentieth century, attempted to organise cooperative societies among them, but in vain. He reported the causes of his failure :

This is a difficult task, as the fishermen are very ignorant and conservative and the middlemen are only the more prosperous men of the same castes, who wield enormous influence over their brethren, and I regret that I have not met with any success yet.⁶⁶

2.7 Rice husking : and other rice processing

A large number of persons in the rural areas were engaged in husking rice. The great majority of the workers were women who had no male earning members in the family. Sometimes they bought paddy and sold the rice after it was husked. But usually the paddy was supplied to them by others and they received only a remuneration for their labour. The remuneration was generally paid not in cash, but in the rice that was husked. A woman could in this way earn about one and a half seer of rice in a day, with which she could somehow maintain herself and one or two small children.

Sometimes the women (particularly widows) made puffed rice (*muri*) or flattened rice (*chira*) out of paddy and sold it by hawking from village to village.

The District Collector mentioned in 1871 that :

The wives of the cultivators buy wheat and after preparing the *atta* sell it in the market at prices which they consider profitable.⁶⁷

2.8 Miscellaneous : Making of bamboo mats and thatched houses

The district abounded in bamboos which supplied the villagers with material for house-building. The soil was sandy and there were no mud walled houses in the district, except in the Barind tract. The houses were walled with bamboo mats. There was also a brisk trade in baskets and mats. The price of one hundred mats of one square yard

was Rs. 6 in 1872.⁶⁸ They were used locally in Rangpur but were also taken to the neighbouring districts in large quantities by boat.

Similarly most houses in the rural areas had thatched roofs and construction and repair required a special class of labourers, called *gharami*. The *gharami* or the professional thatcher was often a cultivator himself, who took up this work when he had nothing to do on his lands.

Trade in hides

In a district where the people were chiefly Muslims, the trade in hide could not be of little importance. The people of the *Chamar* or *Muchee* sub-caste were hereditary skinners and leather-dealers.⁶⁹ The local agents of Dacca merchants bought down the *Chamars* by money advances and legal instruments.⁷⁰

The butcher sold the meat but retained the hide which was sold either to the *chamar* or to other local agents of the Dacca merchants. The value of the hide of a full grown bullock went by 'four annas more than that of a calf or branded cattle [in 1872]'.⁷¹ The cultivators who slaughtered their cattle during festivals and entertainments sold the hide for Rs. 2 to the *bepari* who went to 'every house in quest of them'. The hide of a deceased cow or bullock could be taken by the *chamar* free of cost.⁷²

The occupation of barber

Barbers were in universal demand. Muslims often wore beards and they needed their service less frequently than the Hindus. The presence of a barber was essential in most of the Hindu ceremonies. Both the Hindus and the Muslims rewarded a barber on the occasion of the birth of a child.

Beggary

Most beggars were widows or deserted women, but some households headed by sickly, elderly men also had to rely on alms for a living. Some households, especially those subsisting on labour, were reduced to occasional begging during the leanest months while some others went begging only during the Muslim Eid festivals, when alms were given as a religious duty.

3. NEW OCCUPATION : SUCCESS AND FAILURE

3.1 Business, government job, etc.

Till the 1870s trade was comparatively insignificant. In a village market, things like vegetables, milk, fruit etc., were sold by the producers

directly to the consumers without the intervention of the middlemen. With the development of the means of transport and communication, rural people came in contact with the world market. They began to produce for the outside world and many foreign things had become essential parts of their daily life. For example, the jute produced by them was used practically all over the world. On the other hand, commodities like matches and kerosene oil, which were unfamiliar to them even in the 1850s, had become so popular that they could hardly do without them after the 1870s. The Sub-divisional Officer of Kurigram reported in 1889-90 that 'the facilities of transport afforded by the Railway enable shopkeeping to set up with a small capital'.⁷³ The Sub-divisional Officer of Nilphamari reported in the same year that 'for a small commission they buy and bring produce to the warehouses of the large exporting traders'.⁷⁴ Thus with this increase of commercial contact between the village and the outside world there emerged a group of merchants. They were mostly involved in the marketing of cash crops. But this participation in business was often subsidiary occupation. This can be seen from the 1931 Census Report, which reveals that in 1931 trade was the principal occupation of only 40,540 persons (1.56 % of the total population of the district),⁷⁵ the majority of whom were *Marwaris* and *Shahas*.

Participation in business as a subsidiary occupation was increasing ; there was an equally increasing tendency of involvement in different jobs. Since the 1870s, the number of educational institutions was increasing in the district. Though these institutions could not increase the literacy rate in Rangpur (it was only 5.74 per cent in 1931) they provided employment opportunity to almost all literate persons. Hunter reported in the 1870s that 'as soon as the boys reach the highest class [in middle school], they take posts as *patwaris* or *gumashtas*' which were 'very seldom given to or sought after by school boys in other districts'.⁷⁶ Hunter also reported that the majority of the pupil who had passed from Normal School 'are at work as teachers'.⁷⁷ Thus with the increase of educational facilities some people began to enter into different jobs. But we do not know how many of them were from the remote villages.

4. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN RANGPUR : AN OVERVIEW

One chief characteristic of non-agricultural occupation in Rangpur was that the Muslims and Hindus had distinctly separate occupations.

G.C. Dass observed in the 1870s that the Hindus were 'the principal Zemindars, merchants money lenders, shop-keepers and traders', while the Muslims were 'good cultivators, day labourers, brokers, beparis, and artizans'. He further noticed that, the 'trade in hide, salted fish and hooka-pipes', was 'exclusively monopolized' by the Muslims. 'The greater portion of the oil-sellers, dyers, tailors, peons, masons, boatmen, and carters' were also Muslims.⁷⁸

A second feature is that the Hindu-caste groups were mostly immigrants. In this regard, we get some example from a letter of the Officiating Magistrate of Rangpur in 1892.⁷⁹ The Magistrate stated, the *Doms*, immigrants from 'the south and west' had 'exclusively taken to bamboo wicker works'.⁸⁰ The Daria Bagdis immigrated here from West Bengal as sweepers and had settled in towns.⁸¹ The *Sundis* had the trade in spirituous liquors.⁸² *Goalas* (professional milkmen) immigrated here 'from the west of India'.⁸³ 'Bengali Goalas have just begun to migrate in small hands from the district of Pabna'.⁸⁴ Hunter also made mention of 'Badiyas', hereditary physicians by caste. 'Most of the members of this caste in this District are immigrants from other Districts'.⁸⁵

As regards the quality of its manufacture, all evidence reveals that manufactures were all in a very backward state. The level of skill of artisans was very low. Glazier illustrated :

...and indeed in every branch of manufacture there is a total absence of that delicacy of taste and fineness of manipulation so conspicuous in other parts of India.⁸⁶

Conclusions

With the increase of population pressure on land, the necessity of extra income from non-agricultural pursuits increased day by day. Thus despite the disappearance of industries like silk-weaving, opium-manufacturing, Indigo-making, paper manufacturing, jute-fabrics, etc. in Rangpur, the percentage of partial involvement in non-farm occupation tended to increase. This had become possible due to the finding out of new occupations and carrying out of many of the old activities. Thus our evidences reveal that a section of the people took to petty trading and some entered into government jobs, while some others retained the occupations of fishing, carpentry, black smithing, oil-pressing, etc. throughout the colonial period.

NOTES

1. Buchanan Hamilton Manuscript, Account of Ronggopur Mss Eur, G-II, Table-2, micro-film available at Dhaka University Library.
2. *Report on the Census of India, 1901*, Vol. 6 (Bengal), pt. I (Calcutta : Superintendent Government Printing, 1903), p. 490.
3. Economic Bulletin of the District for 1937-38 (Rangpur Muhafekkhana Records), File no. 7 of 1937-38.
4. During the period of 1872-1931 the net increase of population in Rangpur was about 0.45 million, giving an increase in density from 619 persons per square mile in 1872 to 742 persons per square mile in 1931. See Censuses of 1872 and 1931.
5. The average owned holding in Rangpur was 4.3 acres in 1931 and 3.59 acres in 1945. See H.S.M. Ishaque, *The Report on Agricultural Statistics by plot to plot Enumeration in Bengal 1944-45* (Alipore : Bengal Government Press, 1946), p. 130 ; W.V. Schendel, *Peasant Mobility : The Odds of Life in Rural Bangladesh* (Assen : Van Gorcum, 1981), p. 82.
6. N. I. Khan, *Bangladesh District Gazetteers, Rangpur* (Dacca : Bangladesh Government Press, 1977), p. 167.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
8. Mss Eur. G-II, Table-37.
9. N. I. Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
10. A.C. MacDonald, Officiating Collector of Rangpur to A.I. Moffatt Mills, Judge of the Sudder Court on deputation, Rangpur, letter no. 77, dated 23 April 1853 (Rangpur District Records : National Archives of Bangladesh (hereinafter NAB), Vol. no. Rangpur-350).
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. G.N. Gupta, *A Survey of the Industries and Resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908* (Shillong : Eastern Bengal and Assamese Secretariat Printing Co., 1908), para-65.
14. Annual Administration Report of Gaibandha Subdivision, 1896-97, (Rangpur Muhafekkhana Records), File no. 39 of 1896-97, para 13.
15. J. A. Vas, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers, Rangpur* (Allahabad : Pioneer Press, 1911), p. 91.
16. *Proceedings Revenue Department*, April 1898, No. II (NAB volume no. Revenue-313).
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. J. A. Vas, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

20. *Ibid.*

21. W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (Delhi: D.K. Publishing House, 1974), Volume VII (Rangpur), pp. 246-247

22. There were 15 factories in Nilphamari Subdivision in 1889, viz.,

1. Kalikapur; 2. Noyan Khan; 3. Nitye; 4. Noyal Nitye; 5. Chand Khan; 6. 7. Donga (2 factories); 8. Bolagram; 9. Ocrabari; 10. Alam biditas; 11. Beradanga; 12. Panial Pooker; 13. Gora-gram; 14. Gonesh; 15. Inusha; (see Annual Administration Report of Nilphamari Subdivision for 1894-95, Rangpur *Muhafekhana* Records, File no. 34 of 1894-95).

23. Paper was being manufactured in the following villages :

			No. of factories
Panialghat	in Pergunah	Monthona	30
Chandghat	"	Bamondanga	5
Durgapur	"	Baharbund	12
Bobakpore	"	"	4
Hallakhamar	"	Basuthi	10
Balla Kandi	"	"	9
Kursha	"	Udashi	10
Bhangni	"	Pyrahband	50
Total :			130

Source : G.C. Dass to Collector, letter No. 75, dated 25 June 1873 (Rangpur District Records : NAB Vol. no. Rangpur-511), p. 69.

24. For the process of paper making see G.C. Dass to the Collector, letter no. 87 dated 6 August 1873 (Rangpur District Records : NAB, vol. no. Rangpur-511) pp. 193-198.

25. G.C. Dass to the Collector, letter no. 75, dated 25 June 1873 (Rangpur District Records : NAB vol. no. Rangpur-511), p. 69.

26. N.I. Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

27. These villages were :

1. Ambari, 2. Kaitkibari, 3. Jarabari, 4. Panga, 5. Baragari, 6. Nuri-pukur, 7. Ballagram, 8. Juldhaka, 9. Betgram, 10. Satgram, 11. Bhog-dubri, 12. Chandkhamar, 13. Bolholia, 14. Matukpukur, 15. Bamoniam, 16. Sunderhata, 17. Dhalpur, 18. Khogakhari, 19. Chatnai, 20. Balapara, 21. Battensing, 22. Jhar Singeswar.

See G.C. Dass to Collector, letter no. 75 dated 25 June, 1873, (Rangpur District Records, NAB, vol. no. Rangpur-511) p. 71.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
31. *Proceedings General Department*, April 1901, Nos. 39-40 (NAB vol. no. General-376), para-20.
32. Collector wrote in 1864 the following report on the system of cotton collection from the Garrow Hills by the Rangpur weavers :
 'They [weaver] cross the Berhampooter River and go into the Garrow Hills where cotton appears to be largely grown and barter for it. I have been informed by several of these traders that the Garrows only care for piece tobacco beads, and at a fair exchange of these they give their cotton'.
 See Collector to Divisional Commissioner, letter no. Rangpur-37, dated 16 April 1864 (Rangpur District Records : NAB, vol. no. Rangpur-373).
33. N. I. Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
34. J. A. Vas, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
35. Annual Administration Report Kurigram Subdivision for 1896-97, part VIII (Rangpur Muhafekhkhana Records) File no. 39 of 1896-97.
36. G. N. Gupta, *op. cit.*, para 143.
37. *Ibid.*
38. For the method of production, see A.E. Porter, *Census of India, 1931*, vol. V. (Bengal), part I, Report (Calcutta : Central Publication Branch, 1933) Appendix I to Chapter VIII, p. 308.
39. *Proceedings General Department*, Feb. 1874, File 12-3/4 (NAB, vol. no. General 55), para 82.
40. G. N. Gupta, *op. cit.*, para-104.
41. *Proceedings General Department*, Feb. 1874, File 12-3/4 (NAB vol. no. General 55), para-82.
42. Annual Administration Report of Nilphamari Subdivision, 1894-95 (Rangpur Muhafekhkhana Records) File No. 34 of 1894-95, para-13.
43. Sub-divisional Officer, Nilphamari to Vice-chairman, Rangpur District Board, letter no. 281, dated 9 Feb. 1927 (Rangpur Zilla Porishad Records) File no. 6 of 1927.
44. *Ibid.*
45. For process of this manufacture, see G.N. Gupta, *op. cit.*, para 95.
46. *Ibid.*, para 96.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, para 126.
50. N.I. Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
51. See *Report on the Wages Census of Bengal, 1925* (Calcutta : Bengal Secret-
19. J. A. Vas, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

52. *Proceedings General Department*, Feb. 1874, File 12-3/4 (NAB vol. no. General 55), para-81.
53. G.N. Gupta, *op. cit.*, para 125.
54. The was a crude wooden machine, worked by a pair of bullocks, which was somewhat similar to the cane-crushing machine used in the manufacture of gur. The same *ghani* could be used for pressing different kinds of oil-seeds. The *ghani* was usually started in a shed in a corner of the inner courtyard.
55. Kiran Chandra De, *Report of the Fisheries of East Bengal and Assam* (Shillong : Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat Printing Office, 1910), para-63.
56. W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
57. *Rangpur District Census Report, 1891*, para 70.
58. G.N. Gupta, *op. cit.*, para 156.
59. W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
60. A.C. Hartley, *Final Report of the Rangpur Survey and Settlement Operations 1931-1938* (Alipore : Bengal Government Press, 1940), para-87.
61. W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
62. Kiran Chandra De, *op. cit.*, para-74.
63. *Ibid.*, para-75.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, para-223.
67. Collector to the Offg. Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Letter no. 35, dated 12 April. 1871 (Rangpur District Records, NAB vol. no. Rangpur-391), para 2.
68. W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 305.
69. *Bengal Administration Report, 1882-83*, p. 28.
70. *Ibid.*
71. G.C. Dass, *Report on the Statistics of Rungpore for the Year 1872-73* (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariat Press, 1874), para-177.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Annual Administration Report of Kurigram Subdivision for 1889-90 (Rangpur *Muhafekhkhana* Records), File no. 29 of 1889-90, para 29.
74. Annual Administration Report of Kurigram Nilphamari Subdivision for 1889-90 (Rangpur *Muhafekhkhana* Records), File no. 29 of 1889-90.
75. A.C. Hartley, *op. cit.*, para 19.
76. W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
78. G C. Dass, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

79. Rangpur District Census Report of 1891, see paras 41-64.
80. *Ibid.*, para 53.
81. *Ibid.*, para 54.
82. *Ibid.*, para 55.
83. *Ibid.*, para 63.
84. *Ibid.*
85. W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
86. E.G. Glazier, *A Report on the District of Rangpore* (Calcutta : Central Press Company Limited, 1873), p. 179.

Ethnic Problem in Bangladesh : A Case Study of Chakma Issue in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Zaglul Haider

Introduction

The ethnic problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh is yet to be resolved though the Government of Bangladesh has been trying to uproot the problem. The solution of this problem, as claimed by the outlawed Shanti Bahini (SB—Peace Corps) lies with the awarding of autonomy to the tribal people of CHT.

During the construction of Kaptai Hydro-Electric Power Project, a considerable number of tribal people were displaced from their homesteads. But they were not properly rehabilitated. It is alleged that the eviction of the tribal people and some other socio-politico-economic and administrative measures had forced the tribals to form Shanti Bahini. The leader of the 'Shanti Bahini' Mr. Manabendra Narayan Larma sought foreign assistance to train up tribal people to float a resistance against the Law Enforcing Agency (LEA) of Bangladesh in 1974. But the endeavour was foiled due to good political relationship of the Mujib regime with India. The situation, however, dramatically changed following the Coup D'état of August 1975. Taking the advantage of cold relationship with Zia regime, India welcomed the leaders and armed personnels of the outlawed Shanti Bahini and offered military training and equipped them with modern weapons. Government of Bangladesh started rehabilitation of settlers from plain land to the hilly areas since 1976 with an objective to balance the local power structure. With the settlement of plain land people to CHT, the grievances, violence and atrocities of Shanti Bahini shootup which is even now continuing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Consequently, hundreds and thousands of tribals took shelter as refugees in the Indian Eastern State of Tripura following the increasing of military operations of LEA of Bangladesh as claimed by India as well as Shanti Bahini. Meanwhile, a substantial number of tribal refugees fled back to Bangladesh despite the resistance created by India in Tripura. A series of summit and high level talks were held between Bangladesh and India to find out the ways in an effort to bring back the refugees from Tripura but no tangible progress has yet been achieved.

After the emergence of Bangladesh, as a sovereign and independent nation, India built up very close relationship with the then Mujib regime of Bangladesh. After the change of political power in 1975, India welcomed the Shanti Bahini men belonging to the Maoist camp although India was trying to root-out the communist activists from the seven North Eastern States viz : Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal and Monipur. The attitude of India towards the hostile tribal militants clearly reflects the inconsistent and dubious political behaviour of the Indian regime with Bangladesh.

Consolidation of national sovereignty and independence and improving the quality of lives of the people are the main tasks before the newly emerged nation. Immediately after independence, the new leadership of Bangladesh faced the problem of integrating the tribal minorities with the mainstream of the nation. The subsequent regimes also tried to integrate the tribals within the ambit of the Constitution of Bangladesh. However, this paper intend to focus on different dimensions of the ethnic problem of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and complexities arising out of the intervention of the external power.

Historical Background and Social Structure

The district of CHT belongs to the hilly region that branches off from the Himalayan ranges to the South through Assam and Tripura to Arakan in Burma. The hill and forest areas of the old Chittagong district were separated from the Chittagong district in the year 1860. The newly created district was named as 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts' with an area of 5,138 square miles¹.

CHT is divided into valleys formed by the Feni, Karnaphuli, Sangu and Matamuhuri rivers and their tributaries and is carved out

by chains of hills running from the South in a North westerly direction. The district is full of tangled mass of hill, ravine and cliff covered with dense trees, bush and creeper jungle. The intervals between the smaller hill ranges are filled up with a mass of jungle, low hills, small water courses and swamps of all sizes. The extraordinary relief and geography of the CHT provided shelter for the Shanti Bahini men to wage the guerilla warfare.

The historical development of the Chittagong Hill Tracts had been different from that of the alluvial plain of Bangladesh. For some time, it was under the Sultans of Bengal. The Mughals conquered it from the Arakanese in 1666. It remained under Mughal possession until 1760 A.D. before it was subdivided by the British East-India Company. At the beginning, the chiefs of hill tribes were allowed to retain their authority, but gradually by degrees they were brought under the British control. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the district ceased to be a tribal area on January 10, 1964 after amendment of the Hill Tracts Manual of 1900².

The administrative tiers of the Chittagong Hill Tracts changed from period to period. After the creation of CHT, a separate district officer with the designation of Superintendent, subordinate to Commissioner of the Chittagong Division was appointed. The Superintendent was styled as the Deputy Commission in 1867 with Chandraghona as district headquarters. But it was transferred to Rangamati in 1868. In 1891, it was reduced to the status of an independent subdivision and placed incharge of an Assistant Commissioner. It was again elevated to a district in 1900 and the old designation of superintendent was restored as Deputy Commissioner.

In 1900, a district Advisory Council consisting of three tribal chiefs was formed to assist the Government in revenue collection and general administration. A District Council was set up in 1960 and a Town Committee was established at Rangamati in 1965.

Before 1860, the internal administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was in the hands of two hill chiefs, assisted by a number of subordinate village officials. Even during the Mughal rule, two domiciled Zamindars or Chiefs, known as Chakma Raja and Poang (Bomong) Raja, were recognised as local collectors of revenue. In 1782, another batch of Mugh families immigrated from Arakan

headed by one Machai, whom the East India Company recognised as Mong Raja who was entrusted with the charge of collecting revenue.

In 1900, the district was divided into four circles—(a) The Chakma Circle in the Rangamati Sadar subdivision, occupying the centre and the North of the district, and was mainly inhabited by the Chakmas ; (b) The Bhomong Circle in Bandarban subdivision occupying the southern portion of the district and was inhabited by the Mugh and Kuki-tribes ; (c) The Mong Circle in Ramgarh subdivision in the North East was peopled principally by the Tripars and (d) The Fourth Circle consisted of several Government forest reserves.

The administrative setup of the CHT is based on three-tiered structure — the circle, the mouza and para — in descending order. Mouza which is composed of several villages or paras. The headman acts as middle man between the mouza and the chief. The Headman is selected by the chief and endorsed by the Deputy Commissioner, who never vetoes the chief's selection. The post of Headman is hereditary. He collects land revenue and taxes from the people.

The Genesis of the Problem

Political consciousness had been growing among the hilly people following political, social and economic changes in the CHT since the nineteenth century. The reaction against the government policy began with the formation of Hill Students Association (HSA) in the mid fifties.

Development of Underdevelopment

The history of CHT records pace of underdevelopment since the colonial British rule with some exception for few years. During the British rule, CHT was excluded from the main territory of India. The Britishers did not take any development projects in the CHT despite collection of huge taxes from the zamindars appointed by the British rulers. The poor CHT people were crushed under the wheel of Zamindari rule, patronised by the British Government of India.

A sense of deprivation grew among the people resulting from negligence showed by different regimes since the British period. After the Indian partition, considerable efforts were made to improve the living standard of hilly people as well as to develop the physical

infrastructure of CHT. The benefit, however, was appropriated by the touts of tribal administration.

Some educational institutions were established before Bangladesh's independence but facilities were confined to the elite Chakma families. Most tribal people were kept out of the facilities of education. Though education spread up at a slower rate, it had made the tribal people more conscious about the exploitation of the Government machineries and local ruling class. The tribal school teachers played a catalytic role in making the tribal people more vigilant about their rights. At present there are 8 colleges, 62 high schools (5 government), 938 primary schools, 2 technical training centres (one Swedish aided) in the CHT and rate of literacy is scored at 18.2 percent.³

Construction of the Kaptai Dam

To meet up power shortage and boost up economic development through the utilisation of cheaper energy, government of Pakistan took up the implementation plan of a Hydro-Electric Project at Kaptai of CHT in 1957. An American firm Uttah Engineering Co. was entrusted with the task of executing the Project. The Project was completed in 1962 and upon completion, a huge number of people were forced to evacuate their homeland and vast areas went under water.⁴ The dam inundated an area of 400 square miles including 125 mouzas, district headquarters of Rangamati, 94 miles of Government roads and a large number of bazars, schools, dispensaries and places of worship. About 10,000 farm families having land in reservoir bed and 8,000 landless Jhumiya families comprising more than 100,000 people were displaced. The submerged area constitutes 40% of the total settled cultivable land of the district.⁵ The fertile valleys of the district viz : Karnaphuli, Chengi, Kassalong and Maini have been inundated.

Bengali Nationalism Concept : Threat for the Tribal Nation

Tribal people were given special status in the Constitution of 1956. Later Sheikh Mujib dropped the special status of the CHT from the Constitution of Bangladesh in 1972⁶. It is argued that the rejection of the demand of tribal people by the Sheikh Mujib Government was one of the reasons behind the formation of the Shanti Bahini.

Influx of Non-tribals in the CHT

The influx of non-tribal men in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is claimed as the main reason of formation of the Shanti Bahini.

But the process started long before.⁷ Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, there has been atleast 4 to 5 waves of Government sponsored resettlement of refugees/landless people in CHT which angered the tribal people. In 1977, Dhaka launched a programme of establishing ideal villages throughout the Hill Tracts with a view to settle the nomadic tribal populace. These were located near townships of Balukhali, Dhupsil, Pharna, Bilaichari, Teiskonia, Kae Chaptali, Bagmara, Thanchi, Balipara, Ruma and Ali Kadam⁸. Total population of the CHT has been estimated to be 7,90,414 as per Census of 1981⁹ which is less than one percent of the population of Bangladesh. Of this, 61 percent (4,79,147) are tribal and remaining 39 percent are non-tribal.

