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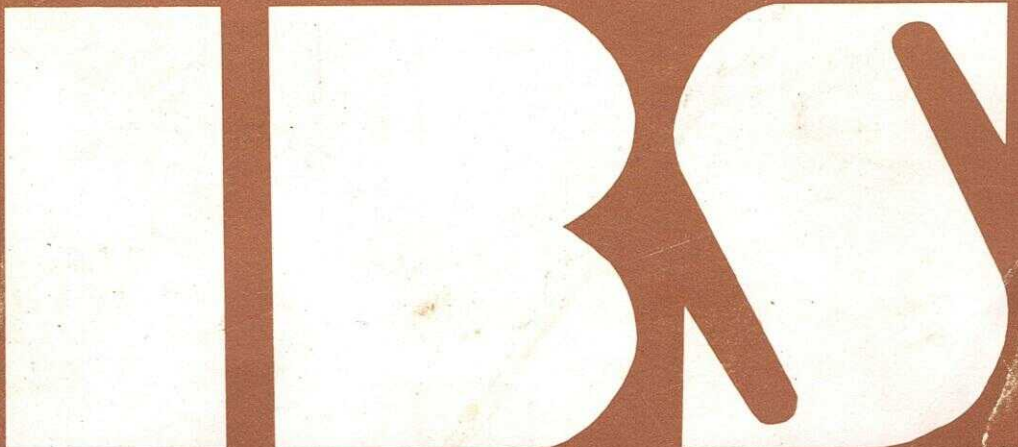
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MAHMUD SHAH QURESHI

Executive Editor



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Editor's Note

Two decades have passed since the founding of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, popularly known as the *IBS*. We have reasons to be proud of the performances of the Institute: some 80 Ph. D. and M. Phil. dissertations have been prepared, 15 monographs and a 16-volume Journal are on the shelf, besides a few hundred seminars organized with scholars from home and abroad.

We celebrated the Foundation day on January 24 this year with a befitting one-day seminar on *Bangladesh Studies*. An Alumni Association was also formed. The following day they organized a one-day seminar on the *Significance of Research in the Context of Higher Education in Bangladesh* along with other festivities.

So, here is a bumper number of the *JIBS*. And now for the first time we are also publishing its Bangla sequel. We dedicate the volume XVII of the the *JIBS* to the founders, fellows, teachers and other employees of the Institute as well as to the authors, reviewers and printers of *IBS Journals*.

Mahmud Shah Qureshi

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ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH BANGLADESH EXPERIENCE: AN OVERVIEW

- A. N. Shamsul Hoque *

Abstract

Bangladesh with world's highest population density (470 per sq. km, population growth rate 2.6%) very poor economy (per capita GNP \$180), economic growth rate 2.7%) and lowest literacy rate (24.8%) is one of the LDCs of the world. Yearly natural disasters like floods, cyclones, river erosion cause further degradation to its environment with serious adverse effects on economy, health and development. Environmental degradation affects the children most. IMR is very high. Under 5 mortality accounts for 50% of total deaths in the country (184 per 1000). There are prevalence of diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, tetanus, ARI, polio and cholera. Diarrhoea alone accounts for one third of child deaths. MMR is also very high (600 per 1000). Poverty, malnutrition aggravate the situation. The government is making valiant efforts to improve environmental health by ORT, EPI, clean water supply, improved sanitation and personal hygiene. These programmes have achieved some success. IMR has declined. Diarrhoea and vaccine preventable diseases have been checked. Clean water supply covers 80% of the people and is expected to be universal by 1995. Sanitation remains a problem with only 7% coverage by WSL and pit latrines and the coverage is expected to be only 35% by 1995. The government with active collaboration with UNICEF, WHO, NGOs are engaged in improving environmental health. There is now an integrated approach which includes water supply, sanitation, beneficiary participation, social mobilization and education. In spite of financial and other constraints much has been achieved yet lots remain to be done for achieving the goals of an acceptable environmental health in Bangladesh.

* Professor of Political Science, Rajshahi University.