Indian Involvement

After launching of the Shanti Bahini (Peace Corps) in 1973, M.N. Larma tried to communicate with the neighbouring countries¹⁰. He at first communicated with the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) as they were motivated by the communist ideology and Shanti Bahini was the armed cadre of the Rangamati Communist Party (RCP) established on 16 May, 1972¹¹. Meanwhile having negative response from the BCP, Larma took an initiative to draw assistance from China but it did not succeed¹².

Later, he tried to have the Indian assistance but due to good relationship with the Mujib regime, India made continued effort to inform Bangladesh about the activities of the Shanti Bahini instead of providing the SB with assistance¹³.

The trouble turned in 1975 when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated. A twist in policy took place and Shanti Bahini sought political shelter in the Tripura and Mizoram states of India where training camps were set up and a flow of materials was ensured later by India.

Insurgency in North Eastern India

Tribal insurgency emerged in the North Eastern provinces of India viz : Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura in the late 60s intensified by the assistance of Pakistan as claimed by India several times. It is assumed that the Chakma inspired from the insurgency of North Eastern Provinces of India.

India forced Larma to launch military action against the Law Enforcing Agencies of Bangladesh. Larma set up his headquarters in Agartala, Tripura's capital and Priti's armed ranks began to waylay security patrols in the forested hills by 1976 and the bushwar was clearly on¹⁴.

The Tribal Politics : A Chronology of Historical Development

The formation of the Shanti Bahini was the final shape of political development taken place since 1954. Pahari Chatra Samity was formed in 1954 and after long 12 years in 1966, Manabendra Narayan Larma launched Tribal Students Association (TSA). After the liberation of Bangladesh, on May 16, 1972 Rangamati Communist Party (RCP) was instituted. The first Adhoc Committee was constituted with M.N. Larma, Bodhipriya Larma (Shantu), Jotindra Lal Tripura, Bhubotosh Dewan, Amiya Sen Chakma, Kali Madhav Chakma and some others¹⁵. In the same day, Parbatta Jana Sanghati Samity, a political party was floated¹⁶ and the Pahari Chatra Samity was revived under the leadership of Priti Kumar Chakma¹⁷. The Jana Sanghati Samity was recruiting cadres in 1973 and 1974. In the meantime, an armed wing of JSS, Shanti Bahini was formed on 7 January, 1973¹⁸.

In 1976, M.N. Larma crossed the border following the invitation of India and met the Indian Intelligence Officers. Meanwhile his younger brother Shantu Larma was arrested and on his return, immediately Larma went underground. By then, appointments of commanders in six sectors, zones and sub-zones had been completed. Larma made another attempt to settle the dispute through negotiations with the late President Ziaur Rahman as was made before during the Mujib regime¹⁹.

But the attempts of negotiations by M.N. Larma leading the solution was foiled as the armed wing of the Jana Sanghati Samity was compelled to initiate armed operation under Indian pressure in mid-1976. The existence of the Rangamati Communist Party (RCP) was kept away from the Indian authority because they were launching political and military action against the development of communism in the Indian territory²⁰.

Priti Kumar Chakma put enormous pressure for the dissolution of the RCP and advocated for making the Jana Sanghati Samity as

the main political party on the ground that India would stop assistance to the Shanti Bahini due to its tilt towards communist ideology²¹.

The Indian Government was obsessed with the communist ideology as it has been facing political offensive from some North Eastern States through the formation of insurgencies in the late '50s. The Maoist ideology of the Shanti Bahini was the major irritant for which India put pressure to replace M. N. Larma by Priti Kumar Chakma from the central leadership of the Shanti Bahini.

The Shanti Bahini was fractured along ideological lines. M. N. Larma at heart sought limited autonomy and end of economic persecution. Having recognised the eventual futility of depending on another State for waging war against one's own, he was clearly contemplating negotiations with Dhaka.²² From the beginning India was suspicious of Larma. They were searching for an alternative leadership.²³ Priti Chakma on the other hand believed that it was better for the Hill Tracts to be under Indian suzerainty than to be under Dhaka. Priti's Headquarters printed leaflets revealing the fact and for two days after August, 1947 the tribals at Rangamati had flown the Indian flag rather than the Pakistani flag.²⁴

India found Priti as the alternative leader of the Chakma militants due to his organising capacity²⁵ and was helping indirectly to oust three Larma brothers (M.N. Larma, Subhendu Larma and Shantu Larma) from the Rangamati Communist Party or to kill them if necessary. Actually the soft liner M.N. Larma was the main problem to India rather than his communist ideology. But Larma declared in the Second Congress of the Rangamati Communist Party in 1982 that "Success will come following the way of long struggle" but he did not mention whether the struggle will rely on arms or not. While in the same Congress Priti raised his voice as "We will have to achieve the success within limited time through armed struggle with the spirit of nationalism, if required we are ready to go under the flag of India, or Burma."²⁶

The dichotomy became clear during the 2nd Convention of the Rangamati Communist Party and the Priti group demanded the implementation of a violent military campaign aimed at declaring an independent state called CHADIGONG. The path of negotiations and compromise were thrown out by the window and the blueprint for

allout war was unfurled.²⁷ The eight day conference experienced hostility between the two groups.²⁸ But Priti continued his allout efforts to kill three of the Larma brothers to establish his supreme role on the Shanti Bahini as inspired by the Indians. But the attack first came from the Larma faction. On June 14, 1984 the Larma faction attacked Priti's sector headquarters killing Amritilal Chakma (Boli Ostad) and Corporal Torun, Captain Surjit and wounding three others.²⁹

But Priti's group claimed that M. N. Larma was directly associated with the attack but effort was floated to narrow down the gap and bridging the ties but nothing came out of it. On August 13, 1984. Priti's men captured the armoury of M.N. Larma. In September M.N. Larma and Kali Madhab met Priti's representative but discussion ended in fiasco. On November 10, 1984 Priti's men attacked the headquarter of Larma faction and killed M.N. Larma and the situation took a sharp turn in favour of extremists and the prospects of amicable political settlement diminished away and the insurgency coupled with atrocity in the CHT gained momentum.³⁰

Political Development

On October 3, 1983 General Ershad had declared general amnesty and took several steps to resolve the issue. The steps are as follows :

- (a) Each returnee would be given Tk. 5,000/- (US \$ 160) as lump-sum grant.
- (b) 20 K.G. ration for per returnee per week for a year.
- (c) 5 acres (2 hectares) khas land for those who are interested to live in the CHT.
- (d) Disbursement of loan for agriculture and other sectors at lower interest rate.
- (e) To provide the surrendered Shanti Bahini armed men with service in the Government, Semi-Government and in the security forces on the basis of their eligibility.
- (f) The surrenders will follow vigorous vocational training and thereafter they would be provided in the service.

After the general amnesty, 150 armed Shani Bahini men surrendered and most of whom belonged to Priti Group. The amnesty period was then extended up to April 26, 1984.³¹

The Chakma Refugee Problem

Regarding the Chakma Refugees in the eastern Indian State of Tripura, disputed figures are available both from the Bangladesh and Indian sides as to the actual number of refugees in India. While during the visit of Indian Foreign Secretary to Bangladesh in March 1987, he declared a figure of 49,000 Chakma refugees in different camps of Tripura. A Foreign Office spokesman of Bangladesh expressed surprise at the statement of the Indian State Minister for Home Affairs for quoting a figure at 49,000 refugees³².

The Shanti Bahini attacked some villages of Khagrachari on April 29, and May 1, 1986 and the spokesman elaborated "a number of Chakma fled to South Tripura following terror created by attacks of so-called Shanti Bahini"³³. Indian side gave a figure of 13,310 and of which 6,150 were declared genuine. Later India gave a figure of 26,903 and 18,219 of them had been declared as Bangladeshi citizen. He further elaborated that "Return of Bangladeshi nationals and their repatriation to their homes could not be possible despite allout efforts by Bangladesh at different levels"³⁴.

On the contrary, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh gave a statement in the Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad—"26,000 fled away to India of which 24,329 identified as Bangladeshi". He said that "India and Bangladesh officials agreed to start the repatriation on January 1987. But on the night of May 14, 1987, some people from Indian side created terror and the Indian side reported to Bangladesh that the refugees did not agree to return home due to lack of security³⁵. But Bangladesh continued its efforts to bring back the Chakma refugees. H.R. Chowdhury elaborated that it was proposed by India to send a fifteen member Bangladesh delegation to India to see for themselves the condition of the refugees which was agreed upon by Bangladesh. But they did not visit the refugee camps. Later Bangladesh sent a proposal to hold a dialogue on Home Ministry level which India did not reciprocate. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of South Tripura claimed that more Chakma had fled to India but Bangladesh denied it³⁶.

The reason behind the increased figure of Chakma refugees given by India may be that India might include a good number of Chakmas and other tribals who were settled in South Tripura before Indian partition.

The situation of the refugees are still now very staggering in the refugee camps of Tripura. They are ill fed and often starves due to lack of food and medical treatments are seldom available in the camps and mostly the children are the victims. By May 1987, 900 tribals died in the refugee camps suffering from different diseases specially from diarrhoeal diseases. Refugees are being kept inside the security zone and training for youths is compulsory³⁷.

Within May 1987, about 2,000 refugees returned back to their homeland. On return from the CHT, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh said "The returnee complained to him that the Shanti Bahini men put blockades on their return and it is necessary to check the massacres of the Shanti Bahini men drastically³⁸.

The Shanti Bahini Blueprint for Massacre in CHT and Separate Chakma State

External intervention accelerated the massacre of the Shanti Bahini in the CHT in recent days. The tribal rebels have attacked non-tribals at seven different places in Khagrachari district and killed 37 men, women and children within the first week of May 1988. In recent times, the Shanti Bahini has kept its current series of activities confined to mainly three upazilas — Dhiginala, Matiranga and Panchhari under Khagrachari district. "These upazilas border on Tripura State of India wherein lie the camps of the Shanti Bahini³⁹." The area of operations by the Shanti Bahini has spread to Rangamati district too. On May 26, 1988, a Barkal bound launch carrying passengers was intercepted by the Shanti Bahini members at Kalalayan which is located between Shubhslong and Barkal upazilas 44 kilometers off Rangamati district headquarters. "The tribal rebels opened fire at random on the passengers. Three of them died on the spot, two severely injured and five kidnapped⁴⁰."

The Indian press has published a number of reports on the violation of human rights in CHT by the law enforcing agencies of Bangladesh. Since their deployment, Amnesty International recently reported "There is no complain of violation of human rights in the CHT"⁴¹. The report was published following the visit of a three member delegation headed by Mr. I.N. Martin, Secretary General, Amnesty International during 24-30 January, 1988.

From beginning of operation of the Shanti Bahini hitherto 782 people were killed in the Hill Tracts including some tribals also. And Shanti Bahini attacked 254 times⁴² upto May 1988. The attacks were mainly concentrated to the border areas. 500 people were wounded during

the attacks and 141 were abducted. They also set fire in 4 thousand markets. The incident of abduction has been increased in recent days. Shanti Bahini abducted 50 fishermen and two woodcutters. Their whereabouts is yet to be known.

Marathon discussion has been continuing on the issue of return of the refugees in the CHT. The Indian Government does not allow the refugees to return back on the plea of security problem. The Indian High Commissioner told the Indian journalists at the Calcutta Airport mid April 1988 that "the tribal refugees who had taken shelter in the Indian Camps were not returning to their homeland due to lack of security of their lives"⁴³. The Bangladesh Government was taken aback by the comment of H.C. to Bangladesh and Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh termed it as "incompatible with the diplomatic norms"⁴⁴.

Just after a week Indian television Doordarshan put up a highly provocative magazine programme centering on the issue of tribal refugees. The programme was based on an absurd and imaginary theme according to a protest lodged by Bangladesh with India. This was not the first attempt by the Indian television to present such a film on the Chakma issue. On July 25, 1987, there was a similar campaign by the Indian television which was seen in the official circles here as naked interference by India in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. The carnage of Khagrachari in the last of April, 1987 was carried out following the telecasting of the magazine programme. The idea of so-called Chakma State is an integral part of the "South Asian Security Plan" — floated by the Soviet Union in early 1972⁴⁵. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India had taken up a step to establish a "Clandestine Radio Station" as a part of the said programme. Moreover 30 Chakma youths were taken at a training centre of U.P. from Agartala to train up them in Radio-electronics⁴⁶.

Again in the last two years, India has provided training and other military facilities to two thousand tribal youths of Chakma. Tomcheyanga, Tipra and Kharma tribals in some training camps of Tripura and Mizoram. One of such training camps is located at Fiabai, nearest to Indian military cantonment two miles North of Khagrachari of the CHT⁴⁷.

India established some refugee camps long before the migration of refugees in the Indian territory in the Karbuk. The tribals started leaving the CHT from 24th September, 1984. But mysteriously the then Chief Minister of Tripura made a statement on 17th September in a press conference that refugees were coming⁴⁸. On the other hand,

India has been establishing Border Security Force (B.S.F.) camps along the Tripura-Bangladesh border. By May 1988 13 such new camps were established. With the establishment of 13, new camps the total B.S.F. camps have been raised to 94 along the Tripura-Bangladesh border. From that time, the attacks of the so-called Shanti Bahini were intensified⁴⁹ and at that time the 81 and 85 battalions of B.S.F. were deployed at Tripura-Bangladesh border.

There has been a number of allegations that the Indian Security Forces took part in the massacre launched by the Shanti Bahini. In the year 1986 until June, Shanti Bahini killed 80 non-tribal people including 30 women and children. Armed men with deep green uniform took part in the massacre. It was proved that Shanti Bahini conducted such operations with the assistance of Indian Security Forces⁵⁰. Shanti Bahini men killed more than three hundred non-tribal people in areas Bhusanchara, Pindichara, Chottaharina and Gorostan areas under Barkal Upazilla. 12 Indian and 35 Bangladeshis gave witness before the Joint Investigation Team that Shanti Bahini men were trained up in India. India provided such miscreants with arms, ammunition, ration, vehicles and telecommunication equipments⁵¹.

The Dialogue and Development

In fact the dialogue regarding the Chakma issue has been continuing since the Pakistan period. The leaders of the tribal people demanded the rehabilitation of uprooted people due to commissioning of the Kaptai Dam. Government of Pakistan made a scheme costing Rs. 200 million for rehabilitation of the displaced population and was approved in November, 1959 and work started in the same year. But Rs. 15 million was made available.

The main problem for rehabilitation was the non-availability of plain lands. After a fairly vigorous search, it had been possible to settle about 20,000 acres (8,000 hactres) of flat cultivable land of a somewhat inferior quality, to the displaced persons as against the loss of 54,000 acres of plough land, which means a net loss of 34,000 acres of land. A total of 11,761 families including 9,201 ploughing families had been rehabilitated upto 1965-66⁵².

After the independence of Bangladesh, a delegation of hill people, led by M. N. Larma, member of Parliament in 1970 and 1973 went

to Dhaka twice in 1972 and 1973 to meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and present their 4-point demands. The four points were :

- (1) The Chittagong Hill Tracts will be an autonomous State.
- (2) The Act of 1900 must be retained in the Constitution.
- (3) The tribal Chiefs must be allowed to continue.
- (4) The Constitution must guarantee that the regulation will not be amended⁵³.

The delegation sought for self determination of the Chittagong Hill Tract and the continued rule of the tribal Chiefs. But Mujib gave them short shift said in effect "let them become Bengalis"⁵⁴.

"Mujib also advised M.N. Larma to join Awami League and Larma refused the offer. Then he was intimidated not to raise the Chakma issue again and again⁵⁵."

In 1973, Sheikh Mujib recognised the problem in the CHT and undertook various steps listed below :

- (a) Establishment of the CHT Development Board run by the tribal leaders ;
- (b) Special Banking system for the tribal people, and
- (c) Setting up of an Institute for development of tribal culture.

But the Awami League government could not implement these projects.

After the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib regime in 1975, the tribal issue became complex and armed attacks were started. Zia identified the problem of Chittagong Hill Tracts and instituted "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board" for the economic development of the CHT which was initiated by the Mujib regime. Upto 1983-84, the Board spent Tk. 395.7 million (13 million US \$). In 1979-80, President Zia also adopted a Multisectoral Development Programme for CHT region aided by ADB at a cost of Tk. 1,138.4 million (US \$ 36.5 million). Moreover, he made an effort to maintain reserve seats in the Higher Educational Institutions. Board has taken some steps but maximum could not be materialised due to Bureaucratic Procedural Complexity⁵⁶.

Zia also made a futile move to incorporating Mrs. Binita Roy, mother of Raja Tridiv Roy, who gave option for Pakistan in early 1972 as his adviser, Angshu-pro Chowdhury as State Minister and Subimal Dewan as Assistant Adviser⁵⁷. The Government also encouraged the people of overcrowded central Bangladesh to move into Hill Tracts granting them both land and agricultural inputs. Already over 100,000

plain lands people have settled in the region and the Government plans of setting 500,000 more there so as to have a countervailing power against the tribal people⁵⁸.

Ashoke Dewan, a tribal leader, put forward a memorandum in 1980. The memorandum recorded :

- a. Return of all lands appropriated by the settlers since 1970.
- b. Protection of the indigenous culture.
- c. Free movement and commerce within the district.
- d. Equality before law.
- e. Stopping of official harassment.
- f. Enforcement of the 1900 manual.

The Zia Government appointed a three-member delegation consisting of Mr. Shahjahan Siraj, Mr. Rashed Khan Menon and Mr. Upendralal following the atrocities in Kawkhali in 1980 to go into the problem. President Ziaur Rahman later initiated another move to enter into an agreement with the Tribal rebels in late 1980. A closed door dialogue was held in the Rangamati Circuit House and substantial progress was made in this respect. But abortive coup of May 30, 1981 foiled his allout efforts in resolving the problem⁵⁹.

In October, 1982, Mr. Upendralal Chakma, later inducted as Adviser in the Ershad's Cabinet, sat in dialogue with General Ershad, the then Chief Martial Law Administrator and put forward the following demands :

- a. Expulsion of all settlers since 1972.
- b. A mini parliament for the CTH consisting of elected representatives.

The Chakma leaders again proposed to sit in dialogue with the present Government in April, 1984 and put some conditions. But the Government refused any dialogue on condition.

The negotiation was again held in May 1988 with the Parbatta Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity to find out a lasting solution to the CHT issue. Earlier a liaison committee was set up to maintain contact with the insurgents headed by Mr. Upendralal Chakma. The official team was headed by the Khagrachari Brigade Commander, and Colonel Ibrahim was involved in dialogue with the Jana Sanghati Samity. "Mr. Rupayan Dewan, Chief Commandant of Shanti Bahini, for the first

time responded positively to come into dialogue with Bangladesh officials once they were convinced of the goodwill of the Government which was evident from its adopting the recommendations of the six member high powered national team⁶⁰.

A number of attempts were also made earlier. "Major General Nooruddin Khan, while posted in Chittagong, also made an attempt to hold dialogue with the Shanti Bahini but though the Shanti Bahini initially responded a little bit, they finally did not turn up for peace talks. However, General Nooruddin successfully got the Shanti Bahin divided and liquidate its Priti faction"⁶¹.

President H. M. Ershad has been interested about the solution of the problem. "He frequently takes time to visit these troubled areas to keep himself abreast of the situation"⁶². Meanwhile some progress has so far been made on the issue. The two sides sat again face to face in the Community Centre at Pusgaon, a remote hamlet in Pansari Upazilla on June 19 after a long stalemate of four months. The Shanti Bahini representatives put pressure on the constitutional shape of the problem. However, "the Government side in the talk unequivocally said that there can be no solution to the issue violating sovereignty of the constitution"⁶³. This was reiterated by President Ershad much earlier. In a statement, he said "a steps have been taken to solve the problem politically but the problem needs attention of all. CHT is an integral part of Bangladesh. There is no scope of compromise about the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will live as one nation"⁶⁴. The fifth round of peace talks between Government and Shanti Bahini continued for six hours. In the meeting, the Shanti Bahini representatives reportedly avoided all questions relating to their recent barbarous acts on innocent people in Chittagong Hill Tracts during the peace talks. The SB representatives stressed their demand for a separate Chakma province and its autonomous status with a separate legislature. The Government side reportedly assured that Chittagong Hill Tracts would be given a special status ensuring the interest of the tribal people"⁶⁵.

Recent Development

A silver lining hope is in the offing regarding the solution of the problem as revealed from latest development in the CHT despite mistrust and misunderstanding among the concerned parties. Meanwhile

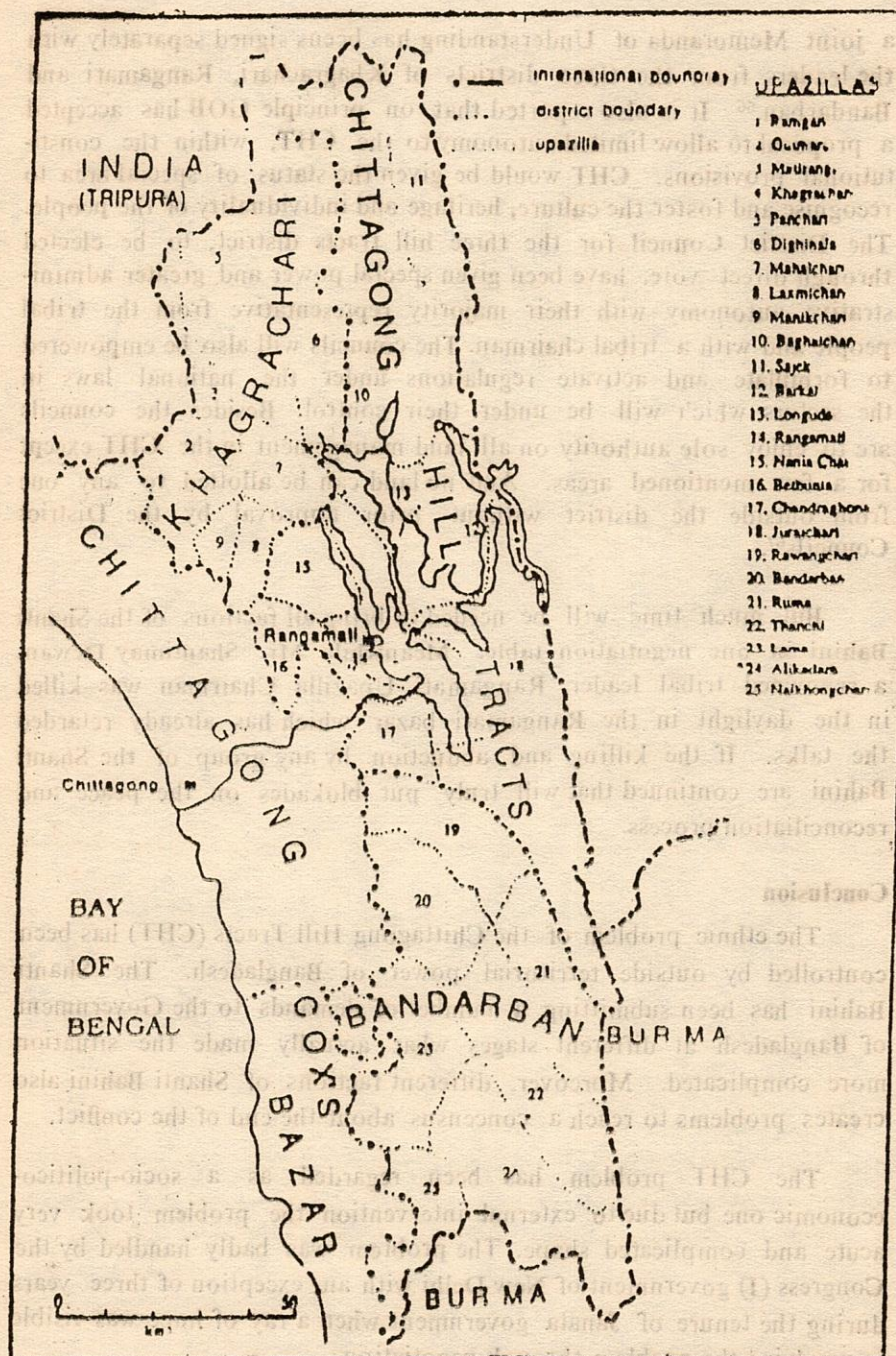
a joint Memoranda of Understanding has been signed separately with the leaders from the three districts of Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban.⁶⁶ It is also reported that on principle GOB has accepted a proposal to allow limited autonomy to the CHT, within the constitutional provisions. CHT would be given the status of special area to recognise and foster the culture, heritage and individuality of the people. The District Council for the three hill tracts district, to be elected through direct vote, have been given special power and greater administrative autonomy with their majority representative from the tribal people and with a tribal chairman. The councils will also be empowered to formulate and activate regulations under the national laws in the sectors which will be under their control. Besides the councils are to enjoy sole authority on all land management in the CHT except for a few mentioned areas. And no land can be allotted to any one from outside the district without prior approval by the District Councils⁶⁷.

But much time will be needed to bring all factions of the Shanti Bahini in one negotiation table. Meanwhile Mr. Shantimay Dewan, a renowned tribal leader, Rangamati Upazilla Chairman was killed in the daylight in the Rangamati bazar which has already retarded the talks. If the killing and abduction by any group of the Shanti Bahini are continued that will truly put blockades on the peace and reconciliation process.

Conclusion

The ethnic problem of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) has been controlled by outside territorial power of Bangladesh. The Shanti Bahini has been submitting a number of demands to the Government of Bangladesh at different stages what actually made the situation more complicated. Moreover, different factions of Shanti Bahini also creates problems to reach a consensus about the end of the conflict.

The CHT problem has been regarded as a socio-political-economic one but due to external intervention the problem took very acute and complicated shape. The problem was badly handled by the Congress (I) government of New Delhi with an exception of three years during the tenure of Janata government when a ray of hope was visible in resolving the problem through negotiation.



India has been trying to keep Bangladesh under permanent political pressure and CHT problem is their own creation. Anti-Indian sentiment in Bangladesh after the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib also accelerated the problem.

Considering the seriousness of the problem specially the economic disparity, government of Bangladesh sanctioned Tk. 2,000 million (US \$ 60.5 million) for the development of the CHT during the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) period of Bangladesh. The overall development of CHT is far better during the present regime compared to the other regimes which has already been hailed by different quarters inside and outside of Bangladesh.

The problem could be solved very easily if the external intervention is stopped. India has already entered into an agreement with the insurgents of Tripura State i. e. with TNV. The solution of the problem will provide India with more time and attention to solve their own problem in the North East region.

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Ethnic Conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts : The Problems and Prospects of Tribal Integration*

A. N. Shamsul Hoque

Introduction

The tribal peoples of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh are engaged in a 15 year long armed struggle to preserve their autonomous administrative status and ethnic identity which they enjoyed for a long time since before the time the region was ceded to East India Company in 1760.¹

Bangladesh is basically an ethno-linguistically homogeneous country. However, it has about two million tribal population, belong to various tribes, spread over the north-western, northern, south-eastern and southern parts of the country.² The socio-economic and cultural life of the minority ethnic groups are basically different from the general Bangladeshis.³

The greatest concentration of the tribal population is found in the CHT, on the south-eastern part of Bangladesh. The estimated tribal population of the region is about six lakhs (0.6 million) belong to thirteen tribes of which the Chakmas are relatively more advanced.⁴

During the British Colonial rule in the Sub-continent CHT enjoyed a special administrative status, ruled centrally through their Chiefs (Kings) with the help of locally recruited officials. During Pakistani rule CHT continued to be administered as a special area till 1964 when the autonomy and special status was abolished by a constitutional amendment in 1963.

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Bangladesh on becoming independent on December 16, 1971 inherited the situation. In 1972 the tribal leaders of CHT presented four basic demands including the guarantee of their special status which were interpreted as secessionist and rejected outright. The long accumulated discontent of the tribals against the policies of Pakistan and Bangladesh governments towards the CHT led to the formation of the *Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity* (PCJSS) with an armed cadre known as the *Shanti Bahini* (peace force) in March 1972. The *Shanti Bahini* (SB) became militarily active since 1976. They started attacking the military and para-military personnel, their bases as well as the non-tribal Bengalee settlers in the CHT. Thus the struggle continues.

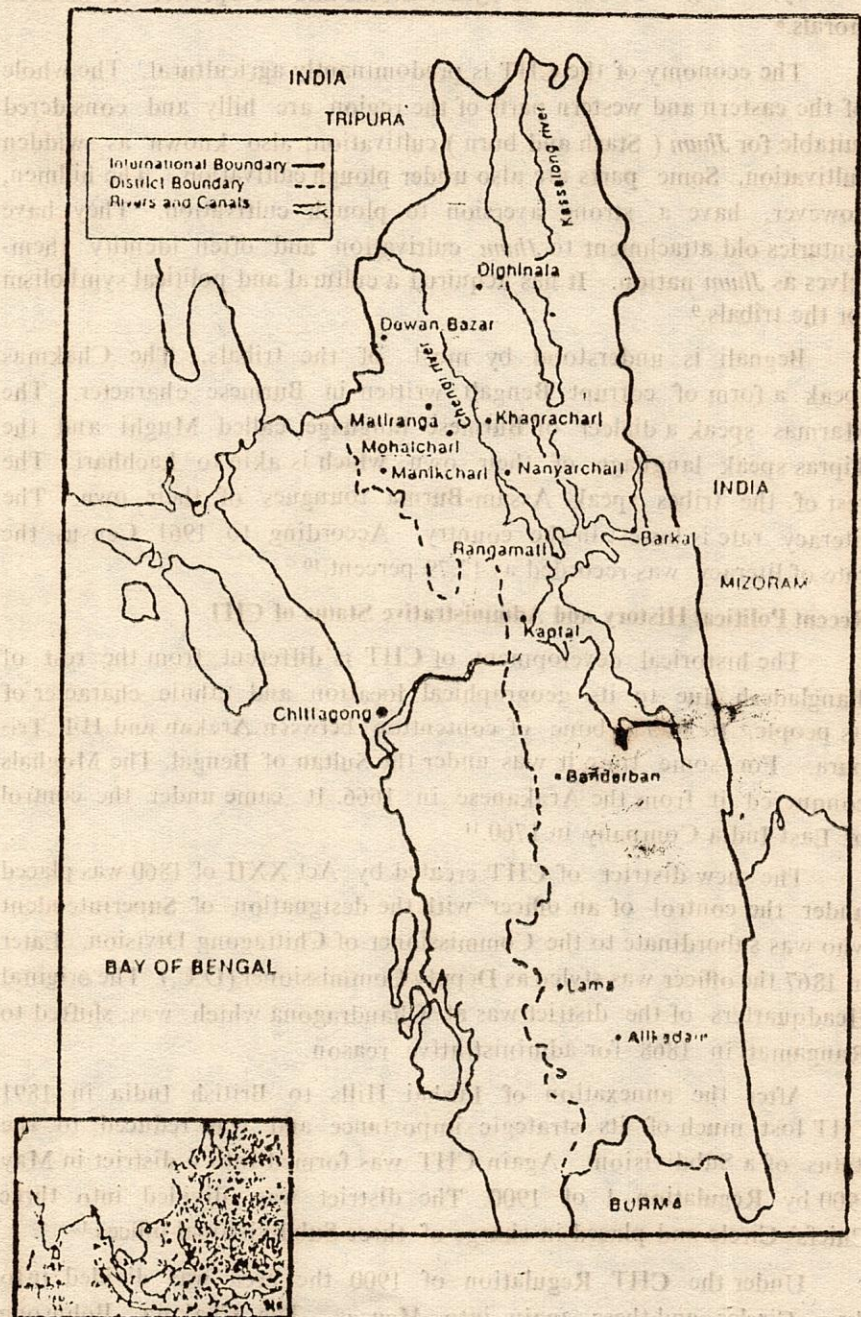
General Outline of CHT : Area and People

The district of Chittagong Hill Tracts was formed by separating the hill and forest areas of Chittagong district in 1860.⁵ The total area of the district is 3,138 sq. miles, about 10 percent of the total land area of Bangladesh. But it has the lowest population density in the country. The CHT borders Indian state of Tripura on the north and Mizoram on the east and Burma on the south and south-east. The district is a hilly region and stands in sharp contrast to other parts of Bangladesh which is flat and alluvial and subject to regular monsoon flooding. The CHT is comparatively rich in natural resources. It has water resources, timber, bamboo, gas, abundant of fruits and possibly oil.⁶ This has always attracted the plain landers to enter the region.

The total population of the CHT is about 7.4 lakhs of which about 6 lakhs are tribals who belong to 13 tribes. The tribes can be classified into two groups :—(a) the ancient tribes which fall under Kuki groups, are Kuki, Kumi, Mro, Lushai, Khyang, Bonjogi and Pankho ; (b) the domiciled tribes which fall under the Tipra group, are Chakma, Marma (Mugh), Tipra (Mung), Tangchangya and Rieng. The Chakmas are the largest who constitute about 75 percent of the tribal population in CHT. Next in importance are the Marma and the Tipra.⁷

Ethnically, the tribal population of CHT differ significantly from the majority population of Bangladesh. They are of Sino-Tibetan origin, have Mongoloid features and are predominantly Buddhist though subsequently many have converted to Christianity or adopted Hindu customs and rituals. The tribal culture are undergoing changes with the advent of modern civilization. The migration of non-tribals and the development of tourism and industry in CHT, a threat to tribal culture and

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS



identity, have given rise to changed customs and acceptance of modern morals.⁸

The economy of the CHT is predominantly agricultural. The whole of the eastern and western parts of the region are hilly and considered suitable for *Jhum* (Stash and burn) cultivation, also known as swidden cultivation. Some parts are also under plough cultivation. The hillmen, however, have a strong aversion to plough cultivation. They have centuries old attachment to *Jhum* cultivation and often identify themselves as *Jhum* nation. It has acquired a cultural and political symbolism for the tribals.⁹

Begnali is understood by most of the tribals. The Chakmas speak a form of corrupt Bengali written in Burmese character. The Marmas speak a dialect of Burmese language called Mughi and the Tipras speak language of their own which is akin to kachhari. The rest of the tribes speak Assam-Burma tongues of their own. The literacy rate is lowest in the country. According to 1961 Census the rate of literacy was recorded as 12.79 percent.¹⁰

Recent Political History and Administrative Status of CHT

The historical development of CHT is different from the rest of Bangladesh due to its geographical location and ethnic character of its people. It was a bone of contention between Arakan and Hill Tripura. For some time it was under the Sultan of Bengal. The Moghals conquered it from the Arakanese in 1666. It came under the control of East India Company in 1760.¹¹

The new district of CHT created by Act XXII of 1860 was placed under the control of an officer with the designation of Superintendent who was subordinate to the Commissioner of Chittagong Division. Later in 1867 the officer was styled as Deputy Commissioner (D.C.). The original Headquarters of the district was at Chandragona which was shifted to Rangamati in 1868 for administrative reason.

After the annexation of Lushai Hills to British India in 1891 CHT lost much of its strategic importance and was reduced to the status of a Subdivision. Again CHT was formed into a district in May 1900 by Regulation 1 of 1900. The district was divided into three Chiefs' Circle and placed in charge of three Subdivisional offices.¹²

Under the CHT Regulation of 1900 the area was divided into three Circles and these again into *Mouzas*. The Chakma, Bohmong

and Mong Chiefs were charged with the responsibility of the Circles which remained unchanged as they existed from before the creation of the district in 1860. They were assisted by subordinate officials like Headmen, Dewan later replaced by *Karbari*. The Village Headmen appointed by the Superintendent/Deputy Commissioner in consultation with the Chiefs collected revenue under the control and authority of the Circle Chiefs. But the Deputy Commissioner retained the control of all land settlement.

Before 1860 and to some extent since then the internal administration of the CHT was in the hands of two tribal Chiefs, the Chakma and the Bohmong (Peong Raja). Later in 1882 a third Chief known as the Mong Chief, head of immigrants from Palong, Arakan was recognised.¹³

During British rule in India CHT was administered indirectly by the Governor as an excluded area separately from the rest of India. Except the D.C. the representative of the Governor, other administrative officials including the police force were locally recruited from the tribal people. The three Chiefs (Rajas) collected revenue and dispensed with civil and criminal justice within their respective jurisdiction.

Migration to the area was virtually prohibited which needed permit impossible to get. The CHT regulation of 1900 retained the special administrative status of the region. Under a system of dyarchical administration it was given limited self-government and kept largely isolated from the people of the plains.¹⁴ Since 1920 alienation or subletting of land to outsiders was strictly forbidden.¹⁵ By the Government of India Act 1935 CHT was declared a "totally excluded area" outside the province of Bengal and Assam.

At the time of partition of India in 1947 the principal Chiefs of CHT sought to be a "native state" or part of a confederation with Tripura or other parts of North-east India with a predominantly tribal population. However, CHT became a part of East Wing of Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim majority area which was rather anomalous. As a part of Pakistan CHT continued to be ruled as a special area under the Regulation of 1900. Though there were complaints that the provisions of the Regulation were violated. The indigenous police force of CHT was disbanded by the repeal of the CHT Frontier Police Regulation of 1881 in 1948. However, the Constitutions of Pakistan,

1956 and 1962 retained the special status of the CHT. But the Constitutional amendment of 1963 which came into force in 1964 abolished the special status and autonomy of the CHT and formally opened up the area for economic development and thus for the entry of outsiders. The process of assimilation of the tribal people began, of course, under opposition from the tribal people.¹⁶

The Constitution of Bangladesh 1972 made no provision for special status for CHT. The government of Sheikh Mujib also did not give due importance to the demands of the tribal leaders for guaranteeing their special status and autonomy as under the CHT Regulation of 1900.

Genesis of the CHT Problem

Migration of Outsiders. During the British rule the people of CHT lived an isolated life. The Regulation of 1900 virtually prohibited outsiders in the area. This suited both the insularity of tribal life and the British interest of keeping the tribals out of the influence of the plain landers. However the Amendment Rules of 1930, in a limited scale, allowed the outsiders to enter the CHT without permission of the Deputy Commissioner and carry on trade and business.¹⁷ When the number was increasing rapidly and the money lenders were charging exorbitant interest rates the presence of outsiders in the area was resented by the tribals.

The abolition of tribal status of CHT and the opening up of the Hills for economic development by Pakistan in 1964 led to the entry of large numbers of outsiders in the area. In fact the government encouraged the emigration of outsiders for working in projects like the Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project, Karnafully Paper Mills. In the 1960's 40 thousand people from Barisal, Patuakhali, Khulna, Faridpur, Jessore, Comilla and Noakhali were settled in CHT.¹⁸ The tribals viewed the presence of outsiders as a threat to their economic position and cultural identity.

The process of migration to CHT has been encouraged by the successive governments since Pakistani rule. Settlement of non-tribals in the region is seen as necessity for overall development of the country in view of population pressure and land resources.¹⁹ Today the tribals are outnumbered by Bengalee settlers who were brought into the Hill Tracts (HT) in three phases. The percentage of tribal

population of CHT has come down from 91 in 1951 to 56.5 percent in 1981.²⁰ The present government is going on with further settlement at the northern border belt to prevent the free entry and exit of insurgents to Tripura and to act as a cushion cover between the insurgents and military installations despite protests and opposition of the tribals.²¹ The tribals apprehend that if the immigration continues and settlers are not taken back very soon they will be a minority in their own land.

The conflict over settlement of Bengalees and land together with the threat of assimilation into the majority culture created the background of ethnic conflict in CHT.²²

Economic Exploitation of CHT. The economic problem of CHT is a long standing one. The British rulers did not adopt any programme for the development of the region. They only collected revenue through the tribal Kings and strengthened the base of feudalism.²³ The Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project undertaken by the then government of Pakistan financed by foreign aid though aimed at economic development of the country it turned to be a major catastrophe for the tribal people of the CHT, specially for the Chakmas. The artificial lake created by the Dam inundated 253 sq. miles, 50 thousand acres of settled cultivable land which is 40 percent of the CHT's total arable land, displaced one lack persons mostly Chakmas. They were not adequately rehabilitated and they had no hope of getting jobs in the project. As a consequence 40 thousand Chakmas emigrated to Indian states of Tripura and Assam. The tribal people for the first time felt neglected and became bitter at their miserable plight due to the Dam.²⁴ The tribal people began to put up some resistance which the government viewed as communist inspired guerilla activity spilling over neighbouring states of Burma and India.

Integration and CHT Problem. The *Jhum* cultivation which required large area of land was not considered suitable for economic development and production of large scale cash cropping. The policy left no choice for the tribals but to be assimilated into national economy which the tribals resented. The influx and settlement of large numbers of Bengalees in the region was viewed by the tribals as a move to assimilate them into national culture.²⁵

The government's policy to integrate the tribals with Bengali nationalism was evident in a speech of Sk. Mujib at Rangamati, "Now we all

are Bengalees". At the same time the Constitution specified all citizens of Bangladesh as Bengali. The tribals played no significant role in national liberation struggle and they were not a part of the Bengali nationalistic movement. The educated tribal groups were of the view that they were citizens of Bangladesh no doubt but ethnically they have a separate racial and cultural identity different from the Bengalees. This declaration of Sk. Mujib, the head of the government and the undisputed leader of the Bengali nationalist movement, created suspicion in the minds of the tribals and pushed them further apart. The student community of CHT also resented the declaration and policy of the Government.²⁶

The tribal view of national integration lies in the autonomy of CHT under the framework of Bangladesh constitution and the protection of tribal culture and rights.²⁷ The Awami League government in fact wanted the tribals to forget their tribal identity. Though General Zia redesignated nationality as Bangladeshi, deemphasising the linguistic and cultural basis of Bengali nationalism but he was not prepared to accept tribal demands and "adopted a stick and carrot policy" to pacify the tribals.²⁸

The Parbottya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity and Shanty Bahini

Formation. Bangladesh became independent on 16 December 1971. A delegation of tribal leaders led by Mr. Manabendra Narayan Larma, an independent member of Bangladesh Parliament called on the Prime Minister Sk. Mujibur Rahman in February 1972 to accept four basic demands of the tribal people which were as follows :²⁹

- (a) Autonomy for CHT and a separate legislative body ;
- (b) Retention of the provisions of 1900 CHT Regulation in Bangladesh Constitution ;
- (c) The continuation of the offices of tribal Chiefs ;
- (d) Constitutional provision restricting amendment of CHT Regulation of 1900 and ban on the influx of Bengalees in CHT.

As stated earlier these demands were interpreted as secessionist and rejected by the Government. In the meantime the preparation for rebellion started in 1972 though the rebels became militarily active from 1976.³⁰ Rangamati Communist Party was formed on May 16, 1972 with Manabendra Narayan Larma, Jatirindra Bodhipriya Larma (Shantu),

Jatindra Lal Tripura, Bhabotosh Dewan, Amiya Sen Chakma, Kali Madhav Chakma and others as members of the ad-hoc committee. The formation of the communist party was kept strictly secret.

The leaders of the Communist Party along with some others formed the *Parbattiya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity* (PCJSS), a semi open party. The leadership of the PCJSS remained in the hands of the Communist Party. At the same time the defunct *Hill Students Association* was revived and Priti Kumar Chakma was given the responsibility to organise the student front. The *Shanti Bahini* (SB), armed wing of the PCJSS, was formed on January 7, 1973.³¹

The PCJSS identified the establishment of durable peace in the CHT, fight against feudalism, regaining the special status of CHT as an excluded area and stopping the settlement of outsiders in CHT as their ideals. The JSS identified the following as their main demands:³²

- (1) Autonomy of CHT ;
- (2) Return of all immigrants since 1972 ;
- (3) Revaluation of rehabilitation of persons affected by the Kaptai Dam ;
- (4) Adoption of development programmes for CHT and entrusting the tribals with the execution of the programmes ;
- (5) And other demands previously placed before the government.

Preparation. The Headquarters of the JSS and the GHQs of the Shanti Bahini were established at Dighinala, an inaccessible place in Khagrachari. CHT was divided into six military sectors, the HQs being a special sector. Each sector was divided into zones and each zone was again divided into a number of Subzones.

By November 1975 Commanders were appointed for each zone and Subzone and by December troops were deployed in all the zones and Subzones.

The training of troops started with arms from the tribal *Rajakars*, that is the persons who cooperated with Pakistan during Bangladesh's struggle for independence. Some retired police, Bangladesh Rifle (BDR) and army personnel took charge of training the rebels. 1973 and 1974 were the period of recruitment to the SB. Educated middle class joined the rebels. The role of school teachers was very significant in the entire process of formation and preparation of the JSS and the SB. A new insurgent activity started in the forest Hills of CHT.³³

Initially the strategy of the SB insurgents was to attack police stations and capture arms and ammunitions. Subsequently the SB resorted to acts of sabotage such as destruction of bridges, culverts, government property and stage guerilla attacks on military and paramilitary personnel and the Bengalee settlers.

The period from 1976 to 1980 was the years of violent insurgent activities. The SB claimed success but with transitory results. The rebels suffered heavy casualties. The government side also suffered considerable losses. Two of the prominent leaders of the SB, Jatindra Bodhipriya Larma (Shantu) and Moung Cha Bai were captured by the army. Many of the rebels died and captured in clashes with the government forces. As a result the rebel actions considerably lessened in 1980.³⁴

Schism in the Rebel Camp. After the arrest of Shantu Larma in 1975 Priti Kumar Chakma became the field commander of the SB. Priti raised objection to the induction of Shantu to JSS after his release from Bangladesh prison in 1980. The issue of return of Shantu led to the split of SB into two factions; the Larma faction and the Priti faction.

There also developed ideological differences in the JSS around 1978. Priti Kumar Chakma wanted the JSS to be the main party and shed its Marxist, Leninist ideology. He was also in favour of achieving the objectives of the party in the shortest possible time depending on nationalistic ideas. Thus the Priti group came to be known as the *Badhi* (Short) group.³⁵

While Mr. Larma struck to the leftist ideologies and favoured a protracted struggle for solving the problems of CHT. Thus the Larma faction came to be known as the *Lamba* (Long) group.

The conflict between the two groups became acute within a short time and the first inter group violence started on June 14, 1983. In a bid to settle the difference a meeting of the two factions was arranged in a remote hill, bordering the Indian State of Tripura. In the night of the meeting the Priti faction shot and killed Mr. Larma and 8 other leaders of his group on Nov. 10, 1983. Shantu Larma escaped the massacre and soon became the leader of the Larma group.³⁶

In a span of three years the Priti group was either annihilated by the Larma group or surrendered enmasse to the Bangladesh army. Pres-

ntly the SB is led by Shantu Larma faction. The government has accepted his leadership of the SB and has decided to hold talks with this group.³⁷

Response of Successive Reigmes to CHT Problems

Awami League Regime. We have already mentioned earlier that the Awami League government was not at all receptive to the demands of the tribal leaders. The government adopted no measure to stop the atrocities and reign of terror perpetrated on the tribal *Rajakars* by the *Mukti Bahini* (freedom fighters) and the *Rakhi Bahini*. Instead of stopping migration, the government encouraged permanent settlement of outsiders in CHT. This accentuated the dissatisfaction and anger of the tribals.

Manabendra Narayan Larma raised the issue of CHT in the Parliament but it was not given any importance. He along with other tribal leaders met Sk. Mujib several times but no result followed from the talks. A delegation of JSS and Hill Students Association under the leadership of Mr. Larma placed four demands to the government which in fact reiterated the earlier demands of the tribals.³⁸ This did not receive any positive response from the government. Awami League government viewed the issue as a law and order problem of national integration. After Mujib's death on August 15, 1975 situation took a new turn.

Zia Regime. General Ziaur Rahman considered the problem of CHT as economic not political. He adopted several measures to pacify the tribals which proved to be utterly inadequate. He formed the Chittagong Development Board to ameliorate the economic condition of the tribals but the programmes undertaken by the Board could not create any good impression and impact on the tribal people due to administrative bottlenecks.

General Zia appointed Mrs. Binita Roy, mother of Raja Tridip Roy, an adviser to his government. This did not help to pacify the tribals as the king had already lost control and influence over the population. The educated middle class held the king responsible for the miseries of the tribal people.

Then Zia made Aung Shu Pru Chowdhury, an independent member of Parliament, who later joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP),

a State Minister. But he could neither help remove the dissatisfaction of these people nor could prevent them from supporting the rebels. Later Shubimal Dewan was appointed an Assistant adviser to the President. Though he regularly visited the area but did not succeed in his mission.³⁹

To counter the influence of JSS and SB a 21 member Tribal Convention was formed with cooperative tribal leaders like Upendra Lal Chakma, Shantimoy Dewan, Maung Shu Pru Chowdhury, Nakul Chandra Tripura. The convention could not play any significant role in ameliorating the situation as by this time they had lost contact with the people and the rebel leaders.