1. A Brief Introduction of Bangladesh

Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in 1971 but as a national and cultural entity it has a history of more than five thousand years. Bangladesh is a country of some 1,44,000 square kilometers, largely formed by floodplain delta of two major river systems- the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. In a typical year 10 per cent of the land area is subject to severe flooding and about 50 per cent to some inundation, specially during the monsoon rain. Tidal surges and cyclones often cause havoc to crops and settlements. During the dry season there is periodic drought, specially in the north-west regions of the country. The natural forest is reduced to 6 per cent of the total land area as a result of expansion of agricultural land use due to high population pressure. In response to these factors the people of Bangladesh have developed a diversified and relatively resilient agroecological system which provides for their needs in most years.¹

In spite of the adaptation and resourcefulness of the people of Bangladesh, the over-all economic and development statistics for the country is daunting. It had a *per capita* GNP of just US \$160 in 1986 which has risen to \$180 in 1992.² Eighty per cent of the people live below the poverty line. The government policy is understandably directed towards alleviation of poverty as an overriding development objective. Sixty per cent of Bangladesh households do not have sufficient land to produce enough food. Twenty per cent of the households do not even have enough land for a homestead.³

About 60 per cent of the land area is cultivated, one of the highest in Asia. The average annual rate of growth in agriculture was about 2.7 per cent for 1980-1986. Food shortages affect more than 50 per cent of the population. Despite relatively higher growth rate in the urban areas (about 3%), 80-90 per cent of the population of Bangladesh still resides in the rural areas.

These geo-environmental factors have unfavourably affected the economic and other developmental efforts in Bangladesh as economic development and environmental protection are inseparable.⁴

Bangladesh has a total population of over 110 million with a population growth rate of 2.2 to 2.6 per cent *per annum*. It is the most densely populated country in the world with a density of population 740 per sq. km as on March 1991. The population is expected to reach

140-145 million by the year 2000. Population growth, in fact, is a constant factor in development planning in Bangladesh.⁵

Literacy rate, for all ages, in Bangladesh is 24.8 per cent, one of the lowest in the world. Per capita total public expenditure on education is taka 137, also one of the lowest in the region.⁶

The country faces many environmental hazards affecting health and hygiene. Many households do not have access to clear water. As a result of drinking contaminated water gastroenteritis and other water borne diseases are common. The effect of these diseases, together with chronic malnutrition and inadequate health services there is a high infant mortality rate (IMR) (91 per 1000 in 1991). Twenty five per cent of infants die before the age of 5 years. Maternal mortality rate is also very high (600 in per 10000) as compared to other developing countries. The life expectancy at birth is only 56.1 years.⁷

2. Environment and Health Linkage

Environment today has become a matter of universal concern because of its impact on development and human survival. The president of Bangladesh has declared 1990 as the year of environment and 1990's as the decade of environment.⁸ Environment factors have a direct bearing on human health. The United Nations Conference on Environment of 1972 held in Stockholm and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992 (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro stressed the need to improve health by improving environment and by stopping environmental degradation.⁹ "The health status of an individual, a community or a nation is determined by the interplay and integration of two ecological universe - the internal environment of man himself and the external environment which surrounds him. In the modern concept, disease is due to a disturbance in the delicate balance between man and his environment."¹⁰ Hence the key to the prevention and control of disease lies in the proper management of environment. Environmental health according to WHO is the control of all those factors in man's physical environment which exercise or may exercise a deleterious effect on his physical development, health and survival.¹¹

Bangladesh lags behind many of the countries in the field of environmental health. The basic problems of safe water supply, sanitary disposal of human excreta and personal hygiene are yet to be solved.

Much of the ill health and diseases, specially child diseases are due to defective environmental conditions and poor management of environment. The Government of Bangladesh with active assistance from international organisations such as the UNICEF, WHO, FAO, and the NGOs is doing its best to improve environmental health. The Government has announced a National Environment Policy in 1992. Of the 15 components of the Policy, health and sanitation; water development; food; population; education and mass awareness are inextricably related to environmental health and diseases.¹²

Since 80-90 per cent of the population in Bangladesh live in rural areas, the problem of public health is primarily of rural environment and sanitation. The first step in any national health programme is the elimination through environmental improvement and control of those factors which are harmful to health.