During the later part of Zia regime an atmosphere was being created to open a dialogue with the rebels. Through efforts of the GOC 14th Infantry Division dialogue was established with the rebels in early 1981. Shantu Larma and Mang Cha Bye were released from custody who could help in establishing the dialogue. However Zia's death on May 30, 1981 prevented the effort.⁴⁰

In view of the Kaukhali killings on 25 March 1980 some opposition members namely Mr. Shajahan, Mr. Rashed Khan Menon, Mr. Upendra Lal Chakma appealed to the government for political solution of the CHT problem and submitted several proposals to the government.⁴¹

However General Zia though adopted some measures to pacify the tribals never deviated from the policy of military solution of the problem.

Ershad Regime. General Ershad while he was the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Bangladesh declared on July 27, 1982 at Rangamati and Khagrachari that he wanted a political solution of the CHT problem.⁴² This has been at least the expressed policy of the government since then. President Ershad as recently as May 5, 1988 declared at Khagrachari that SB terrorism is a threat to national independence and sovereignty of the country and the government is ready and willing to solve the problem peacefully through dialogue under the framework of the national Constitution, independence and sovereignty.⁴³

In October 1982 three leaders of the Tribal Convention — Upendra Lal Chakma, Shantimoy Dewan and Maung Shu Pru Chowdhury had a

secret meeting with three representatives of the Larma group. The rebel side was represented by Gautam Chakma and Shuvendu Larma. The rebel side put forward several demands when the Convention leaders proposed for formal dialogue with the government. These demands included the return of all Bengalee settlers since 1972 and establishment of a mini-parliament for CHT with the elected representatives of the tribals. Government refused to enter into a conditional dialogue.

Again on April 19 some tribal leaders met with some leaders of the Larma group at Pusgang, Panchari. The meeting was partially successful as the rebels showed some interest in dialogue but they set one condition that the outside settlers are to be taken back. The Convention leaders assured the rebels that there will be no new settler after April 1984 and if the talks succeed the question of taking back earlier refugees will be seriously considered.⁴⁴

Ultimately through the mediation of the Convention leaders an atmosphere of formal dialogue between the rebels and the government has been created. Several talks have already been held giving rise to optimism of a peaceful solution of the 14 years long problem of the CHT.

In the meantime the government declared general amnesty to the rebels in 1983 and 1986 in view of increased violence of the rebels with a promises of adequate rehabilitation. A large number of rebels mostly of the Priti faction surrendered to the law and order authority but it fell short of the expectation. There were of course, complaints that repatriation had not been timely and adequate. The government has created more job opportunities for the tribals by reserving jobs in industries, factories in CHT and in national government.⁴⁵

The government has launched a massive special five year plan financed by World Bank and other foreign agencies for the CHT. The government is determined to bring about a total change in the socio-economic structure of the tribals. The programmes have started functioning. All these are being done to remove the impression of the tribals that they are neglected.⁴⁶

Tribal Refugees in India a New Dimension to the Solution of CHT Problem

Atrocities on Both Sides. There has been armed offensive by SB in CHT since the mid-1970's after the rejection of their demands of auton-

omy, special status and non-settlement of Bengalees. The acts of insurgency and violence were directed against the military and paramilitary personnel, non-tribal settlers and even foreign nationals working in the area. The law enforcing agencies in counter-insurgency operations often committed excesses amounting to human rights violation. The excesses committed by the law enforcing agencies included unlawful killing, detention, torture etc. of the tribals as reported by Amnesty International.⁴⁷

The total area of the CHT has been militarised. It is alleged that about one-third of the Bangladesh army is deployed in the CHT. In addition the naval and airforce personnel stationed at Chittagong has been helping the army when needed. The whole of CHT has turned into an army camp.⁴⁸

The presence of such a large number of military and para-military forces and their atrocities on the tribal population in the name of counter insurgency measures have scared the innocent tribals.

Refugees to India. A large number of tribal refugees from CHT are languishing in makeshift refugee camps in the Indian state of Tripura. The actual number lies somewhere between 30 thousand to 50 thousand as estimated by Bangladesh and India.⁴⁹ The presence of refugees in India has turned the CHT problem into a bilateral issue between Bangladesh and India as the solution of the CHT problem is now contingent upon the repatriation of the refugees to their homes.⁵⁰

The refugees moved to India during different periods and in different batches. About 20 thousand tribals crossed the border to Tripura and Mizoram in 1978 due to large scale air raids on the northern parts of CHT. Subsequently many of them returned to Bangladesh. Since April 1986 there has been an influx of tribal refugees in the Indian state of Tripura due to fear of reprisals by the Bangladesh troops against escalated SB action and the Bengalee settlers.

It has been a heavy burden on Tripura to shelter such a large number of refugees for a long time. Delhi brought diplomatic pressure on Bangladesh to put a stop to emigration of tribals and take the refugees back as soon as the situation normalises in CHT.⁵¹ The refugee issue has put both Bangladesh and India in an uncomfortable situation. Several bilateral talks have taken place between the two countries regard-

ing the *modus operandi* of the return of refugees but without any result. Bangladesh blames India for keeping the issue alive and playing diplomacy with it while India contends that they can not push back the refugees unless the CHT is secure and normal for their return and, of course, denied Bangladeshi allegations.⁵²

Bangladesh on several occasions has expressed its readiness to repatriate the refugees. It was agreed upon between India and Bangladesh that the refugees will return on January 15, 1987 at 11 a.m. by the Tabulchari border. But they did not return. It was later known after a meeting of the officials of the two countries that the refugees refused to return due to lack of security and normalcy in CHT.⁵³

Bangladesh has always been claiming that normalcy prevails in CHT. But acts of violence by SB still continue. The government has recently tightened security measures in CHT in view of escalated actions of the SB. High officials, except the President who has adequate security protection, rarely visits HT on grounds of insecurity.⁵⁴

However, in the meantime some positive developments have taken place regarding the repatriation of refugees. A Bangladesh delegation comprising Mr. Faruq Ahmed Chowdhury, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India and 14 tribal leaders including Chakma Raja Debashis Roy, Charu Bikash Chakma, Gautam Dewan visited refugee camps in Tripura on July 11, 1988 and persuaded the refugees to return. The visit also shows some softening of Indian attitude towards the repatriation of the refugees.⁵⁵ A suitable solution may soon be found to the problem provided the refugees can be assured of their safety, security and normalcy in the CHT.⁵⁶

India's Role in the CHT Problem

During the initial 12 years the Rangamati Communist Party or the JSS could not establish any understanding with any Communist Party of India or Burma. They also did not receive any support from the Mizo guerillas as the Chakmas had a long standing strained relation with them.⁵⁷ During the later part of 1974 the JSS tried to establish contact with Indian authorities but without any success. India was suspicious of Manabendra Narayan Larma. In the early part of 1975 India in fact informed Bangladesh about the secret activities of the CHT rebels. It is alleged that India and Bangladesh were planning for a

joint operation in CHT to eliminate both the tribal rebels of India taking shelter in CHT and the CHT rebels. However the situation changed after the killing of Sk. Mujib.⁵⁸

The change of regime in Bangladesh also changed Indian attitude towards the JSS and SB. India on its own initiative contacted Mr. Larma and gave short and tentative support to the SB. Government sources confirmed that in November 1975 and March 1976 India supplied arms and ammunitions to the SB guerillas in CHT. The supplies were completely stopped after the fall of Mrs. Gandhi's government in 1977. After Mrs. Gandhi came to power again arms supply was not resumed but tacit support was extended to SB by tolerating their strongholds in Tripura.⁵⁹

Bangladesh press and government authorities are vocal about India's involvement in CHT problem. They allege that the SB insurgency and the non-repatriation of tribal refugees are due to Indian conspiracy. The SB stages its attack from across the border. They receive training on Indian soil.⁶⁰

However, the support the SB received on Indian territory may or may not be official. But with the influx of a large number of tribal refugees in Tripura India has become involved in the process. The refugees are a heavy burden on India. On the other hand they can not be pushed back under uncertain and insecure situation on humanitarian considerations. To safeguard her own interests India is putting diplomatic pressure on Bangladesh to create right atmosphere in CHT so that the refugees can return home. As a part of the strategy India thinks that the right atmosphere for discussion of various bilateral issues between the two countries is contingent upon the resolution of the Chakma refugee problem.⁶¹

So far as the repatriation of refugees is concerned there does not seem to be any lack of goodwill on the part of India. Indian officers invited Bangladeshi officers to visit refugee camps when the refugees declined to return on January 15, 1987. Again on July 11, 1988 India allowed a Bangladesh delegation to visit the refugee camps and pursue the refugees to return.⁶²

The tribals of CHT believe that HT problem is not an Indian conspiracy. It is the struggle of the *Jhum* Nation for self defence against the aggression of Bengalees. It is not that India is preventing the refugees to return home. The main reason for not returning home is that

the lands and properties of the refugees are occupied by the Bengalees and the situation in CHT is not safe and secure.⁶³

Irrespective of the varacity of the allegations and counter allegations at the present state of affairs goodwill of both the countries seems to be essential for a peaceful solution of the problem.

The Process and Prospect of Political Solution of CHT Problem

Formation of a National Committee. President H.M. Ershad for the first time recognised the need for solving the CHT problem politically under the framework of Bangladesh Constitution. In a bid to end the SB insurgency politically the government initiated fresh plans to start a dialogue with the tribal insurgents. The dialogue was to be held at the highest level of the government and the high Command of the Shanti Bahini. This initiative was made soon after the President expressed his desire to talk to the insurgents and find out what could be done to establish peace in the region.

A meeting scheduled to be held in late October, 1987 between the Commander of the Eleventh Infantry Division at Chittagong engaged in counter-insurgency operations and the Field Commander of the SB and the Secretary of the JSS had to be cancelled due to differences of opinion regarding agenda for discussion. The SB insisted on acceptance of some demands as precondition for the discussion which included the following :

- (1) To declare the CHT problem as a political one. This was in fact accepted by the government.
- (2) To stop Bengalee settlement in tribal lands.
- (3) To continue dialogue for a peaceful solution of the problem.⁶⁴

The repatriation of Chakma refugees from Tripura was the real hurdle in the continuation of the dialogue. The JSS leaders placed some rigid conditions for the repatriation of the refugees.

The high level talk was expected to be held some time in the month of November, 1987. But the mid level contacts proceeded uninterrupted. Earlier a secret meeting was held in early October, 1987 between a government delegation and representatives of the PCJSS. It created a new possibility of solving the CHT problem peacefully. It also indicated the willingness of both sides to open a political dialogue.⁶⁵

The government of Bangladesh has set up a high powered six member National Committee for CHT in August, 1987 which is headed by Air Vice Marshall (Retd.) A.K. Khondkar, minister in charge of Planning. The other members of the Committee are the Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chittagong Area Commander of Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong and a Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Committee is entrusted with the task of studying the problems of CHT and the refugee problems and make appropriate recommendations to the President for his consideration for a lasting solution of the 15 year long CHT problem. The Committee held several meetings with the tribal leaders at Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari during the months of September to December, 1987.⁶⁶

The Committee also held five rounds of formal talks with the representatives of the JSS. The fifth round of talks were held on June 19, 1988 at Pansari, Khagrachari.⁶⁷ A four member Liaison Committee headed by Mr. Upendra Lal Chakma played a very significant role in establishing formal contact between the high level Committee and the high command of the JSS and the SB. The Committee will complete its study and submit its recommendations after threadbare discussions with the rebel leaders as well as other tribal leaders.

The second round of talks with the JSS representatives were held on December 17, 1987 which was headed by Shantu Larma and assisted by SB Field Commander Major Shamiran.⁶⁸ The discussion was held on the basis of a 7 points demand placed by the JSS. The third round of talks were held in the last week of December, 1987 which were more or less satisfactory.

The insurgent activities of the SB considerably waned mainly due to initiative of rapprochement by the government. The security forces were restrained from taking any action against the SB. The SB also went into an unofficial truce for the sake of fruitful dialogue.⁶⁹ But after the fourth round of talks held in February, 1988, the SB suddenly violated the truce and escalated their violence. These actions were perhaps aimed at keeping pressure on the government to yield to their demands in the talks.⁷⁰

The demands of the JSS which featured in the dialogues may generally be listed as follows ;

- (1) A Chakma province with autonomous status and a separate legislative body ;
- (2) Stopping the migration of Bengalees in the hill forest ;
- (3) Return of the refugees, ensuring their safety and return of their land and properties taken over by the Bengalees ;
- (4) Raising a Chakma regiment ;
- (5) Revival of the CHT Manual ;
- (6) Ensuring the right to practise their own religious, cultural and ethnic customs.

In the fifth round of talks held with the National Committee, the JSS placed 12 demands to the government. They were informed that the first three demands including the demand for autonomy could not be accepted as they were opposed to the Constitution and sovereignty of Bangladesh. The JSS demands and government proposals were limited to nine recommendations as proposed by the National Committee such as follows :⁷¹

- (1) The three districts of CHT are to be made special areas ;
- (2) There will be a District Council in each district with maximum power directly elected by the people ;
- (3) Decision regarding division of subjects between the District Council and the Government ;
- (4) To empower the District Council to make bye laws, issue orders, make rules and regulation and implement them under the general law of the land ;
- (5) To empower the District Council to inform the government regarding any law passed by the Parliament which may be considered unsuitable for the area for reconsideration of the Parliament ;
- (6) To harmonise the district and the Tribal Circle by determining new boundaries ;
- (7) To determine the relationship between the Deputy Commissioner and the Tribal Chief ;
- (8) The formation of a police force in each Circle ; and
- (9) Necessary amendment and implementation of the CHT Manual.

In the fifth meeting the JSS demanded declaration of the outline of government proposals.

Move to Isolate the SB. In the backdrop of these dialogues and talks the government machinaries proceeded to isolate the hardcore

segments of the rebels from the main stream tribals. The law enforcing agencies hoped to deal with them separately.

The government initiated a fresh move to find a lasting solution of the SB problem which included : (1) Revival of the traditional values of the Tribals and return to the tribal system of administration ; (2) Economic upliftment of the tribal people ; (3) Creation of a separate economic zone of CHT ; (4) Preferential treatment of tribals for government jobs, reserved seats for higher education.⁷²

The move has yielded positive results as evidenced by the recent signing of Local Peace Pacts by tribal and non-tribal leaders at Langado and some other Hill areas for the sake of peaceful and harmonious living between the two communities. The community leaders pledged to work together for the development and integrity of the country and to thwart the activities of the Shanti Bahini.

The Tribal Convention on an official parallel organisation to the SB has been reactivated to counter the rebels. The Marma and Tripura tribes have set up their own welfare bodies which function under government patronage and work for integration between the Communities. All these organisations and bodies work to mould public opinion against helping the insurgents.⁷³

The JSS reportedly passed a secret note to the competent government authority expressing its dissatisfaction with government move to pacify the tribals. It also resented the government steps of rehabilitation of the nomadic tribal families. The JSS viewed these government measures as moves to weaken the hold of SB over the tribals.⁷⁴

At the same time the government is making elaborate arrangements to strengthen the military presence in the area. The Battalion HQs are being upgraded to house brigades. Huge resettlement colonies are being planned to provide adequate population cushion cover to prevent direct guerilla raids on the cantonments.⁷⁵

The measures undertaken by the government to isolate the JSS and SB from the general tribal population may jeopardise the prospects of a political solution of the problem. The alternative is the annihilation of an ethnic minority community.

Conclusion

The 15 year long conflict in CHT which was initially an ethno-cultural problem has turned into an issue needing political solution.

This is perhaps due to wrong understanding and mishandling of the problem by the successive governments of Bangladesh.

The tribals' demands for autonomy and ethnic identity were perceived by the Awami League Government as a law and order problem and a problem for national integration. The policies of the government were directed to that ends. The government of General Ziaur Rahman viewed the problem mainly as an economic one and adopted some economic programmes for the tribals along with military measures to solve the problem.

The policies of the two earlier regimes could not pacify the JSS and SB spearheading the tribal demands which led to large scale violence and massacre in the region and resulted in heavy losses on both sides. The government of General Ershad for the first time has recognised the violence and insurgency in the CHT as a political problem and has established mechanisms for a political solution of the problem through talks and dialogues. But there remains some doubt about the sincerity of the government. It is pursuing a two pronged policy—pacifying the general tribals and isolating the hardcore insurgents perhaps to deal with them militarily if occasion demands. A solution without the SB would not really be a political solution of the problem.

Over the years the insurgency in CHT has become primarily a Chakma issue. The refugees in Tripura are mostly Chakmas. The JSS and SB have also become predominantly Chakma organisations. Most of the other tribes, out of frustration or due to government initiative have become passive in the conflict though they are not yet ready to surrender their original demands of autonomy, special status and preservation of ethnic identity.

However, in the process the SB rebels have become much weaker than before though there are occasional incidents of violence. Due to their reduced number and lack of full support from the tribals the rebels by themselves do not seem to be strong enough to stand the military might of Bangladesh and achieve their objectives, though the sporadic acts of insurgency and guerilla actions may continue for years.

Under the circumstances the Bangladesh government may be in a position to force a military solution of the CHT and specially the Chakma problem. But some moral and humanitarian considerations are involved in the solution of the problem.

The tribals of CHT have a distinct ethnic and cultural identity which they enjoyed for a long period without outside interference. Now

they are placed in a large majority community who are basically different from them in ethnicity and culture but politically dominant. In such a situation the dominant majority has a moral and legal responsibility to preserve the richness and variety of minority cultures.

A humane and peaceful solution of the CHT problem would be to accommodate them in the framework of national polity in a way consistent with their ethnic identities, socio-cultural systems and mode of subsistence. Examples of such accommodation of subnational minorities are not rare in recent history. Only a sincere effort at political solution of the CHT problem may attain these objectives.

NOTES

1. Muhammad Ishaq (ed.), *Bangladesh District Gazetteers : Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Dhaka : Government Press, 1971), p. 111 (Later cited as *Gazetteers*).
2. Peter Bertocci, "Resource Development and Ethnic Conflict : Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh," in Mahmud Shah Qureshi (ed.), *Tribal Cultures in Bangladesh* (Rajshahi : IBS, 1984), p. 345.
3. See Abdus Satter, *Tribal Culture in Bangladesh* (Dhaka : Muktadhara, 1975).
4. See the *New Nation*, Dhaka, April 14, 1985 ; *Dhaka Courier*, April 29, 1988.
5. The original CHT district is now divided into three districts : Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban.
6. Amnesty International, *Unlawful Killing and Torture in the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (London, 1986), p. 3 (Later cited as *Amnesty Int.*).
7. See *Gazetteers*, p. IV ; *Amnesty Int.* p. 3 ; Satter, *Tribal Culture in Bangladesh*, p. 1 ; *Dhaka Courier*, April 28, 1988 ; *Azadi*, January 5, 1985.
8. *Gazetteers*, p. V ; *Amnesty Int.* p. 3.
9. *Gazetteers*, p. V ; Bertocci, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-50.
10. See *Gazetteers*, p. VI.
11. See *ibid.*, p. iii.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.
14. *Amnesty Int.*, p. 4.
15. *Gazetteers*, p. 252.
16. *Amnesty Int.* p. 4.
17. *Gazetteers*, p. 256.
18. See *Holiday*, Sept. 12, 1986.

19. Wolfgang Mey (ed.), *Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Copenhagen, IWGIA, 1984), Introduction, p. 7.
20. *Amnesty Int.*, pp. 6-7.
21. *Ganakantha*, October 6, 1980 ; *Sunday*, 15-21 May, 1988.
22. *Amnesty Int.*, p. 3.
23. *Weekly Bichitra*, May 25, 1984, p. 21.
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29. *Amnesty Int.*, pp. 4-5.
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33. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25 ; *Dhaka Courier*, Jan. 1, 1988.
37. *Dhaka Courier*, Jan. 1, 1988.
38. *Weekly Bichitra*, May 25, 1984, p. 22.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
42. Wolfgang Mey, "The Road to Resistance," in Wolfgang Mey (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 168.
43. *The Daily Ittefaq*, 6 May, 1988.
44. *Holiday*, Sept. 12, 1986 ; *Weekly Bichitra*, 25 May 1984, p. 31.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 32 ; *Rakamari* (Chittagong) May 24, 1985.
46. *Holiday*, Sept. 12, 1986.
47. *Amnesty Int.*, pp. 1-11 ; Wolfgang Mey (ed.), *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 7.
48. Wolfgang Mey, "The Road to Resistance," *op. cit.*, p. 147 ; *Amnesty Int.*, p. 10 ; *Sentinal*, May 29, 1986.
49. *Dhaka Courier*, Nov. 5, 1987 ; January 1, 1988 ; *Sunday*, 15-21 May, 1988.
50. *Dhaka Courier*, January 1, 1988 ; *Weekly Bichitra*, January 8, 1988.
51. Wolfgang Mey, "The Road to Resistance," p. 164.

52. *Dhaka Courier*, Jan. 1, 1988 ; June 10, 1988 ; *Weekly Bikram*, April 27, 1988 ; *The New Nation*, August 4, 1988.
53. *Chitrati Variety* (Chittagong), January 23-29, 1987 ; *Dhaka Courier*, Nov. 5, 1987 ; *The New Nation*, August 4, 1988.
54. *Dhaka Courier*, Jan. 3, 1988 ; Jan. 17, 1988 ; *The Daily Ittefaq*, May 6, 1988 ; July 24, 1988 ; *Sunday*, 15-21, May, 1988.
55. *Dhaka Courier*, July 15, 1988.
56. *Sunday*, 15-21 May, 1988.
57. *Weekly Bichitra*, May 25, 1984, p. 22 ; Wolfgang Mey, "The Road to Resistance," p. 142.
58. *Weekly Bichitra*, May 25, 1984, p. 23.
59. Wolfgang Mey, "The Road to Resistance," p. 142.
60. *The Daily Ittefaq*, May 6, 1988 ; *Weekly Bikram* ; April 27, 1988.
61. *Dhaka Courier*, June 10, 1988.
62. *Chitrati Variety*, Jan. 23-29, 1987 ; *Dhaka Courier*, July 15, 1988.
63. For views expressed by Nirmal Kunti Chakma, see *Weekly Bikram*, May 11, 1988.
64. *Dhaka Courier*, Nov. 5, 1987.
65. *Ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1987.
66. *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1988.
67. *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1988 ; March 11, 1988.
68. *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1988.
69. *Ibid.*, July 15, 1988.
70. *Ibid.*, April 8, 1988.
71. *The Daily Ittefaq*, August 4, 1988.
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A Study of Muslim Philosophy in Bangladesh : An Introduction

Muhammad Shahjahan

1. Introduction

While evaluating the ideals, culture and heritage of Bangladesh, some books and articles have been written in context of the study of philosophy in Bangladesh. But so far we know, very little has been discussed on the study of Muslim Philosophy in these books and articles. Thus an important branch of philosophy studied in Bangladesh remains to be further discussed. So I feel the necessity to write this article entitled 'The Study of Muslim Philosophy in Bangladesh'. In this article, I would like to discuss, in short, the trends of the study of Muslim philosophy in Bangladesh, the position of its study in different educational institutions, about the books and articles written in this field and finally about some translation works done in Bengali from original books. Research works that have been done on Muslim philosophy by Bangladeshi scholars also come under my consideration for review. At the end an attempt will be made to put forward some suggestions which might be helpful for further flourishing its study in Bangladesh.

Muslim philosophy may be defined as a trend of thought and analysis of some fundamental questions relating to the problems of life and world in a systematic way by the Muslim thinkers on the basis of revelation, reason, experience, and intuition. It also inquires and evaluates socio-political problems on empiricorational ground and sound judgement with a view to find out the truth and for the betterment of human beings.

As to the scope of Muslim philosophy, we may say that the fundamental principles and problems of metaphysics, psychology, logic, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, social philosophy, scholastic theology and sufism are the subject matter of discussion of Muslim philosophy.

And as to its major branches of speculative thought, we may further mention its three aspects, i. e. falsafa (philosophical school), Ilm-al-kalam (Muslim scholastic theology) and Tasawwaf (sufism) which are mainly based on 'aql (reason), naql (Qur'an and Hadith) and Kashf (intuition) as their respective sources of knowledge.

The names of Abul Hasan Ash'ari, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Razi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, Ibn Rushd, Jalal Uddin Rumi, Ibn al-Arabi, Shihab al-Din Shuhrawardi Maqtul, Ibn Khaldun, Mulla Sadra, Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani, Shah Waliullah, Jamal Uddin Afghani, Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduhu, Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Amir Ali and Muhammad Iqbal are worth mentioning for their contribution to discovering the origin, development, re-orientation and reconstruction of Muslim philosophy in Medieval and contemporary periods.

In Medieval period Muslim philosophy was studied and taught in Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Central Asia, Asia Minor, Rome, Spain, France and India. Now-a-days it is taught in different universities and institutions all over the world, i. e. in the colleges, universities and institutions of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Malaysia, Algeria, Nigeria, United Kingdom, United States, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Australia even in Russia.

2. Study of Muslim Philosophy in India and Pakistan

During Muslim rule in India a great number of sufis, ulema, and teachers came to India from Arabia, Iran, and some other countries of Islamic heritage. Muslims of the Indian Sub-continent introduced a system of education and prepared the syllabi of madrassah based on the education system which prevailed at Bagdad during the Abbaside period.² In this period, Muslim philosophy was transmitted to India by early Muslim scholars. In the opinion of Tara Chand :

The philosophical thought that developed from Kindi to Ibn Sina was transplanted in India by early Muslims. They were men of high rank ... who lived and laboured in India and through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth in India.³

As to the preservation of manuscripts and publications, it is to be mentioned here that a good number of manuscripts of Muslim philosophy is preserved in the library of Osmania University, and Dairat al-Ma'arif in Hyderabad, India. Some philosophical writings of al-Kindi,

al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and others have been printed during the early twentieth century from these institutions. This trend is still continuing there. So many scholars in different colleges, universities and Institutions, especially the teachers of the department of philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University in India are engaged in writing books and guiding research for higher degrees on Muslim philosophy. Moreover, researches on various aspects of Muslim philosophy are usually published in the journals like *Islamic Culture*, *Islam and Modern Age*, *Studies in Islam*, *Aligarh Journal of Islamic Thought* and so on.

In Pakistan since its very inception, Muslim philosophy is being taught in the Departments of Philosophy, Islamic Studies/and Islamic History & Culture in the universities and colleges. Scholars of different fields and faculties are engaged in writing books and articles on Muslim philosophy. There is an 'Islamic Institute' in Islamabad where the Muslim thinkers are doing research work on Muslim thought. Pakistan Philosophical Congress, which usually arranges seminar on philosophy in general and Muslim philosophy in particular, published a book entitled *A History of Muslim Philosophy* in two volumes edited by M.N. Sharif, which is so far the most comprehensive work on the subject. Ashraf Publication, a Lahore based publishing firm of international repute, has been also engaged in publishing a good number of books on 'Ilm-al-Kalam', Sufism and Muslim philosophical thought. Journals like *Islamic Studies*, *Iqbal Review*, and *Hamdard Islamicus* are published quarterly. Professor Khwaja Muin Uddin Jamil, Muhammad Saghir Hasan Masumi, Saeed Shaikh. C.A. Qadir, and others have been writing books, treatises, and research articles on Muslim philosophy. A good number of Arabic books on Muslim philosophy have also been translated into Urdu by Pakistani scholars.

3. Study of Muslim Philosophy in Bangladesh at Madrasah

The Islamic system of education was first introduced in Bengal in a systematic way by the Muslim commander Bakhtiyar Khilji in the year 1203 A.D.⁴ The Muslim rulers of Bengal were distinguished patrons of arts, science, language, literature and architecture.⁵ Makhdum Sharf Uddin Yahya Maneri (b. 1262) was educated in Sonargaon Madrasah under the noble guidance and valuable direction of his teacher Maulana Sharf Uddin Abu Tawma. Yahya Maneri edited so many books on Islamic concept of creation and mysticism.⁶

From 1200 A.D. to 1765 A.D. the subjects of studies in the Madrasah system of education were broadly divided into two categories : (a) Al-'Ulum al-Naqliyyah, otherwise called Al-Ulum al-Shar'yiah and (b) al-Ulum al-'Aqliyyah — the rational sciences. It is also called al-Ulum al-Nazriyyah — the speculative sciences. Al-Ulum al-Naqliyyah includes the subjects like al-Tafsir, al-Hadith, al-Fiqh, Ilm al-Tawhid, 'Aqaid and Ilm-al-Kalam — Islamic theology, creed and scholasticism.⁷ Al-Ulum aqliyyah — rational sciences comprises the subjects like logic (Mantiq), philosophy (Hikmat, Falsafa), Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Anatomy, Music and so on. Thus we see that from 1200 to 1765 A.D. Islamic Theology, Muslim philosophy and logic were taught in educational institutions of India.⁸

It is stated in *Ain-i-Akbari*, written by Abul Fazal, that during Mughal period, Mathematics, Agriculture, Geometry, Ethics, and Philosophy had been taught in the educational institutions of India.⁹

During British period in India (1757-1946) along with other subjects Tafsir, Hadith, Arabic, Fiqh (Law), Usul-al-fiqh (Principle of Jurisprudence), al-Ilm al-Kalam (Islamic Theology) and Hikmat (Natural Philosophy) were taught in Madrasah system of education. In 'Ilm al-Kalam' four books were prescribed — (1) Sharh 'Aqaid-i-Nasfi, (2) Sharh 'Aqaid-i-Jalali, (3) Mir Zahid, (4) Sharh Mawaqif. Under the 'Hikmat' or 'natural philosophy', three books — (1) Maibuzi, (2) Sadra, (3) Shams — Bazigah were included. Logic comprises eight books — (1) Sugra, (2) Kubra, (3) Isagujji, (4) Tahzib, (5) Sharh-Tahzib, (6) Kutbi, (7) Mir Kutbi and (8) Sullam al-Ulum.¹⁰

According to the Syllabi of Madrasah Education Board (1946-47), Logic (Mantiq) was prescribed for Alim Class and Sufism (Tasawaf) or Muslim philosophy were studied at the Fazil Class level. Teaching of Muslims philosophy in Madrasah is still continuing.

For detailed information, current syllabus of Muslim philosophy for Fazil standard in Madrasah Education Board, Bangladesh is given below :

Origin and nature of Muslim philosophy, importance of Freedom of thinking in Islam, impact of the Jabarites, the Quadarites, and the Mutazilites on rationalism ; The Mutazilites and the Ash-'arites views on the Unity of God, freedom of will, eternity of the Qur'an al-Kalam (Scholastic Theology), concept of soul and creation

in the philosophy of al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Rushd ; origin, development and main tenets of Sufism.¹¹

It is to note here that the syllabus for Muslim philosophy of Madrasah education is quite traditional. It does not cover the entire scope of Muslim philosophy. The contents of courses and studies included in the syllabus fall within the medieval period. In it, there is no scope and provision for getting oneself acquainted with the trends and movements of Muslim thought in modern and contemporary periods as well as with their influences and impact on the history of philosophy — eastern and western. So the syllabus should be changed in such a way so that it covers the entire scope and dimension of Muslim philosophy.

4. Study of Muslim Philosophy in Bangladesh Universities

Now we shall discuss about the study of Muslim philosophy in college and universities at B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. levels. According to Professor Saiyad Abdul Hai, since the inception of the Department of Philosophy at Dhaka University, Muslim philosophy was introduced there along with other branches of philosophy. In 1962, the committee for courses and studies of the Department of Philosophy of the same university adopted a resolution that a separate group of Muslim philosophy would be introduced for three hundreds marks in total, comprising Ilm-al-Kalam (Muslim Scholastic Theology), Tasawwaf (Sufism) and Philosophy (Falsafa) having one hundred marks in each paper. But it is a pity that the resolution was just in black and white and was not implemented in practice. At that time Muslim philosophy was being taught at B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. levels with Indian Philosophy as an optional paper. This trend is still in practice.

In Bangladesh, Muslim philosophy is taught at B.A. Pass, B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. levels in the Universities of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and at Jahangirnagar University in the Departments of Philosophy, Islamic Studies ; and Islamic History and Culture. In all these universities, Muslim contribution to Social thoughts and Political Philosophy are being taught in the Departments of Sociology and Political Science respectively. For the present purpose, we shall discuss and investigate into the problems of teaching of Muslim Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy alone. For clear understanding of this issue, the syllabi of Muslim philosophy of B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. courses which are being followed in four universities are given below :

**(A) Syllabus for B.A. (Hons.) Course in Muslim Philosophy,
University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1988**

Nature, scope and sources of Muslim Philosophy, a general knowledge of the basic philosophical teachings of Islam, a general knowledge of the history of Muslim Philosophy with the emphasis on the following :

- (a) Jabarites, Qadarites, Matazilites, Asharites and Sufism.
- (b) The Philosophers : Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, and Iqbal.

**(B) Syllabus of B.A. (Hons.), Department of Philosophy,
University of Rajshahi, 1987**

Nature, scope, and sources of Muslim Philosophy and a general knowledge of the history of Muslim Philosophy with emphasis on the Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Mutazilites, the Ash'arites, Sufism, al-Kindi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun and Iqbal.

**(C) Syllabus of B.A. (Hons.), Department of Philosophy,
University of Dhaka, 1987**

Origin and development of various theological schools in Islam, scholastic schools : Mutazila and Mutakallim, Sufism, Falsafa, al-Ghazali, Iqbal and comparative study of the problems raised by different philosophers.

**(D) Syllabus of B.A. (Hons.), Department of Philosophy,
Jahangirnagar University**

The beginning of free thinking among Muslims, the Qadarites, Jabarites and the Mutazilites, the Ash'arites, the Muslim Philosophers of the Islamic East, the Muslim Philosophers of the Islamic West, origin of Sufism, great Sufis, and their main doctrines, al-Ghazali, criticism of his predecessors, Muslim Philosophy and Sufism from al-Ghazali to the present day, ethical thoughts in Islam.

Our observation reveals that the syllabus of Jahangirnagar University for B.A. (Hons.) course is more comprehensive in comparison to the syllabi of other universities. But there should be a provision for discussion of Muslim philosophers' contributions to metaphysics, psychology, logic, epistemology, ethics political and social philosophy each independently.

The guidelines of an ideal syllabus covering Muslim scholastic theology, Muslim philosophical schools of thought and Sufism may be presented as follows :

- (A) The origin and development of the Theological schools in Islam, the main tenets of the Sunnites, the Shiites, the Kharijites, the Quadarites and the Jabarites, the Mutazilites, the Asha'arites, and comparative study of the important problems raised by them.
- (B) History of the development of Muslim philosophical school of Thought ; Muslim philosophers : al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Miskawaih, Ibn Tu'ail, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun and Iqbal with special emphasis on their contribution in metaphysics, psychology, logic, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy and social philosophy.
- (C) Al-Tasawwaf — origin and development of Sufism, main-tenents of the prominent sufi orders, Dhun-nun-al-Misri, Ma-'ruf al-Karkhi, Bayazid Bistami, Ibn al-Arabi, Jalal Uddin al-Rumi, Mujaddid alf-i-Thani, and Shah Waliullah of Delhi.

It may be added here that the syllabus for B.A. (Hons.) course in Muslim philosophy should be at least for one hundred marks as it is in practice in all the universities of Bangladesh except the University of Rajshahi. It is to be noted here that since the inception of Department of Philosophy at Rajshahi University, Muslim Philosophy was taught at honours and pass levels for one hundred marks but since few years back, Muslim Philosophy is being taught in the above courses for only fifty marks as an optional paper along with Indian Philosophy. When the study of Muslim Philosophy is growing and getting in importance throughout the world, there is no reason to reduce its study in the country where eighty per cent people are Muslims and Muslims and non-Muslim students are equally interested in Muslim philosophy. So, provision should be made at Rajshahi University also to study Muslim philosophy at least at honours level for one hundred marks. We may further observe here that at Chittagong University in its Department of Philosophy at M.A. level, Philosophy of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd is taught in details and in the said Department of the University of Rajshahi at M.A. final level, two courses of Muslim Philosophy viz. (i) Philosophy of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd and (ii) Mystical Philosophy of Ibn al-Arabi and Jalal Uddin Rumi are taught simultaneously. In the

University of Dhaka, so far we know, philosophy of al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd is taught with *Tahfut al-Falasifa* of al-Ghazali and *Tafut al-Tahafut* of Ibn Rushd prescribed as texts. Of course, some other books of Muslim philosophy which are enlisted in the syllabus are considered to be less important in comparison to the prescribed text books mentioned above.

Thus having considered the syllabi of all the universities, we may say that in the Departments of Philosophy, only Philosophy of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, Ibn al-Arabi and Jalal Uddin Rumi is taught at M.A. level. It is well-known that all these philosophers belong to the medieval period in the history of Muslim thought. In these syllabi, there is no scope for making the students aware of the movement that took place in modern time and of the development that occurred in contemporary period. The trends of Islamic thought which is going on throughout the world and the contribution of Muslim thinkers toward modern and contemporary developments also remain not fully appraised.

An ideal syllabus for Muslim philosophy at M.A. level may thus be framed keeping the following contents therein :

- (a) History of the development of Muslim Philosophy in modern and contemporary periods ;
- (b) Renaissance of Muslim thought in the Near and Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh ;
- (c) Muslim thinkers — Jamal Uddin Afghani, Shaikh Muhammad Abduhu, Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Amir Ali, Iqbal, Maududi ;
- (d) Influence of Muslim Philosophy on the west and a comparative study of Muslim thought with Socialism and Humanism.

5. Books of Muslim Philosophy in Bengali and English

There are some books of Muslim Philosophy written in Bengali by Bangladeshi scholars such as Dr. Aminul Islam, *Muslim Dharmatatya and Darshan* (Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1985) ; Dr. Rashidul Alam, *Muslim Darshaner Bhumika* (Shahitya Kutir, Bogra, first edition, 1975) ; *Al-Qur'aner Darshan* (Shahitya Kutir, Bogra, first edition, 1982), Abul Hashem, *Muslim Darshaner Mulkatha* (Chuadanga, Bangladesh, second edition, 1975) ; Dr. Abdul Hamid and Dr. Abdul Hai Dhali, *Muslim Darshan Parichiti* (Puthighar, Dhaka, 1988) ; Abdur Rashid Faquir, *Sufi Darshan* (Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1980) ; Dr. Sulaiman Ali Sarker, *Jalal Uddin Rumi-O-Ibn al-Arabi* (Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1984).

Here it is not possible to discuss and examine the contents of the books mentioned above. These Bengali books which are written mainly according to the prescribed syllabus are not sufficient to meet the demands of the students of B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. Classes. So more comprehensive books on Muslim Philosophy covering the entire scope and dimensions should be written in Bengali.

There are some other books of Muslim Philosophy written in English by Bangladeshi scholars. These are Abdul Jalil Miah, *Concept of Unity* (Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1986) ; S.A. Hai, *Muslim Philosophy* (Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 2nd ed., 1982) ; *Muslim Philosophy : A Short Survey* (Islamic Foundation, 1987) ; *Iqbal, The Philosopher* Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1986) ; Muhammad Mizanur Rahman, *The Philosophy of al-Ghazali* (International Islamic Philosophical Association, Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1977) ; *The New Concepts in Philosophical Studies* (Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1980) ; Sayedur Rahman, *An Introduction to Islamic Culture and Philosophy* (Mallick Brothers, Dhaka, 1956).

6. Bengali Translation of Books on Muslim Philosophy

In medieval period, Muslim Philosophers translated so many books from different languages into Arabic. Now-a-days also books of Muslim (Philosophy are being translated into different languages of the world. There are some books of Muslim Philosophy that have been translated into Bengali, some of which are : Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Maqaddimah*, translated into Bengali by Ghulam Samdani Quraishi, vol. 1 and vol. II, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1981-1982 ; Syed Amir Ali, *Spirit of Islam*, translated into Bengali by Rashidul Alam, Mallick Brothers, Calcutta 1987 ; Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, translated into Bengali by a group of translators, edited by Principal Ibrahim Khan ; *Islame Dharmiyo Chintar Pumargathan*, Islamic Foundation, 3rd Edition, Dhaka, 1987 ; *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, translated into Bengali by Kamal Uddin Khan, *Progaon Charchay Iran*, Iqbal Academy, Dhaka, 1372 Bengali year ; Al-Ghazali, *Yahya al-Uhim al-Din*, translated into Bengali by Maulana Fazlul Karim, 9 vol., Islami Mission Library, 1972-1977 ; *Kmiya-i-Sa'adat*, translated into Bengali by Nurur Rahman, *Souvagya Parashmani*, 4 vol., Imdadiya Library, Dhaka, 1979-1981 ; *Tahafut-al-Falasifa*, translated into Bengali by A.K.M. Adam Uddin, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 3rd edition, 1980 ; *Miskat-al-Anwar*, translated into Bengali by Muhammad Yaqub, Hafizia Kutubkhana, Baitul-

Mukarram, Dhaka, 3rd ed., 1986 ; *Al-Munquidh-min-al-Dhalal* translated into Bengali by Anis Choudhury under the title *Satyer Sandhan*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1976 ; Shibli Nu'mani, *Islamic Philosophy*, translated into Bengali by Muhammad Abdullah, *Islami Darshan*, Islamic Foundation Dhaka, 1981 ; *Selected Articles*, translated into Bengali by Abdul Mannan, *Nirbachita Prabandhabali*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1972.

It is noteworthy to mention here that more books of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd and some other books on Muslim Philosophy, like *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited by M.M. Sharif and *A History of Islamic Philosophy* by Majid Fakhry, should be translated into Bengali at least to meet the demands of the students of colleges and universities.

7. Articles on Muslim Philosophy

From the decade of 1930's till now, a number of Bengali articles have been published on sufism, scholastic theology, and on philosophical thoughts of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawash, Ikhwan al-Safa, Hai Ibn-Yaqzan, Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn Khaldun, Mawardi, Iqbal and others in different journals, such as, *Monthly Muhammadee*, *Sawgat*, *Journal of Islamic Academy*, *Journal of Islamic Foundation*, *Monthly Prithibi*, *Philosophy and Progress*, *Proceedings of Philosophical Association*, *Journal of Philosophical Association*, *Copula: Journal*, Department of Philosophy, Jahangirnagar University, *Anweshan*, *Journal*, Department of Philosophy, Rajshahi University, *Progma*, *Journal*, Department of Philosophy, Chittagong University.¹² Besides these, a few articles on Muslim philosophy written by Bangladeshi thinkers in English have been published in some national and international journals, such as *Islamic Quarterly*, London ; *Islamic Culture*, India ; *Islam and Modern Age*, India ; *Islamic Studies*, Pakistan ; *Journal of Pakistan Philosophical Society* ; *Journal of the Astatic Society*, Bangladesh ; *Philosophy and Progress*, Bangladesh.¹³

8. Theses on Muslim Philosophy

Research work on Muslim Philosophy which started in the medieval period is still continuing throughout the world. There are a good number of Ph.D. and M.A. theses which are based on the works of Muslim thinkers like al-Farabi, al-Razi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawash, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun, Jamal Uddin Afghani, Shaikh Muhammed Abdahu, Iqbal ; Shah Waliullah, Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani, Jalal Uddin Rumi, Ibn al-Arabi and so on. The scholars who worked

on Muslim thinkers mentioned above contributed a lot in the fields of metaphysics, psychology, logic, epistemology, ethics, theology and sufism. During the twentieth century, research work is being carried out on Muslim Philosophy in its different branches in the universities of Europe, America, Asia and Africa.¹⁴ This trend is continuing in Bangladesh also.

Some scholars of our country who obtained Ph.D. and M.A. degrees from home and abroad and also worked on topics related to Muslim Philosophical thought, Muslim Scholastic theology and sufism. These works are Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics of Islam*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972, published in Malaysia, 1973; Muhammad Enamul Haq, *A History of Sufism in Bengal*, Ph.D. thesis, Calcutta University, 1934, published by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1975, A. Q. Fazlul Waheed, *A Comparative Study of the Metaphysics of Ibn Rushd and Aristotle*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1982; Muhammad Ghulam Rasul, *Chisti-Nizami Sufi Order of Bengal Until Mid 15th Century and Its Socio-religious Contribution*, Ph.D. thesis, Calcutta University, 1983, (later published); Muhammad Mizanur Rahman, *The Materials in the Works of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina on which the Metaphysical Section of al-Ghazali's Maqasid is Based*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1966; Serajul Haque, *Imam Ibn Taimiyah and His Projects of Reforms*, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1937, published by Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh, 1982; Muhammad Shahjahan, *A Critical Edition of Risalah al-Tanbih 'ala Sabil al-Saadah of Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi with an Introduction, English Translation and Notes*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1986 and A.N.M. Wahidur Rahman, *Religious Thought of Maulavi Chiragh Ali*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, MacGill University, Canada, 1982.

It is to be noted here that it is very difficult to do research work on Muslim Philosophy in Bangladesh, because of the fact that research materials in this field which are mainly in Arabic, are not easily available in our country. This is why almost all the researchers were compelled to go abroad for higher degrees. Now-a-days, a new trend is going on to do research here in this area by collecting the materials from abroad, but progress is very slow.

9. Conclusion

From our discussion, we may draw a conclusion that the study of Muslim Philosophy which is started in medieval period in India is still in

progress in the Madrasahs, Colleges and Universities of our country and that some books, treatises and articles on it have been written in English and Bengali. It also reveals that some research work is being done for higher degrees on different topics of Muslim philosophy. But compared to its wide dimension and demand, the scope of its teaching in the Madrasahs, Colleges, and Universities is still very limited. In some university, the syllabus of Muslim philosophy is being contracted rather than becoming extended. In view of the present situation of the state of affairs in the Islamic world, on the one hand, and the necessity of a rational and critical interpretation of theological problems in Islam as well as the views of Muslim philosopher, on the other, we would like to put forward some suggestions given below for improvement of its study in Bangladesh.

- (a) That the syllabi of Muslim Philosophy is to be improved in Madrasah Education and be extended at College and University levels and that a fullfledged department of Muslim Philosophy be opened in the Islamic University ;
- (b) That books on the history of Muslim Philosophy in general and on the study of Muslim Philosophy in Indo-Pak-Bangladesh Sub-continent are to be written in Bengali ;
- (c) That the original books and treatises of Muslim Philosophers and important books on Muslim Philosophy are to be translated into Bengali ;
- (d) That the original manuscripts of books and treatises on Muslim Philosophy are to be collected from different libraries and museums of the world and be preserved in the libraries and museums of our country and that a research guide book should be written and made easily available in order to find out the source materials of Islamic studies and thoughts ;
- (e) That a book on the problems of Muslim Philosophy comprising Muslim Philosophers' contribution to metaphysics, logic, ethics, psychology, political philosophy, and social philosophy should be written in Bengali and English ;
- (f) That the research journals in English and Bengali on Muslim Philosophy are to be published annually and quarterly respectively ;
- (g) That a series of books on a particular Muslim Philosopher covering his entire life, works and thoughts should be written in English and Bengali.

If these suggestions are implemented we may hope that the scope of the study of Muslim Philosophy will be widened in educational institutions and become acceptable to the intellectuals interested in this important branch of study and research.

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as well as a family-member household. I shall, therefore, in this paper follow Shah's definition to analyse households in Mukhait. However, I shall use Bhuiyan's (1978) when he makes a modification in Shah's definition. The member of a household in Mukhait may live in different

Classification and Typology of Household Structure in a Village in Bangladesh*

S.M. Zillur Rahaman

Definition of household

The term 'household' has received considerable attention from social scientists. It has been defined as the most common and basic social as well as economic unit in society. Netting, Wilk and Arnould state that "the household is society's most common place and basic socio-economic unit" (1984:xiii). Kunstadter points out that "most people in most societies at most times live in households ; membership in which usually is based on kin relationships of marriage and descent, which are simultaneously combination of dwelling unit, a unit of economic co-operation (at least in distribution and consumption) and the unit within which most reproduction and early socialization childhood takes place" (quoted in Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984:xiii). Shah defines : "the household is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in a single kitchen" (1973:8). Bhuiyan finds out in Shah's definition the following principal features : (i) one or more persons, (ii) living under the same roof, and (iii) taking food cooked in a single kitchen (Bhuiyan 1978:87).

Among definitions quoted above, Shah's definition most clearly conceptualises the household in Bangladesh because unlike others it takes into account the possibility of the existence of a single member

*This paper is an outcome partly of my Doctoral Thesis, submitted to the Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University on the 31st May, 1990. The field data for it was collected in a village named Mukhait under Bagerhat District of Khulna Division. The field work conducted in Mukhait in two phases, covering a total period of one year. The first phase lasted from 1st April to 30th September, 1986, and the second phase from 1st May to 31st October 1987.

as well as a multi-member household. I shall, therefore, in this paper, follow Shah's definition to analyse households in Mukhait. However, I agree with Bhuiyan (1978) when he makes a modification in Shah's definition. The member of a household in Mukhait may live in different houses or a housing complex, and not necessarily under one single roof. Taking this into account, my definition of villages household implies a residential or domestic unit composed of one or more persons normally living in the same house or housing complex and taking food cooked at a single *chula* (hearth).

Emigrant households

Very little attention has been paid to emigrant households and persons living in them by the research scholars who have conducted studies in different villages in Bangladesh. Bhuiyan observes, "There is no data on emigrant persons in other village studies in Bangladesh (1978:95). Further, emigrant households and persons living in them are very much important for any comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of any village of the country. It should be noted that the persons living in emigrant households are different from daily commuters who go to their place of work in the morning and come back to the village in the evening.

These two types of households and persons living in them mentioned above are the result of the impact of modern forces of industrialization, urbanization and modernization. These process are taking place more or less in every country of the world. They throw open new work opportunities and the villagers are attracted in the whirlpool of these rapid processes by getting jobs, etc. However, on the one side the village people go out from the village to find jobs, business and other opportunities, but on the other side they keep their relations with their relatives living in the village households or families.* Their one leg is in the village and one leg outside, and sociologists should take a serious note of this complex reality.

Apart from the households residing permanently in Mukhait, there are 20 households which reside outside but are domicilled in the village. The male heads of these emigrant households are engaged in various

*In sociology and social anthropology the word 'family' has been used in several different senses. Recently, however, social scientists clearly distinguish between 'household' and 'family'. I have maintained this distinction in my study (For an intensive explanation on this distinction, see Shah 1973, 1977, Bhuiyan 1978, Laney 1986, Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984, Raju 1988).

economic activities at the place of their residence. These 20 households have been classified into two categories, 'independent' and 'linked'. 5 households belong to the 'independent' and 15 to the 'linked' category. The 'independent' emigrant households are settled outside the village. In most of the cases the male head of the household of this category has a house or room in a house in Mukhait but it remains locked. When he or his household members come to the village they open the same and reside there. The 'independent' emigrant households are not included as part of households of Mukhait, and therefore, not considered in analysis of households. The reason is that these households' members are not socially recognised by the village people as village residents, though they are 'domiciled' in the village. When they come to the village their relatives and other fellow villagers treat them as guests. During their stay in the village they do not cook food at their own hearth, but usually take it from relatives' or friends' households.

In the case of 'linked' emigrant households, they have links with the households in the village, such that when the members of these households come to the village they stay with their relatives in their respective households. Table 1 shows the 'linked' emigrant households with persons living in them and the kinds of relatives they have links in the village.

The kinship composition of Table 1 shows that in all the cases the emigrant persons who reside in 'linked' emigrant households have definite relationship with their respective households' members living in the village. So, persons living in the 'linked' emigrant households are an important part of their village household, family as well as kinship structure.

Now the situation is, if the 'linked' emigrant households are not added with the households residing within the village, then the total number of households is 203, and the total number of population is 1028. But if added, then the total number of households is 218 ($203 \text{ within the village} + 15 \text{ 'linked' emigrant households} = 218$), and the total number of village population is 1096 ($1028 \text{ within the village} + 68 \text{ living in 'linked' emigrant households} = 1096$). The 'linked' emigrants are added with the village households. The reason is that the persons living in these households are domiciled in the village and they are recognised by the villagers as village people. They have economic, political, familial and social links with their relatives and fellow villagers.

Typology of households

The sociological and anthropological studies on family and household in South Asia, including India and Bangladesh, exhibit mainly a common typology. This consists of two structures of family and household: one 'elementary' and the other, 'extended' or 'joint' (see Madan 1965,

TABLE 1

'Linked' emigrant households with persons living in them and their relation with the household in Mukhait.

Category of relation	Number of emigrant households	Persons living in emigrant households
(i) Emigrant household of a man having widow-mother and unmarried sibling(s) in the village.	6	18
(ii) Emigrant household of a man having married brother and unmarried sibling(s) in the village	2	9
(iii) Emigrant household of a man having parents and unmarried sibling(s) in the village	7	41
Total	15	68

Mandelbaum 1984, Karve 1953, Arafeen 1986). However, Shah does not think this typology adequate as there are a number of shortcomings of it. To mention an example, the joint family has been generally shown as a group constituted of members of patrilineal descent and virilocal residence. It does not bring into account non-virilocal members which are found in many households in South Asia. Shah also deplores, "only a few works give attention to the distinction between households composed of complete elementary family and those composed of the various types of incomplete elementary family" (1973:141-42.) Shah classifies households into two types. One, simple, and the other, complex. He states, "A simple household may be composed of the whole or a part

of parental family" (1973:14). Again he says, "parental family is a unit of man, his wife and their unmarried children" (1973:14). The term 'parental family' here is equivalent to the term 'nuclear family' and 'elementary family.' Shah includes adopted children, remarried children, and also the wife's children by her first husband brought over to the second husband's home in his definition. Shah defines complex household as "composed of more than one parental family, or of parts of more than one parental family, or of one or more parental families and parts of one or more other parental families" (1973:14).

The above household classification and definition by Shah show that efforts have been made to take into account every possible type of member in the household in the society. So, Shah's classification is followed to analyse the typology of village households in Mukhait. But it should be noted that Shah's definition of parental family is modified. Mukhait is a Muslim village. Islam permits a man to have four wives at a time. In Mukhait there are five men each residing with two wives and their unmarried children. There is no separate arrangement for cooking and lodging of a man's two wives and their children. The co-wives are living in the same household with the husband. Therefore, such a unit has been counted as parental family. So, the parental family in Mukhait consists of a man, his wife(ves), and their unmarried children. Table 2 shows the two major types of households in Mukhait, including the 'linked' emigrant households.

TABLE 2

Types of households in Mukhait

Household Type	In Mukhait		'Linked' emigrant		Total	
	HH	P	HH	P	HH	P
Simple	153	723	14	64	167	787
Complex	50	305	1	4	51	309
Total	203	1028	15	68	218	1096

H = Household

P = Population

Of the 203 households in Mukhait, 153 are simple and 50 are complex. The first category comprises of 723 persons and the latter 305. Further, there are 15 'linked' households outside the village, of which 14 are simple and only 1 complex, with 64 persons living in simple and 4

persons in complex households. Thus, if the 'linked' emigrant households are added to the households resident in the village, the total number of households is 218, of which 167 are simple and 51 complex. On the same account, the majority of the village people 787 (71.81%) of the total 1096 are living in simple households and 309 (28.91%) in complex households.

Now the point is, whether the 'linked' emigrant households will be just added, or they will be merged with their related households residing in the village. It must be clear that 'linked' emigrant households are merged with their related households residing in Mukhait and the merged figures of the households are termed 'composite household.' Because, when the persons living in 'linked' emigrant households come to the village they become a part of their village household. They take food cooked on the same hearth with their village household members. Table 3 shows the major types of composite households in Mukhait.

TABLE 3
Composite households in Mukhait by two major types

Households type	Household	Persons living
Simple	138	673
Complex	65	423
Total	203	1096

The merger situation shows that the number of composite complex household is increased (from 51 to 65), and also persons living under this category are increased (from 309 to 423), whereas the number of composite simple households is diminished (from 167 to 138), and their population strength also decreases (from 787 to 673). Finally, the total number of composite households in Mukhait is 203, of which 138 are simple and 65 are complex. The majority of the village people 673 (61.41%) of the total 1096 are living in simple households and 423 (38.59%) are in complex households. For the purpose of analysis of complex and simple households these composite figures are taken.

Complex households

As mentioned above, 65 of the total 203 households in Mukhait are complex. They can be differentiated into two categories. The first category are those households which are complex normally, i. e., when married

son(s), their wives and children join in it. In the second category, household become complex through the process of reversal of the dominant norms of households formation. For example, a daughter once married reverts back to her parents' household in case of her divorce or the death of her husband. Table 4 presents the complex households of the second category in Mukhait.

TABLE 4

Composition of complex households through reversal of dominant norms of household formation

Composition	Households
1. Man, his wife, unmarried children, divorced daughter and her child.	3
2. Widow, her unmarried son, divorced daughter and her child	2
3. Man, unmarried siblings and widow sister with her child	1
4. Man, unmarried siblings, divorced sister	2
Total	8

If those who are members by virtue of reversal are excluded from the household composition in Table 4, it will be seen that all the households would become simple. The household without members by reversal is 'core' and the members by reversal are accretion (see Shah 1973:66). So, all the households in Table 4 have been complex by addition of accretions to simple 'core' units. Table 5 presents the types of normally complex households in Mukhait.

The kinship composition of the 57 normally complex households in Mukhait shows that in the majority of the cases (51 out of 57) there are parent(s) and their married son(s) residing in the same household. This includes 1 case (Table 5:4) in which the household includes a widow, her son, son's wife, son's son, his wife and children. Thus in 46 out of these 51 cases the parent(s) have only one married son in the household (Table 5:1, 2, 3, 4). There are only 5 cases in which one or both of the parents live with two or more married sons (Table 5:5, 6, 7).

There are only two cases in which married brothers, their wives, children and unmarried siblings reside together after the death of their parents. In each of these cases the younger married brother is educated. He resides outside the village with wife and unmarried children. The elder brother lives in the village with his wife, children and unmarried siblings. The two brothers, although living in two different places, cooperates with one another and whenever the emigrant brother and the mem-

TABLE 5

Normally complex households in Mukhait

Composition	Households
1. Man, his wife, married son, son's wife and children	18
2. Widow, married son, son's wife and childr(en)	19
3. Widower, his son, son's wife and childr(en)	8
4. Widower, his son, son's wife, son's son, his wife and childr(en)	1
5. Man, his wife, two or more married sons, their wives, childr(en)	3
6. Widow, two or more married sons, their wives, childr(en)	1
7. Widower, two or more married sons, their wives, childr(en)	1
8. Man, his wife, childr(en) and sibling(s)	4
9. Two married brothers, their wives, childr(en), and unmarrieds sibling(s)	2
Total	57

bers of his household come to the village they stay with his brother in the village. That is why they have been considered as forming one household in the village. Otherwise, they are separate. There is no household in the village in which two married brothers reside permanently together. Therefore, the norm of co-residence of two married brothers after the death of parents is not quite strong in Mukhait.

Simple households

Table 6 presents the different types of composition of the simple households, the number of households of each type, and the number of persons living in the households.

TABLE 6

Composition of simple households and persons living in the households

Composition	Households	Persons living
1. Single man	3	3
2. Single woman	6	6
3. Man and his wife	10	20
4. Man, his wife(ves), unmarried children	102	581
5. Widow mother and her unmarried children	13	47
6. Widower father and his unmarried children	4	16
Total	138	673

Three of the 138 simple households consist of a single man each whereas 6 have a single woman each. 10 households have a man and his wife : 102 comprise of a man, his wife(ves) and unmarried children : 13 include a widow mother and her unmarried children : and 4 comprise of a widower father and his unmarried children. So, the majority of a simple households (102) are composed of complete elementary or nuclear families.

Conclusion

The majority of the simple households in Mukhait (120 of the total 138) are composed of complete elementary or nuclear families. However, it is significant that 36 (26.08%) are composed of incomplete elementary families (see Table 6). In other words, a little more than one-fourth of the simple households belong to the incomplete elementary family variety. This shows that in theorising about the household and family we should not take into account merely about the contrast between the nuclear or elementary family and the joint or extended family but take into account the incomplete nuclear family also.

In complex household category, the dominant norm of the household formation is the co-residence of parent(s) and their married son

during the parents' lifetime. The norm of co-residence of two married brothers during and after the death of parents is not quite strong in Mukhait. There are two households in Mukhait where two married brothers reside together after the death of their parents. Some social scientists have found a few households in Bangladesh villages where two or more married brothers reside jointly even after the death of their parents. However, such household (as is evident from their meagre number) are extremely rare in Bangladesh, and may, therefore, be considered as atypical. The point is that the developmental process, only rarely and in exceptional cases, reaches the phase of co-residence of two or more married brothers after their parents' death.

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Pharmaceutical Multinationals and Drug Policy of Bangladesh : Reflections on Concepts and Policy Issues

Muhammad Hasan Imam

Conceptualizing MNC

Since World War II, the multinational corporation (MNC) has emerged as powerful agent of world social and economic change.¹ It is a new dimension of organized economic behaviour of man which largely affected the international flow of capital, labour and rational management system. The existence of multinational enterprises can be traced long before in the form of international trade and business. According to Todaro, these international carriers of capital, technology, and skilled labour with their diverse productive operations throughout the Third World greatly complicated the simple nature of traditional international trade. But recently the most powerful force in international economic relations has been the spectacular rise in power and influence of the giant MNCs.² So, the rise of MNCs as the very rudimentary single-plant, single-product firms to multidivisional enterprises is interestingly evolutionary in nature. Hymer opined that the growth of capital revolutionized and extended both the market and factory which consequently diversified the needed division of labour.³

Conceptualizing MNC is difficult in a single way, because, a number of definitions can be found in economics, sociology, or management literatures. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs came up with the term 'MNC' to cover all enterprises which control assets in two or more countries.⁴ Jacoby⁵ stated, it is simultaneously a 'citizen' of several nation-states, owing obedience to their laws and paying them taxes, yet having its own objectives and responsive to a management located in a foreign nation. According to Campus, it is not

a single corporation endowed with several nationalities, rather, it is a cluster of several corporation, each a separate entity controlled by one headquarter. To describe accurately, a parent corporation based in one country called home country, with a multinational group of subsidiary corporation in different countries called the host countries.⁶ Robinson described the basis of management decisions of MNCs as a truly international firm with sell out of, and into, any national market, taking full advantage of rapid delivery, exchange transactions, bilateral trade agreements, and triangular trade deals. Thus, it may manufacture part 'A' in one country, part 'B' in another, part 'C' in another; exchange all three and assemble in final product in all the three countries.⁷

To summarize, we can say that MNCs are international business enterprises which have home country of origin and operates in several host countries. These organizations are controlled by a central body which determines policy and decision-making. MNCs are not necessarily limited to financial flows or direct foreign investment. They also concern transfer of technology, goods, managerial services, entrepreneurship and business practices.

Basic Features of MNCs

MNCs have large size and worldwide operations. Their economic power is greatly strengthened by the predominantly oligopolistic market positions. They are able to exercise effective control over their foreign affiliates through complete or majority ownership. Greater centralization leads to the establishment of a strong central finance and control group. Decision about hedging on foreign exchange, borrowing, declaring dividends are taken centrally. Thus, they can subordinate the interests of the subsidiaries to the organization as a whole. Dividends and royalty payments are not the only means whereby MNCs withdraw profits from a subsidiary. Through control of the transfer prices for goods and services supplied by the parent company or exports to other affiliates MNCs can deprive the host countries. They are in a better position to avoid taxation in a given country than are the national firms. Considerable variation exists in amount of overpricing or underpricing in the cases of exports and imports of goods. Product choices for the subsidiaries are very much limited to those products manufactured in the home country. Newly established subsidiary generally has a large proportion of

locally raised debt if it is a joint venture, but much less if it is wholly-owned. They are selective in appointing local manpower and training them for managerial purposes.⁸ The 'dominant nationality' is important because most of the shareholders of the parent company are likely to share its nationality and because the foreign investment of MNCs is treated as the investment of the country in which the parent is incorporated.⁹ Pena¹⁰ asserts that the foreign policy formulation is not the business only of the foreign ministry while wide range of activities are carried out by different national and nongovernmental agencies. The influence of MNCs in this context may well be understood as far as the bargaining capacity of the host country is concerned. According to Grant, efforts of MNCs are not sufficient to meet the increasing unemployment problem of developing countries.¹¹ Rather, by employing a small elite, semi-skilled, and highly skilled labour force with better salary MNCs create income inequality. It is also a feature that the subsidiary have a strong hold on some extractive or industrial sectors as well as some services in which no effective counterweight mechanism exists. This imbalance along with others create dependency relationship between countries. By operating in the high-profit sectors, MNCs, impede local prospects of entrepreneurship or contribute to their displacement.¹² Singer¹³ delineates the following forms of technology transfer : 'direct investment' to protect existing market ; 'joint venture' as a need for local collaborators to cope with problems to obtain licences and to get sympathetic interpretation of regulations ; 'licencing' as an independent company to use the patents and trade marks of the MNCs. Parent firms prefer to issue licences for goods with short product cycles (e.g., pharmaceuticals) ; 'management controls and sales' to fill up the shortage of skilled personnel in developing countries by providing top-level managerial staff. 'Technical assistance contracts' usually accompany patent or trademark agreements. Technical assistance programmes include product specifications and layouts, formulas, trade-secrets, selling, techniques and training of technical personnel. However, we must not forget the social impact of technology transfer. Thus, another interesting feature is the transfer of productive resources which tend to become important channels for the transfer of consumption pattern and values effecting indigenous life style. The technology transferred might have not been socially assessed and appeared to be detrimental to the local economy. Specially the weaker position and bargaining capacity of the developing countries experience large business network and their unknown policy

matters as dominant economic power with significant socio-political and culture-environmental implications.

MNCs in Bangladesh : The Case of Pharmaceutical Industry

Foreign investment and existence of MNCs in Bangladesh are not very significant in number and volume, but, have a long history since the advent of East India Company in the early half of eighteenth century. The political ascendancy of the said company in Indian sub-continent for a duration of one century is again not insignificant in any sense. During this time the commercialization of Bangladesh agriculture articulated the economy with the international mercantile capitalism. However, we do not have the scope to highlight the detail of foreign investment and cooperation in the later part of British Government and the Pakistan period. Our aim is to focus particularly on the pharmaceutical sector and investment policy of the Bangladesh Government since 1971.

It is well-known that policy of Bangladesh Government on foreign investment underwent changes over time as the governments changed in 1971, 1975, and 1982. Mujib regime put ceiling on private investment and an embargo on foreign collaboration in the private sector. However, foreign private investment was allowed only as a joint venture in the public sector with minority shareholding for the foreign company. Before the policy could be tested, not only the ceiling of Taka 2.5 million (without land) was raised to Taka 30 million, collaboration with private sector was permitted.¹⁴ The modifications initiated by Mujib gained further momentum during Zia's rule as the ceiling was eventually abolished. Ershad's New Industrial Policy in June 1982 subsequently led to formulating strategy to attract foreign investment and privatization on an accelerated scale. MNCs operating in Bangladesh include significant number of pharmaceutical units. For instance, out of the 49 Asian MNCs incorporated in Bangladesh in 15 sectors, 11 are pharmaceutical units of which 10 were established in 1960s and one in 1950s.¹⁵ Pharmaceutical multinational companies originated and expanded in the West long before they got interested in developing countries.

Modern pharmaceutical industry originated in 1890s. The invention of Penicillin and other antibiotics expanded the worldwide demand and market of medicine. Before World War II, there were 1,100 pharmace-

utical companies with \$150 million sale which later increased to thousand million dollar in 1950. Brand name help the big companies to be bigger by swallowing the smaller companies who were using the generic name.¹⁶ In 1950s and '60s MNCs spent 36.14% of their expenditure in marketing and advertisement rather than in research. This led their profit from 10% in 1940s to 73.2% in 1960s. The following table indicates the monopolization of the pharmaceutical industries by MNCs.¹⁷

Distribution of Market Share and Pharmaceutical Companies by Assets

Market share by asset (%)			No. of companies by asset	
Year	Less than 100 million	More than 100 million	Less than 100 million	More than 100 million
1948	77	7	104	1
1958	62	28	130	5
1968	15	83	173	21
1973	7	92	140	30

During the period between 1950 and 1975, pharmaceutical industry became so profitable a business sector that a number of new companies incorporated in the USA. Small manufacturing units were brought by the giant ones. Pharmaceutical market expanded from \$714 million to \$2,199 million between the period of 1949 and 1962. The ways multinational industrial establishments destroy human health can be classified as (a) Alcoholic drinks, (b) Tobacco, (c) Illegal drugs ; (d) Insecticides, (e) Powder milk and baby food, (f) Non-essential, hazardous, and costly medicine, (g) Arms and ammunition, and lastly (h) International loan.¹⁸ So, WHO's objective to ensure "health for all" before 2000 A.D. is always in danger.

Reports and discussion on the imperialist characteristics of the pharmaceutical industry, its production, and experiments came into limelight in the 1970s in Bangladesh. Medical and journalistic reports and views on the exploitative nature of the MNCs operating in pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh augmented the level of general awareness of the negative effect of excessive/unnecessary medicine intake. The Reports of World Health Organization (WHO) in 1970s help a lot to unmask the secrets of profit-making and inhuman activities of the MNCs in the Third World countries. On November 5, 1976 the *Weekly Bichitra* drew attention of the general people to the intrigue behind medicine pro-

duction, distribution, and the guineapig status of the Third World people.¹⁹ The article specifically focused on the profit-making tendency, drug production, and the role of the drug administration in Bangladesh. It is said that the developing nations pay more for the medicine produced in developed countries than the developed countries do. The following table shows an instance in this respect.²⁰ The drug administration in Bangladesh was just established in 1974 and during the time of reporting the administrative capacity of the department was very much limited due to inadequate manpower and technical facilities.

Variation of Price by Countries		
Item	Price	
Vitamin C		
1 kg	\$2.40 (UK)	\$10.00 (India)
Tetracyclin antibiotic	\$24.00-30.00 (Europe)	\$100.00 (India, Pakistan, Columbia)
Penicillin 100 Tab.	\$21.84 (USA)	\$41.85 (Brazil)

However, Bangladesh formulated the National Drug Policy on the 29th May 1982 on the basis of an expert committee report in compliance with the recommendations of WHO reports. WHO prepared a list of essential drugs in its report of 1977²¹ and then they updated the list on the basis of latest available results of research experiments on the produced medicines.²² WHO suggests not more than 350 or 400 items of medicine as essential while countries of Latin America and Asia import items ranging from 15,000 to 20,000 which means 15 billion dollar income for developed nations.²³

Before going to discuss the features of our drug policy, we now reflect upon the multinational character of the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh. The Government's Commerce Ministry is to fix the price of the items of drugs which leaves on an average a 15% to 20% profit to the producer. But 'transfer pricing' helped them increase it from 70% to 100%. They purchase the raw materials from the parent organizations or preferred foreign agencies. According to Dr. Humayun Hye, the former Drug Administrator, the main reason for high price of drugs

is the opportunity enjoyed by the MNCs in purchasing rawmaterials from their chosen places.²⁴ It is repored in 1983 that Bangladesh brings in raw materials for drugs and finished drugs which worth Taka 10 crore and 6 crore per annum respectively.²⁵ Elsewhere it is said that in spite of having 177 licenced pharmaceutical industries the country had to import finished drugs worth Taka 250 to 300 million per annum.²⁶ It is also interesting that in 1980 the cost of imported raw materials was 38 times more than the cost of imported finished drugs.²⁷ In 1982 the drug market in Bangladesh was of Taka 140-192 crore ; and only 8 MNCs controlled 80% of the market.²⁸ To illustrate the transfer pricing we can mention that while in 1970s the international competitive market price of raw materials for Tetracyclin was in between 7 and 15 US dollar, then the MNCs of the Third World countries brought it from their parent organizations at the rate of \$100 to \$275.²⁹ Variations of the prices (in 1979) with reference to some pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh may be mentioned as follows : \$161.80, \$80.36, \$53.76, \$42.00, \$33.00, \$22.50 and \$25.00. The last two figures are the prices in 1983 and 1984. In addition to the transfer pricing, strip-use is also another way of making undue profit which, for instance, in case of one Paracetamol tablet increases 2.71% of the same item without strip.³⁰ The 'brand name' is a very tacit weapon to exploit the ignorance of common men. In Bangladesh 80% to 85% drugs are sold in brand name. Other than profit making, the brand naming may bring about serious mistakes for the users and practitioners. For instance, Diazepam is available in 30 brand names in Bangladesh.³¹

It is found that in Bangladesh reinvested earnings is the major foreign private investment while capital equipment brought in is still not a significant element in the investment structure.³² There is no example of further capital investment by the MNCs, instead, they remit a larger part of the profit outside the country.³³ It indicates that not their own capital rather profit is responsible for the expansion of business. Even the reinvested amount is an insignificant part of the total profit made from their business in the developing world. Bangladesh is not an exception. The following table³⁴ shows the rate of profit on the first capital investment of multinational pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh. The name of the companies are available in the original source. MNCs produce 80% of the drugs produced in Bangladesh. A number of companies have no manufacturing unit of their own. They

labelled some drugs produced by other companies under some sorts of agreement. People bear the cost of advertisement, seminar, and conferences organized by the pharmaceutical companies since these consequent upon price hike.³⁵

Nature of Profit Made by the Companies (in lac)

Own capital	Position of business in 1980	Declared profit in 1975	Annual rate of profit on their own investment
5.0004	140.0	139.0	2574%
6.0005	1150.0	109.0	1677%
14.3	1050.0	121.0	846%
45.0	1200.0	114.0	253%
114.0	2000.0	288.0	253%
41.5	1100.0	Estimated to be bigger than the former	
21.0	500.0		
8.8	500.0		

Towards a Durg Policy

The Chief Martial Law Administrator's Advisory Council resolved to formulate a national drug policy on 24 April 1982. An Expert Committee was thereby created under the Chairmanship of Professor Nurul Islam to report on the matter of the important national issue relating to the production, distribution, and consumption of drugs in the country. The Committee submitted its report on 12 May, 1982. Health Advisor to the CMLA made it public on 7 June 1982. Consequently, Drug (Control) Ordinance 1982 came into force from 12 June 1982. In the period between 12 June and 7 September 1982, government came under pressure from vested interest groups and lobbies of national and international character. The patrons of multinational corporations and their local allies applied full force for securing their business interest attacked by the Ordinance. They even stopped marketing and selling medicines which are essential for the dangerous diseases like Malaria, Cholera, and Tuberculosis. U.S. government threaten to deprive the Government of Bangladesh of foreign aid.³⁶ Richard Holbrook, the Far Eastern Director for U.S. Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (USPMA), may be quoted as saying that: 'I and a number of company officials will be going to Dacca to discuss with the government the U.S. industry position on the policy'.

We are trying to set up a review committee to examine the policy'.³⁷ Ralf Lieberman of U.S. State Department also commented in the same language.³⁸ Bush, the then U.S. Vice President told 300 industrialists from over 33 countries who attended the eleventh meeting of the International Foundation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association that "The regulatory impulse, the slow slide towards more and more centralization, towards statism must be stopped."³⁹ However, people and organizations of high ethical sense of value could not fail to hail the policy launched by the poorest country from its weakest position in the international 'capitalist empire'. Health Action International says, for instance, that "We hope the Bangladesh Government will not be swayed by pressure from U.S. Government and multinational drug companies to weaken this important step toward improved health for Bangladesh's population."⁴⁰ Recently David Bergman said that the drug policy was a progressive move against the power of U.S. Pharmaceutical multinationals. He also added that it had gained the total support of foreign development organizations including Oxfam, War on Want, and the WHO.⁴¹ About the general public reaction, we may only say that unlike the Education Policy of 1983 or Health Policy 1990 people of any section did not want to resist it. Anyway, on 6 July 1982 CMLA constituted a review committee and on the basis of its report submitted on 12 August 1982, government promulgated Drug (Control) (Amendment) Ordinance 1982 extending time limit upto June 1984 to allow production and marketing of some already banned items of drugs. The major features of the drug policy include assessments of the all available drugs in the market on the basis of 12 scientific-medical criteria and 4 socio-economic criteria. The drugs were classified into three categories : (1) Drugs which are medically detrimental. Their production was banned (e.g., Novalzin, Maxaform, Enabolic Steroid) ; (2) Drugs of useless composition which were suggested to be produced with only the useful elements ; (3) (a) Drugs of least or no medicinal value and (b) Drugs of minimum medicinal value produced by MNCs who have no locally established factory. They produce these on contract basis from local factory while these are also produced by some other local companies or are imported. Production of all drugs of this category was banned. The Expert Committee examined 150 items of 4170 different brand names registered or licensed for production in Bangladesh. Out of 4170, 1707 were declared nonessential and were banned, though, later the number reduced to 1666 as the review committee recommended.

Moreover, government allowed the non-essential drugs to be transferred to other Third World countries.⁴² It is quite unethical in any sense of the term and the country had to compromise with the donors. However, the pressure of the MNCs and problem of fixing price are still under evolution.⁴³ Withdrawal of the proposed health policy of 1990 and the change of the government in the same year may have new impact on the policy matter in the future. The protest against the education policy in 1983 was the beginning of protests of the students against Martial Law and later we observed the protest of the doctors against the health policy in 1990 when the government's suffering from cronic 'illegitimacy disease' took incurable turn. However, the future may better appreciate the pros and cons of the protests apart from their political content.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Beside the pharmaceutical sector, there are other areas where the MNCs operating in the country (e.g., electronics, tea, tobacco, beverage, food-processing, cosmetics, toiletries). But what is important is to analyse the phenomenon of MNCs in the context of our labour-surplus and resource-poor economy. Other than economic cost/benefit analysis, the sociological spotlight on the issue deserve intensive consideration. We would try to do so hereinafter. Whatever may be the present or future volume of operation of the MNCs in the country, we must envisage the all-round sociocultural impact of such activities from practical as well as ideological view point. We must observe the sectors where the MNCs are interested and the socio-economic cost to be paid for the expected return from that. Dependists interpret MNCs in terms of transferring consumption pattern of advanced capitalist countries to underdeveloped poor countries. The relationship of that phenomenon with the larger question of dependence has reflected on the broader perspective of socio-cultural dependence of the developing nations. MNCs are frequently seen as agents of transferring consumption pattern, taste, habits, and demand from the 'center' to the 'peripheral' countries as an important mechanism for the maintenance of dependent relationships among nominally independent countries.⁴⁵ Here, we may draw some instance from our context. The fast growing habits of having soda water (Coca-Cola, 7 Up, etc.) at the cost of Taka 7.00 per bottle has no logic but the extra pressure on the middle class family budget. Consider the case of using synthetic rope in spite of natural

fiber like jute or other non-wood forest products. Immediately after liberation war of 1971 foreign consumer goods were very scarce and people at that time were almost accustomed to common goods available in the market. But gradually the situation changed with the inflow of foreign luxury goods. The wants created and the way they are being fulfilled at high cost are worthy of re-evaluating for the development of the down-troddens. Many local products could not survive at the advent of foreign species. In the name of open market competition for quality raising, local cosmetics, traditional medicine, textiles, etc. are replaced by the branded items of worldwide repute, though not always essential. These imported goods attract solvent people only because the products are of good name and fame but they are costly enough to symbolize the costly life-style — a fashion now creates another dimension of socio-cultural inequality and thereby a sense of deprivation among a section of people. Needless to say, the exhibitionist philosophy of the newly rich exerts disfunctional effect on the social fabric.

In fine, we may conclude that not only the regulations and cautions are enough to implement the nationalist policy like that of drug. Measures should be taken from our consciousness to prevent any alien activities subjugating indigenous economic growth, socio-cultural heritage, and the potential patriotism. However, we must be aware of the following facts :

1. that MNCs in Bangladesh are not undesirable ; it is always welcomed, provided, the bargaining favours national economy and local entrepreneurship through appropriate technology, skill developments, and quality transfer ;
2. that they do not increase income inequality to an undesirable margin without fulfilling the objective of employment generation ;
3. that the MNCs do not displace local and traditional manufacturing potential (e.g., Aurvedic, Unani, Homoeopathy) ;
4. that the local resources and national interests are not hampered in the name of development cooperation ;
5. that the land is not used for unethical experiments and that the production, distribution, and consumption do not detrimentally affect the policy of environmental sustenance ;

6. that whether our social context of technology assessment capacity is wider enough to include diverse issues like 'Gripe Water', 'Soda Water', and 'Ground Water'.

NOTES

1. N.H. Jacoby, "The Impact of Multinational Corporations", *Dialogue*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1971.
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3. Stephen Hymer, "The Multinational Corporation and the Law of Uneven Development", in Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin (eds.), *Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies"*, Macmillan Publisher Ltd., London, 1982.
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8. United Nations, *op. cit.*
9. H. Singer and J. Ansari, *Rich and Poor Countries*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982, p. 198.
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11. J.P. Grant, "Marginal Men in Developing Nations", *Dialogue*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1972.
12. Erb and Kallab, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-69.
13. H. Singer and J. Ansari, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
14. Rehman Sobhan and Muzaffer Ahmad, *Public Enterprise in an Intermediate Regime*, BIDS, Dacca, 1980.
15. Muzaffer Ahmad, "Transnational Corporations from Asian and Pacific Developing Economies in Bangladesh", paper presented at the BEA Biannual Conference held in Dhaka, July 14-16, 1988.
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standard of a particular medicine produced by a particular company. It happened in 1950. The Durham-Humphrey Amendment of 1951 was passed in the U.S. Congress to institutionalize the use of 'Brand Name'. Later, Anti-substitution Law came into existence to enforce the use of brand name and to ban selling medicine of different names but of equal standard.

17. *Ibid.*
18. Talk given by David Werner, 16th Annual International Health Conference, National Council for International Health, Arlington, Virginia, 18-21 June, 1989, translated in *Masik Gonoshastha*, Vol. 8, No. 1, January 1991.
19. Farukh Faisal and Anu Mohammad's articles on the imperialist character of drug business in contemporary world and in Bangladesh, *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 5, No. 23, 5 November, 1976.
20. Gono Prakashony, *Proyogito Aushad* (Essential Drugs), Bangla translation with introduction of The Use of Essential Drugs, WHO Technical Report Series 685 (1983), Gonoshastha Kendra, Savar, Dhaka, 1984.
21. WHO, *The Selection of Essential Drugs*, (Technical Report Series 615), 1977.
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23. David Werner, *op. cit.*
24. *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 10, No. 49, 14 May 1982.
25. Anu Mohammad, *op. cit.* In another estimate it is Taka 70 to 80 crore, see Mahfuz Ullah and Kazi Zawad, 'Cover Story', *The Weekly Bichitra*, 6 August 1982.
26. M. Shamsul Huq. "New Drug Policy", *The Bangladesh Times*, 7 November 1982.
27. Government of Bangladesh, *Import Figures of Pharmaceutical Raw Materials for 1980*.
28. *Tribune*, 16 July 1982, see the *Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 11, No. 11. The 8 companies are : Pfizer, Glaxo, Fissons, BPI, Hoechst, Squibb, Organon, and ICI, Diana Melrose, *Medicines and the Poor in Bangladesh*, cited in the *Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 11, No. 11.
29. Gono Prakashony, *op. cit.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Viz., Camphose, Calmose, Dipipam, Dizep, Easium, Fizepam, Inzepam, Orinil, Pharmapam, Relaxen, Relium, Sebaxin, Sedalin, Sedate, Sedetil, Sedil, Sedium, Seditone, Sedopam, Sedulin, Seduzen, Sequil, Sudex, Strenil, Therapam, Tranquil, Unipam, Valin, Valium. It is more dangerous when different

medicines are branded with almost similar name which may cause serious consequences. A letter in the *Daily Sangbad* (February 24, 1991) drew readers attention to an instance which mentioned the following brand names : Ambexin (Amoxicillin), Ampexi (Ampicillin), Zymet (Pancreatin), Dimet (Cimitidin), Ultrafen (Diclofenac), Ultrapen (Amoxillin), Loperin (Loperamide), Ceporin (Cephalexin), Peridol (Haloperidol), Ceridol (Paracetamol), Cural (Anti-allergic), Sural (Ethambutol), Indiral (Propranolol), Incidal (Mekhydrolin). It appears from the above instances that drug companies have no concern for mass awareness, instead, they want to keep the patients, doctors, and drugs in separate compartments for the sake of business.

32. Muzaffer Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
33. Nazrul Islam, *Bangladesher Unyayan Samasya* (Problem of Development in Bangladesh), Jatiyo Sahitya Prokashony, Dhaka, 1987, p. 86.
34. Gono Prakashony, *op. cit.*, p. 19. The figures are taken from *Consumers' Voice*, March 1982. *Lancet*, and *Drugs' Pusher*, London.
35. Mahfuz Ullah and Kazi Zawad, *op. cit.*
36. David Werner, *op. cit.*
37. *Multinational Monitor*, August 1982.
38. *Multinational Monitor*, September 1982.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. David Bergman, "Bangladesh's Opening for a New Beginning," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 26, No. 7, February 16, 1991.
42. Gono Prakashony, *op. cit.* *Lancet* cautioned : "The power of the multinationals is great and the stakes are high. In the past, government and their ministries have sometime yielded to pressure. If government brings its new policy to fruition, the message will not be lost on other parts of the Third World", 19 June, 1982, cited in *Gono Prakashony, op. cit.*, p. 26. Minister for Health and Family Planning says that the government wishes to put ban on selling four types of drugs. He also added that if the multinationals fail to produce drug here they would not be allowed to marketing and local industries might be allowed to produce Antacid and Vitamins exclusively. Report on a Seminar, *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 19, No. 5, June 15, 1990. The above report reflect the delay of the decisions taken in 1982.
43. Report on the disagreement on fixing price of drugs, *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 15, No. 1, May 1986 ; some companies are still adopting unfairmeans

- for making high profit, *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 15, No. 36, 6 March 1987. It is also reported that a number of banned items are smuggled into Bangladesh from India, Dr. Zafarullah Chowdhury, First National Conference of Drug Action Forum, West Bengal, 20 January, 1985, see for details: *Masik Gonoshastha*, Vol. 4, Nos. 5 & 6, Aug-Sept., 1985.
44. See *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol. 18, No 51, 11 May 1990, for justification of a Health Policy in Bangladesh following the success of the National Drug Policy of 1982 ; in another issue the *Weekly Bichitra* categorically reviewed the positions of government and Bangladesh Medical Association which clearly indicated the irrational elements of the protest by BMA against a novel beginning for greater well-being. The supports of the political parties to BMA's movement do not justify the proposed policy's total rejection by the masses. Even the policy was not rejected by the junior doctors ; see : *The Weekly Bichitra*, Vol.19, No. 12, 3 August 1990.
 45. S.J Kobrin, Multinational Corporations, Socio-Cultural Dependence, and Industrialization : Need Satisfaction or Want Creation ? *The Journal of Developing Areas*, January, 1979.

for making high profits. The Weekly Bishwa Vol. 12, No. 28, 6 March 1967. It is also reported that a number of banned items are smuggled into Bangladesh from India. Dr. Ziaur Rahman Chowdhury, First National Conference of Drug Action Group, West Bengal, 10 January 1967. See for details: *Weekly Bishwa*, Vol. 12, Nos. 2 & 3, Aug 20th, 1967.

20. See *The Daily Bishwa*, Vol. 12, No. 21, 11 May 1967 for discussion of a 'Health Policy' in Bangladesh following the success of the National Drug Policy of 1962. In another issue the *Daily Bishwa* categorically rejected the positions of government and Bangladesh Medical Association which clearly indicated the ideological elements of the process by BMA against a novel beginning for greater well-being. The support of the political parties to BMA's movement do not justify the proposed policy's total rejection or the success. Even the policy was not rejected by the former doctors: see *The Weekly Bishwa*, Vol. 12, No. 17, 3 August 1966.

21. K. R. Ghosh, *International Corporations, Social Cultural Dependence, and Industrialization: Need Satisfaction or Want Creation?* The Journal of Economic Studies, January, 1972.

Education Among The Jalo Das – A Hindu Fishing Caste of The Coastal Area of Chittagong, Bangladesh

A.F. Imam Ali

In the study of social inequality, education has been considered as the most important social indicator by many scholars (Plato (1948), Aristotle (1943), Clark (1962), Moore (1963), Leibenstein (1965), Anderson (1968), Coleman (1965), Dreeben (1968), Bourdieu (1972), Freire (1972), Illich (1971), Reimer (1971), Goodman (1971), D'Souza (1964), Sharma (1979) and others). To deal with this variable, the contemporary scholars are divided into two schools — the functionalist and the radical. The former school considers education as a means for promoting development while the later school looks at education as an important means for retarding development. The functionalist school, to point out, is divided into two sub-schools — economic and sociological. A few scholars belonging to the economic school, considers education as an input for economic development (Libenslein (1965), Anderson (1968), Streeton (1971). While other economists (Malthus, Mill and Senior) take a different view— education is only indirectly relevant to economic development. The sociological views expressed in the writings of various scholars (Clark (1962), Moore (1963), Coleman (1965), Dreeben (1968), recognize education as an engine for socio-psychological change in different countries particularly, in the underdeveloped countries like ours.

The advocates of radical school (Bourdieu (1972), Freire (1972), Goodman (1971), Reimer (1971), Illich (1971) and others) strongly argued that education in an important means for oppression because, it plays a very negative role by maintaining the *status quo* of the society. For bringing a desirable change in the society these scholars gave a call for a 'deschooling society'. However, in order to resolve the controversy built around the role of education it can be said that it (education) has

no independent role. It can neither promote nor retard development because the educational institutions are determined by the general structural conditions of the society.

However, social structure and education are related to each other and this kind of relationship has been observed by many scholars (D'Souza (1964), Freire (1972), Reimer (1971). Dealing with education, D'Souza has divided human societies into two types. In one type, education is an independent variable and social structure is a dependent one. While in another type, education is a dependent variable while the social structure is an independent one. In the societies like ours, education is a dependent variable where the educational levels of the individuals are largely determined by the socio-economic conditions of their parents. That is, the individuals belonging to higher strata get better opportunity for achieving higher education than those belonging to lower strata (Ali, 1983, 1987, 1987a). Similar observation is made by Sohi (1977:257), Jain (1975-72) and others in different Indian villages which corresponds with the typology made by D'Souza (1964) in which education is a dependent variable.

From the foregoing discussions an attempt has been made in the present article to study educational status among the respondents, their fathers and grandfathers of a socially neglected Hindu fishing caste — Jalo Das.

Methodology

Relevant information was collected by administering an 'interview schedule' consisted of both structured and unstructured questions. However, to supplement data, observational technique was also used whenever necessary. A particular village, which is 9 kilometers away from Chittagong city, located just on the Bay of Bengal, was selected purposively. For drawing samples, some information about the heads of the households was obtained by conducting a 'house-to-house' survey.

In the present study, the head of the household was treated as the basic unit (respondent) to furnish data. In the village, in all, there were 59 heads of the households. Several attempts were made to obtain information from all heads of the households. Some of them were not available so ultimately we could obtain information from 53 respondents. In this context it may not be irrelevant to point out that the members of this fishing caste group are physically separated not only from the Muslims

but also from their own caste groups. This aspect can be related with the exclusiveness of caste. Moreover, unlike other members of this village, the fishermen (Jalo Das) are found to pursue their hereditary occupation (fishing). Another important feature of this caste group is that intimate, casual and also the economic interactions are mostly restricted within themselves. This kind of social interactions have created exclusivism which as already mentioned, is expressed in the physical structure of the village.

However, with a view to showing the educational status of the respondents relevant data shown in Table 1. A close look at data shows that among this fishing caste 52.8 per cent are found to be uneducated while the remaining 47.2 per cent are educated¹ ranging from primary to S.S.C and H.S.C.² levels. A study conducted among the Bangladesh village reveals that 31.6 per cent are uneducated (Ali, 1987a:70) showing that literacy rate is much higher among the Baruas than among the members of this fishing caste.

TABLE 1
Educational status of the respondents

Un-educated	Primary class 1-5	Middle class 6-10	S.S.C+ H.S.C.	Graduation+ Post-graduation	Total
28 (52.8)	18 (34.0)	3 (5.7)	4 (7.5)	—	53 (100.00)

In this connection, attempt is also made to see the educational status of the respondents households.³ Relevant data furnished in Table 2 indicate that among this fishing caste relatively greater number of the respondents (66.%) are in 'just-educated' households.⁴ Similar observation is also made by the present author in different Bangladesh villages (Ali, 1983, 1987a). A further look at data shows that 24.5 per cent of the respondents belong to 'un-educated' households but none belongs to 'highly educated' category. In this connection we can recall our attention to the fact that education is a dependent variable and scope for achieving education is relatively higher among the persons belonging to higher caste (Ali, 1983, 1987, 1987a) and no effective measure has been made to minimize the gap between the higher and the lower castes.

TABLE 2
Educational status of the respondents' households

Uneducat- ed house- holds (Score 0)	Just educated households (Score 0.1-1.0)	Moderately educated households (Score 1.1-2)	Educated households (Score 2.1-3.0)	Highly educated households (Score 3.1 and above)	Total
13 (24.5)	35 (66.0)	4 (7.5)	1 (2.0)	—	53 (100.0)

In a stratified society where education is a dependent variable it is usually found that members of all the households cannot equally send their children to educational institutions. Similar observation is made among the fishermen of this fishing caste. That is, in some households, no child goes to school; in other households, some children are found to have attended the educational institutions; still in some other households all children go to educational institutions. It was also observed that in some households there were 'no school-going' children and these are placed in 'not applicable' category. Relevant data on this aspect are shown in Table 3. It is found that in this caste group relatively greater number of

TABLE 3
Distribution of households with respect to school-going children

No child is going to school	Some children are going to school	All child- ren are going to school	Not applicable	Total
12 (22.6)	13 (24.5)	21 (39.6)	7 (13.3)	53 (100.0)

the households are placed in educational category-4 (All children are going to school). But in another village relatively greater number of the respondents' households (21.0%) are found to be in 'some children are going to school' category (Ali, 1983:180-81). It may be pointed out that for this caste group the 'Community Development Centre' — a non-government organization has established an informal school in June, 1986. In this school only Bengali and Mathematics upto the level of class two, are taught by the teachers appointed by this organization.⁵

As already mentioned, some social scientists considered education as an important means for social and occupational mobility. As a result, parents prefer to give some education to their children. Data with respect to the educational preference shown by the respondents for their sons and daughters are given in Table 4. It is found that relatively greater number of the respondents pointed out that they want to educate their children to 'any level' depending on their own economic ability and children intellectual ability. One can further see that among the respondents only 1.9 per cent mentioned that they do not like to give education to their sons while the corresponding percentages for the daughters are 15.1. This categorically, shows that in this respect higher preference was given to sons than to daughters. As far as higher education (S.S.C to post-graduation) is concerned one can see similar trend. Similar observation is also made by Rahim (1970) and Ali (1983, 1985, 1987, 1987a) in different Bangladesh villages. This trend is not difficult to explain if one takes into account the traditional social structure which ensures better opportunity for the males than the females for pursuing gainful economic activities. In this respect the religious factor is no less important.

TABLE 4
Levels of education preferred by the respondents for sons and daughters

	Not to educate	Any level	Primary	S.S.C. H.S.C.	Graduation and Post-graduation	Total
Son	1 (1.9)	28 (52.8)	1 (1.9)	19 (35.8)	4 (7.6)	53 (100.0)
Dau- ghter	8 (15.1)	18 (34.0)	15 (28.3)	11 (20.7)	1 (1.9)	53 (100.0)

It is true that in a country like ours a large number of the people can not send their children to educational institutions mostly for economic inability. However, the respondents are asked to mention the reasons for sending children to educational institutions and for the purpose of analysis the respondents are allowed to give more than one response. From relevant data furnished in Table 5 one can easily observe that among other factors economic one is the major contributor.

The educational institutions functioning in the society can roughly be divided into two major categories — secular and religious. It is usually found that some people are interested in secular educa-

TABLE 5
Reasons for sending children to educational institutions as mentioned
by the respondents

Better job	Social status	For earning more money	Better marriage	Economic security in old age	To acquire knowledge about society	Total
13 (15.8)	12 (14.6)	21 (25.6)	12 (14.6)	7 (8.6)	17 (20.8)	82 (100.0)

tion while others show interest in religious education and still there are some individuals who have interest for both the types. However, to know the attitude of the respondents to various types of educational institutions to be attended by their children data are obtained and furnished in Table 6. One can see that among this Hindu fishing caste relatively greater number of the respondents (52.8%) had shown interest for 'secular' institution while 37.8 per cent pointed out that their children should get both the types of education. That is, secular education for the present life and the religious type for the life after death. One can see that among this fishing caste relatively lesser preference was given by the respondents to 'religious' institution because in the present context secular education can raise the material conditions of the people more when compared with the religious education.

TABLE 6
Educational institutions preferred by the respondents for their children

Secular	Religious	Secular and Religious	Total
28 (52.8)	5 (9.4)	20 (37.8)	53 (100.0)

With a view to showing the inter-generational educational mobility, if any, a comparison between the respondents and their fathers are made. Relevant data furnished in Table 7 reveal that among the Hindu-fishermen 58.5 per cent could not record any change in this respect but 37.7 per cent had changed their education to a higher direction while 3.8 per cent showed a down-ward trend. In another village 47.0 per cent could not

change their education but the remaining 53.0 per cent changed their education either to higher or lower directions (Ali, 1985:55).

TABLE 7

Educational status of fathers by the educational status of the respondents

Same education as that of the fathers	Higher to fathers	Lower to fathers	Total
31 (58.5)	20 (37.7)	2 (3.8)	53 (100.0)

Data with respect to the educational status of the respondents and their grandfathers are obtained and shown in Table 8. A careful look at data show that among the Hindu-fishermen educational status of 52.8 per cent remained in static position while the remaining 47.2 per cent have changed their educational status to both the directions — higher and lower.

TABLE 8

Educational status of the grandfathers by the educational status of the respondents

Same education as that of grandfathers	Higher to grandfathers	Lower to grandfathers	Total
28 (52.8)	24 (45.3)	1 (1.9)	53 (100.0)

Concluding remarks

In the conclusion it can be said that the traditional social structure of our country has been gradually changing and in the changing process education is a dependent variable. For, the literacy rate, as defined in the present article, among the respondents of this socially neglected fishing caste group, has not increased over the last three generations (respondents, their fathers and grandfathers). Though respondents' educational status increased to some extent when compared with that of the grandfathers but this trend came down in respondent's generation as compared with that of the fathers. Another interesting finding is that from 22.6 per cent households of this caste group, no child goes to school mostly for

economic crisis. Moreover, 24.5 per cent households of the respondents belong to 'un-educated' category. All these show that the goals with respect to establishing a uniform, mass oriented and universal education and extending free and compulsory education for all citizens have not been achieved till to-date. Rather, the situation has become grave particularly for the socially neglected caste groups like this. If we really mean to ensure equal educational opportunity for all citizens then we must take immediate steps to change the existing social structure based on exploitation.

NOTES

1. In the present study, an individual who can either read or write his name only is considered as a literate person.
2. S.S.C. refers to Secondary School Certificate while H.S.C stands for Higher Secondary Certificate.
3. A household is a group of persons who live together and take their meals from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work prevents them from doing so.
4. For determining the educational status of the households information on educational status of the members of respondents households is obtained and various weightages from 1 to 5 are assigned to different educational categories namely, (i) Primary (Score-1), (ii) Middle (Score-2), (iii) S.S.C.+ H.S.C (Score-3), (iv) Graduation (Score-4), and (v) Post Graduation (Score-5). To ascertain the educational status of the households, the total score obtained by the members of the households was divided by its effective members. Individuals — both male and female living in the households from age 6 and above, are taken to be the effective members. Finally, for determining the actual educational status, the households are divided into the following five categories : (i) Uneducated households (score-0), (ii) Just educated-households (score 0.1-1.0), (iii) Moderately educated households (score 1.1-1.2), (iv) Educated households (score 2.1-3.0) and (v) Highly educated households (3.1 and above.)
5. The members of this fishing caste live in 'South Selimpur' and this village has only one primary school and a Madrasah. The Madrasah is exclusively attended by the Muslim students giving rise to social exclusivism. On the other hand, the primary school is attended by the students belonging to the two religious groups — Muslims and the Hindus. From this fishing caste

none goes to primary school but 45 male and 26 female students are presently attending the informal school established by 'Community Development Centre' in the *Jele-para*.

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Social Welfare Legislation In Bangladesh: An Analysis*

M.A. Halim

The basis of much of the social welfare legislation** relating to Bangladesh was established during the period of British colonial administration in the Indian subcontinent. By the time of the departure of the British in 1947 the foundation of almost all social welfare legislative provisions had been well laid. During the colonial period, particularly around the middle of the nineteenth century, social welfare legislative activity enlarged and widened the role of the public sector in social welfare, increasing and broadening government responsibility for the provision of meeting the needs of different vulnerable target groups in society. Thus, the legislative initiative which began in the last century gradually evolved, and now we find that the rights of women have been broadened; children and young offenders accorded special status;

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**For the purpose of this paper social welfare legislation refers to legislation relating to family relations, children, offenders of other special groups, health, education, and improvement of economic condition and quality of life of the whole population or a segment of it. Social legislation includes the Reformatory Schools Act, 1876 (Repealed); Criminal Procedure Code, 1898; The Children Act, 1922 (Repealed); The Borstal Schools Act, 1928; The Children Act, 1974; The Probation Offenders Act, 1960; The Children Marriage Restraint Act, 1929; The Factories Act, 1965; The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933; The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961; The Vagrancy Act, 1943; The Rural Poor and Unemployed Relief Act, 1939 (Repealed); The Agricultural Labour (Minimum Wages) Ordinance, 1984.

improved social security measures for some groups established (e.g., mainly for Government and industrial employees), disadvantaged groups (such as, lepers, the mentally ill, and beggars) given special protection and afforded care in the form of various measures. Also attempts have been made to ensure the welfare and protection of children in employment and in relation to their guardians. The legislation which was predominantly of a "residualist" rather than of a "universalist" nature in scope, catered to the needs of varied disadvantaged groups and individuals who were the casualties of society. In general, it could be said that during the post-colonial (post-British) period the thrust of legislative activity pertaining to social welfare followed the well established traditions and patterns of the earlier colonial period.

These legislative provisions, if considered from the perspective of the manner of their enactment and implementation, display some important characteristics, such as gradualism in legislative development, selective coverage of enactments, limited implementation, and selective or arbitrary implementation and lastly generation of considerable conflict about the reform of Muslim personal laws. These characteristics, though not mutually exclusive, are examined here in respect of the legislation enacted in Bangladesh. It should be noted that each of these characteristics does not however relate to the totality of the legislation examined. Consequently, our discussion is perforce selective and draws upon different Acts and Provisions to highlight the argument. It is sometimes the case that a single piece of legislation may be illustrative of more than one characteristic.

In other words, this paper is an attempt to analyse social welfare policy as embodied in relevant legislation through the keyhole of some concepts. Somewhat similar attempts have been made in advanced countries though the contexts of legislative enactments were different (Friedman, 1969; Reich, 1965, Bolderson, 1973). Friedman and Reich used concepts like minimum standard, eligibility, entitlement, morals, privacy, responsibility and beneficiaries and so on for explaining social welfare legislation. Harding and Curran (1979) analysed mental health legislation through some salient characteristics, for example, adequacy of legislation, hospitalisation, categories of mental disorder, rights of the mentally disabled which provided a comparative framework for discussion across nations. Until now there is hardly any such discussion on social welfare legislation in Bangladesh. So, a study of the current social

welfare legislation of Bangladesh on similar line based on the use of the above concepts is expected to increase our critical understanding of legislation.

Firstly, the concept of gradualism is examined in relation to legislation in Bangladesh. The enlargement of public responsibility in welfare has been effected in a characteristically gradual fashion through successive enactments or amendments over a period of time. The net effect of this has been gradual increase and broadening over time of the scope of social welfare provisions. Interestingly, it appears that the welfare content of any given issue has been steadily increased through an extension and enlargement of already existing provisions, rather than by a complete overhaul and review of legislation, which may involve a sharp break with established practice and tradition.

Several examples of gradual change are found in the legislation reviewed. One such example is the gradual and progressive liberalization of the law relating to delinquents and young offenders. The Reformatory Schools Act, 1876 (now repealed) recognised the importance of separating youthful offenders from adult criminals by providing for the establishment of Reformatory Schools. Furthermore, the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 also provided for conditional discharge as well as placements of youthful offenders in reformatories. The Children Act of 1922 (now repealed) proceeded to develop these rudimentary ideas of rehabilitation and individualised treatment by establishing Juvenile Courts for the trial and disposal of youthful offenders. It created new institutions with a view to providing rehabilitative rather than purely punitive treatment to these offenders. Similarly, the Borstal Schools Act of 1928 enlarged the jurisdiction of the Courts to sent young offenders aged between 15-21 years to Borstal Schools for training and reformation. Likewise, the 1974 Children Act, while consolidating and re-enacting the provisions of the earlier Children Act (1922), broadened its scope by incorporating new provisions (e.g., regard for the interest of the child, provision of probation officers). Prior to this, in 1960 the probation of Offenders Ordinance added additional provisions to the Criminal Law of the Country by empowering the Courts to release certain offenders on bond, after admonition, and on probationary supervision. Hence at present delinquents and young offenders occupy a special status under the law in comparison to adult offenders. To take another example, in 1929 under the Child Marriage Restraint Act the age of marriage was fixed at twelve for girls

and sixteen for boys. This was raised to sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys through an amendment in 1961 in order to protect larger numbers of children from marriage at an immature age.

The concept of gradualism is perhaps best illustrated by the Factories Act in the extension of the protection afforded to industrially employed workers, both adults and children. The Factories Act, 1881 excluded children under seven years from employment in industries, while the employment of children between seven and twelve years was restricted to a maximum period of nine hours. Through amendments and re-enactments the Factories Act, 1965 now prohibits the employment of children under fourteen years of age with the object of protecting larger numbers of children from the hazards of industrial employment.

The concept of gradualism which refers to the ways in which legislation has changed through time, does not necessarily account for the nature of these changes or the reasons underlying the gradual improvements. It can be shown that the changes in the legislation were in many instances a product of the reports of various commissions and committees of inquiry (e.g., Indian Jail Committee, Pakistan Law Reform Commission). These reports enabled the Governments to examine legislation in the light of new needs and changes in socio-political situations. As a result, they were able to remedy, at least to a limited extent, some social situations which were considered undesirable by policy makers. In any case, the operation of gradualism in legislative changes shows that social policy in the newly emerging countries of the third world develops in a slow fashion and occupies a secondary place to economic policy. The factors responsible for promoting the introduction of gradual changes in the social welfare legislation is a neglected area of study which lies outside the scope of the present study, but is in need of further investigation.

A second salient characteristic of social welfare legislation is its selective coverage of target groups, i.e., the selective scope of the legislation which is evident, for example, in legislation relating to social security and child labour. It needs to be pointed out that selective coverage as discussed in this context is different to the "selectivity" principle in social policy analysis. The notion of selectivity as used here especially in relation to social security provisions, simply indicates that the major beneficiaries of the social security system are the comparatively

well-off segment of the population. By contrast the concept of selectivity as used in policy analysis e.g., in studies of the "Welfare State", refers mainly to the fact that scarce resources and policy rationality dictate that only those who are in actual need should be the beneficiaries of welfare programmes and services. The term selectivity is, therefore, contrasted with the concept of "universality" which denotes the principle of allocating welfare benefits to all citizens without discrimination on grounds of needs or other special characteristics. Accordingly, such benefits are available as a matter of "social right" and the costs of these benefits and services are charged to general revenue. The choice between "selectivity" and "universality" in "Welfare State" social policies involves questions of eligibility, change for services, incentives, widening choice for citizens and reduction of waste (Robson 1976:26), and is a controversial area which is not directly related to our present purposes.

Social security legislation in Bangladesh is designed primarily for the benefit and protection of the gainfully employed segment of the population, and even within this group, it caters predominantly to the needs of public servants. It thus excludes from its scope the large number of unemployed able bodied men and women, the sick, single mothers and widows who generally live in dire poverty in a poor country such as Bangladesh. The network of mutual and familiar support characteristic of an agricultural society becomes inoperative or non-functional due to the crippling effect of mass poverty and endemic social disorganization. This invariably causes further distress to the underprivileged. At present, social security protection against contingencies of life is in fact, virtually absent for the rural populace who constitute more than eighty per cent of the total population. The conclusion of the ILO on Asian Social Security Systems seems to be largely applicable to the conditions of Bangladesh: "The States with the lowest level of development have the largest farming population and the least social security coverage. Where any form of social security has been constituted, it is limited to wage earners, the more backward the country is, the smaller the percentage is represented by such persons in the total farming population; the inevitable consequence is that the Asian peasants who make up virtually the entire population of the continent — have been left out". ILO 1972:129).

A further example of selective coverage can be found in the laws relating to child labour. In this case, while legislation has prohibited the

employment of children in factories, shops and some other work situations, there is at present no law to prevent the exploitation of child labour in agriculture where the largest number of children are in fact employed. Children are also able to work in other sectors of the economy where casual work is available, e.g., *Minthi* (carriers of goods in bazars, at railway or bus stations) and as bus conductors. Further the Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 has had little effect on one common form of child labour exploitation in rural areas. This relates to a type of pledging of the labour of a child which occurs when parents or guardians "sell" the labour of their children to the relatively well-off farmers on a verbal undertaking that they will receive a repayment in cash or kind for the services rendered by these children.

"Limited implementation" is the third important characteristic of the legislation reviewed. Limited implementation is used here to suggest the practice of token implementation of enactments indicating that certain statutes are enforced in a half hearted or superficial manner in such a way that the desired meaning and intent of the legislation is lost. Consequently, the legislation is ineffectual and devoid of any significance to the intended beneficiaries of the particular legislation. An outstanding example of this phenomenon is the Children Act, 1974 according to which no child can generally be imprisoned for committing an offence. Technically the law requires their detention in a Certified institute for rehabilitative treatment, but the reality is quite different. There exists only one agency called the Training Institute for Juvenile Offenders (the establishment of which is an off-shoot of the implementation of the Act) and the maximum capacity of this institute is 200 delinquents at any given time. As a result the legislative requirement is of little benefit to the vast numbers of juvenile offenders being arrested and convicted every year.

The characteristic of "limited implementation" is also pronounced in the probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960. At present Probation Units are being haphazardly supervised by social workers. Available statistics suggest their operational adequacy is very limited although thousand of cases are available. Again, the existence of only one mental hospital with 400 beds and a couple of lepers asylums for a total population of about 113 million is a dramatic illustration of the fact that there is scarcely any room for implementing the Lunacy Act (1912) and Lepers Act 1898. Finally, "limited implementation" of enactments is glaringly

exemplified by the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance. The prevailing social norms still permit men to practice polygamy and initiate arbitrary divorce. A large number of marriages remain unregistered in rural areas, few divorce cases go to the Arbitration Council and the Arbitration Council generally follows social norms in making decisions regarding polygamy and divorce. Thus, the Ordinance has been implemented to such a limited extent that the great majority of the womenfolk of the country do not get the benefit of this legislation.

In contrast to "limited implementation", another key-characteristic of social welfare legislation is the selective and arbitrary implementation of legislation implying that only some legislation is being implemented seriously. This stands out quite strikingly in the case of the Vagrancy Act of 1943 which has been vigorously implemented with harsh penalty for those violating the Act. The Vagrancy Act has been vigorously enforced since its enactment in 1943, largely to safeguard the city dwellers of Calcutta from the threat of the floating population who besieged the city following the great Bengal Famine (1943). This Act has become in effect an instrument for keeping urban areas free from the undesirable elements called "beggars" and since 1954, this has been frequently applied in urban areas of Bangladesh. During the Famine in 1974 this Act was invoked and rigorously enforced to rid the city of Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh, of beggars (Halim:79-80). The fact that the problem of vagrancy mainly stemmed from a grim unemployment situation exacerbated by the growing agricultural labour force and the failure of the agricultural development programme to generate needed employment, has not been taken into account while formulating this Act. The vagrancy problem in cities is a result of the transformation of rural poverty into urban poverty.

The selective implementation of social welfare legislation as instanced by the Vagrancy Act illustrates the manner in which social welfare legislation is sometimes deployed to serve non-welfare ends. For instance, the motivation underlying the implementation of the Vagrancy Act is largely political. This Act has been implemented mainly in urban areas with the aid of the police, mainly because the Government intended, by keeping vagrants and beggars off the main streets of the cities, to convey an impression that the economy was healthy and well managed. Such an impression would be conducive to enhancing the prestige of the Government. However, this explanation of the possible reasons for the enforce-

ment of the Vagrancy Act is not to suggest that there are no genuine beggars (physically handicapped or professional) who need some kind of care and treatment.

In connection with the selective implementation of legislation it should also be mentioned that some social welfare statutes are either rarely or never implemented. For example, two important enactments viz., the Rural Poor and Unemployed Relief Act, 1939 (Repealed) and the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, merely exist as decorative pieces of legislation. The Child Marriage Restraint Act which, among other things, prohibits marriage of girls below 18 years of age, when empirically investigated, is found to be largely ignored. Again, the Agricultural Labour Ordinance, 1984 is not implemented (Hamid 1988:41). It fixed minimum wage rate for agricultural workers per day at 3.27 kilograms of rice or such amount of money as is equal to this quantity of rice in the local market.

Thus, it appears that a number of laws are not implemented at all or implemented to such a limited extent that they give the impression of token implementation. Many laws exist only within the statute books and in reality have virtually no impact. The legislative provisions authorising services are hardly provided and the rights granted are seldom enjoyed by the underprivileged. Social welfare legislation is observed more in its breach than in its compliance; and in many cases, the implementation and limited or non-implementation of social welfare legislation, depends to a great extent on how much the interests of the dominant groups (i.e., those in control of the state) are served by a particular piece of legislation.

A further characteristic of social welfare legislation, particularly of the Reform of Muslim Personal Law relates to the social conflict it generates or is likely to generate. This conflict mirrors the existing attitudinal differences in regard to fundamental aspects of social relations such as those relating to property and family. It can be said that the majority of people including the *Ulema*¹ and *Mullahs* adopt a traditional perspective opposing changes in the personal laws and are unwilling to follow changes if enacted: Those who support changes are the upholders of a "modernist" view and who from a small minority influenced by western education.

In order to understand the dynamics of law reform in a predominantly Muslim society we need to consider why group attitudes differ and so influence the change or implementation of these personal laws. The controversy surrounding the reform of Muslim Family Law and subsequent reaction to the enactment of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 represent a conflict laden situation charged with arguments and counter-arguments². The substance of these arguments is important for it reflects the attitudes of influential groups who are in a position to affect the formulation of policies in this context.

Two main groups are involved in this conflict, viz., the "traditionalist" and the "modernist". While the subjects concerning family law under discussion vary through time, the nature of the disagreement between these two main groups in society tends to remain constant. "Traditionalists" argue that what is in the Quran cannot be changed since the "law is the command of Allah, and the acknowledged function of Muslim jurisprudence, from beginning, was simply the discovery of the terms of that command". (Coulson, 1964:16). They argue further that the divine law as contained in the Quran is an eternally valid standard of conduct. Society must conform to the divine law for it "precedes and is not preceded by society" (Coulson:16). Any change in the religious law, therefore, confronts "traditionalists" with a fundamental challenge to their beliefs.

On the other hand "modernists" put forward the argument that the principles of the Quran should be interpreted in the light of the needs of the contemporary society. They argue that such interpretation is legitimate and desirable and that no Muslim should believe that Islam is incapable of meeting the challenges of evolutionary forces (Coulson, 1957:153). The adaptation of Muslim religious laws to meet new conditions is seen as an endeavour to exercise "*Ijtihad*", i.e., independent judgement in interpreting *sharia*. It was accepted among the *sunnite* (followers of the Sunni School of Law) that the gate of *Ijtihad* was closed by the beginning of the fourth century after the origin of Islam, for it was assumed that the great jurists had given a final shape to Islamic jurisprudence.

The Marriage Commission³ on whose report the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance was largely based "accepts the principle of *Ijtihad* and does not consider the laws and injunctions of Islam to be inflexible and

unchangeable....." (Coulson, 1957:136-37). The social principles which necessitated the change of family laws were seen to be the granting of social justice to oppressed women, and the recognition of equality between the sexes and of the rights of women (Pakistan Times, 1954, Sec. 6). The "modernists" views regarding the need for change in the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Laws have been well expressed by the then President Ayub Khan, the legislator behind the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, in the following words, "...we must devise such ways and means of practical life which are compatible with the laws of God and are acceptable to the present day mind ... to liberate religion from the debris of wrong superstitions and prejudices and to make it keep pace with the march of time" (Pakistan Times, 1961:June 12).

Though the "modernists" interpret the *Sharia* from a social point of view, their interpretation, it is argued, is also construed within a framework of divine injunction. The crux of their problem is the relation of divine laws to the demands of modern life and notions of family. The nature of the conflict between the "traditionalist" and the "modernist" is succinctly pointed out by Abbot:

"It is not that his (i.e., traditionalist's) arguments are less rational, nor his earnestness less profound, it is only that the starting point of his thinking is theological, while the starting point of the modernist, usually is social or individualistic" (1962:31).

The arguments and counter-arguments, which were advanced concerning the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, are still prevalent in Bangladesh. If any attempt is made in the future to bring about fundamental changes in the Muslim Family Law, similar arguments are likely to be generated, since the groups involved are still very active. The Muslims of Bangladesh can broadly be divided between elitist groups (consisting of people who enjoy considerable social prestige and are capable of influencing the formulation and implementation of Muslim Family Law) and the masses. Within the elitist groups a distinction can be made between the *Ulema* and the *Mullahs* on the one hand and the western educated on the other.

The *Ulema* and *Mullahs* are the products of the *Madrasah* where religious teaching is imparted on orthodox lines. They are given special instructions on the *Quran* and *Sharia* which they regard as their

exclusive scholastic field. They appear to be nearer to the masses, particularly the villagers. Each village has at least one mosque where the *Ulema* and *Mullahs* either lead prayer or impart scriptural teaching to the children and thus have special opportunity to exercise influence over the masses. The "masses" who are assumed to form ninety per cent of the population, live in the villages. At least eighty per cent of them are illiterate. They accept the *Sharia* in its orthodox mould without questions. In contrast to the *Ulema* or *Mullahs* and the general masses, the western educated Muslims are a product of the modern educational system. They are affected by such western notions as the inviolability of the nuclear family, the sanctity of the individual, and the equality of sexes. This westernized group contains a substantial proportion of women as well.

Thus, the *Ulema* and *Mullahs* are generally "traditionalist" while the western educated Muslims are likely to be "modernist" due to the influence of a divergent educational system which creates different values about life, society and religion. These groups are therefore likely to clash over the reform of Muslim Personal Law. Further, if family law is reformed it is seldom obeyed (e.g., Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961), for the masses appear closer to the *Ulema* and *Mullahs* than to the western educated Muslims both in thinking and ways of life. The prospects of ameliorating the conditions of women particularly rural women, are therefore remote.

More generally, the utility and usefulness of social welfare legislation can, at least partially, be best understood in the context of the widely recognised social control function of the law. It has been stated that:

"Law is a specialised form of social control which brings pressure to bear upon each man in order to constrain him to do his part in upholding civilized society and deter him from anti-social conduct, that is, conduct at variance with the postulates of social order" (Quinney, 1978:40).

Within this control function of law social welfare legislation, particularly that which relates to delinquents, young offenders, neglected children and different disadvantaged groups, performs an explicit function for the maintenance of social order. Since colonial times criminal

law has been progressively humanized to include rehabilitative provisions ; disadvantaged groups are also subjected to ameliorative treatment measures. The aim appears to be the protection of society from the effects of poverty and deviance. However, it is admitted that much of this legislation is not implemented properly, but can be invoked when necessary.

Although social welfare legislation performs some function as a means of social control, the primary task of looking after the needy, the disabled, the sick and the old is left to voluntary groups and to families. The whole idea of social welfare is conceptualized and formulated in terms of self-help and voluntary action. The limited role of the state is well illustrated by the institutional social welfare services run by the Social Service Department of the Government of Bangladesh (see table below).

Institutional Social Welfare Services run by the Government of Bangladesh

Programme	Number
Government Shishu Sadan	70
Shishu Nibas (Baby Home)	63
Blind, Deaf and Dumb School	12
Training and Rehabilitative Centre for Blind	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Project for the Disable	1
Rural Vocational Rehabilitation Sub-centre for the Retarded	4
Destitute Women Weaving Training and Production Centre	1
National Centre	1
Socio-Economic Training Centre for the Women	2
Pre-vocational Training Centre	5
Training and Rehabilitation Centre for the Destitute Children	1
Training and Rehabilitation Centre for Vagrants	6
Day Care Centre	1
Integrated Blind Training Project	47

Source : এক নজরে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম, সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর প্রকাশিত, ১৯৮৯।

In the present context of widespread unsatisfied needs among vast numbers of people in Bangladesh, familial and voluntary care seem to be unrealistic and large scale Government intervention to be urgently needed. Current legislation hardly provides any support for socio-economically

disadvantaged groups. Lepers, the mentally ill, and vagrants are the targets of custodial legislation which does not even touch the fringe of the problem. Moreover, for the physically handicapped, especially the crippled and chronically disabled no law has yet been enacted.

In the light of the western concept of "Welfare State" the constitution of Bangladesh provides that the state shall endeavour to secure for its citizens the provisions for basic necessities of life including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care (Art. 15a) and the "right to social security ..." (Art. 15d). The prospects of translating these rights into an operational welfare state model seem to be remote in view of the socio-economic realities in Bangladesh. Being one of the poorest countries in the world with a swelling population of 113 million living in an area of 55,598 square miles, Bangladesh has to maintain a precarious existence in the face of a host of odds, e.g., a staggering per capita income of US\$170, chronic food shortage, widespread unemployment and increasing reliance on foreign aid, etc.

The above discussion brings to light some issues of social welfare policy manifested in relevant legislation. The issues are gradual and slow incorporation of welfare content in legislation, intense societal conflict jeopardising smooth formulation and implementation of family legislation, and partial and selective coverage of beneficiary groups indicating the need for new legislation to cover new areas of need. A large number of legislation decorates the statute books and is hardly implemented showing a gap between the ideal and the real. Finally, the operation of outmoded social welfare legislation viz., Lepers Act, 1898 and Lunacy Act, 1912 in the country which emphasise the dire necessity of reforming them in the light of modern concepts and knowledge. Thus, the discussion not only widens our understanding of the various dimensions of the current social welfare legislation but also identifies issues requiring urgent action.

NOTES

1. The terms *Ulama* and *Mullah* both refer to Muslim religious scholars. However, in the social context of Bangladesh there is a difference in connotation between the two terms, i.e., while the former refers to a somewhat superior category of religious scholars, the latter is a common parlance used to describe any Muslim religious teacher.

2. See, *Pakistan Times*, 1955: April 17; Rahman, 1966:414-427.
3. *The Gazette of Pakistan*, Extraordinary, dated June 20, 1956.

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