3. Environmental Factors Basic to Health and the Environmental Diseases

The environmental factors basic and fundamental to individual and community health are water, sanitation and arthropods of medical importance. Supply of adequate quantity of clean water is an essential ingredient of sound public health. Bangladesh is making valient efforts to prevent water borne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid by making provisions for supply of clean water for drinking and other household purposes. Sanitation, that is, safe disposal of human excreta is another health problem in Bangladesh causing diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, hookworm,ascariasis, viral hepatitis and similar other intestinal and parasitic infections. Improvement of sanitation and personal hygiene,another essential element of environmental health, is given priority in Bangladesh public health agenda.

Diseases transmitted by arthropods like housefly, mosquito such as typhoid, para typhoid diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, gastro-enteritis, amoebiasis, paliomyelitis, conjunctivitis, trachoma and malaria are also given due attention by the Government.¹³ However, the incidences of the arthropod transmitted diseases are not that much alarming. Moreover some of these diseases like malaria, cholera and TB of epidemic proportions have long since been effectively controlled or eliminated in Bangladesh. The current thrust of the government policy in the improvement of public health is on adequate supply of clean

water for drinking and other household purposes and sanitation and personal hygiene.¹⁴

4. Environmental Degradation

Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries of the world, suffers from rapid population growth, unemployment, low productivity, malnutrition and illiteracy. These problems adversely affect the environment including environmental health.¹⁵ Sustainable development in Bangladesh is constrained by high population density and a limited resource base. High population increases the sources of environmental pollution, it leads to increased demand on clean water, sanitation, supply of latrines. Population growth is considered the most serious long term problem for environment. Poverty precipitate many forms of environmental degradation, including deforestation and over exploitation of fisheries and so on.¹⁶

Major natural disasters such as floods, tidal surges, river erosion, inundation and drought which occur every year in Bangladesh inflict serious socio-economic and environmental damage to the country (see Table 1).¹⁷

The disasters also affect health and health infrastructure. It increases the incidences of diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid; damage water supply system and sanitation; and increases mortality rate, specially of children.¹⁸

Environmental Laws: In Bangladesh there are not many laws for the protection and management of environment. Whatever laws there are they are inadequate, outdated and mostly unenforced. Most of the existing environmental laws in Bangladesh were promulgated before independence and are only recently being revised and updated or yet to be updated. The Urban Planning Laws of 1950's and 1960's were passed when cities were just growing. The Factories Act of 1965 and other health protection laws were passed before industrial pollution and hazardous substances became matters of serious concern. The Forestry Act of 1927 is not comprehensive enough to prevent deforestation. The air pollution is governed by the Motor Vehicle Ordinance of 1939 as modified in 1983. The Pesticide Ordinance of 1971 as amended in 1980 remains unenforced.¹⁹ There does not seem to exist any law regarding disaster management, specially in the rural areas, most affected by natural calamities.

Table 1

**Major Types of Disasters in Bangladesh
and its Implications**

Type of Disaster	Vulnerability	Major Implications
Flood	On an average 20% of the total area Bangladesh goes under water every year	Loss of human/animal lives; crop damages; damage to human settlements and infrastructure
Tidal Surges	Coastal zones & upto 16 to 24 km inland industrial enterprise	Loss of human and animal lives; H. risk to human settlements
River erosion	About 1m. people are affected each year erosion is caused by 40 rivers	High risk in human sett.; process of human pauperization
Cyclones	whole Bangladesh	Life and crop damages damage to human sett.

Source: *Bangladesh Country Profile 1993* Prepared for Action Aid Bangladesh (Dhaka, 1993), p. 128.

These compound the country's environmental problems. Relevant government agencies such as the Departments of Forestry, Fisheries, Public Health have little capacity, training, staff and equipment to deal with the emergency situations.²⁰

5. Environment and the Children

Environmental degradation affects the children most and is killing them in large numbers in all developing countries including Bangladesh. There are clear moral and practical reasons why efforts to improve environment must focus on children. Children are too often victims of environmental pollution but they have no part in its degradation. Over population vastly complicates the problem of environmental pollution. The family planning programme will be successful and the parents will choose to have fewer children only when they will be sure that their children will live.²¹ As Julius Nyerere said "the most powerful contraceptive is the knowledge that your children will survive."²²

Bangladesh, in view of the importance of this large segment of the next generation of the population, has set a clear environmental health goal for the 1990's as given in table 2.

Indicator	1980	1990
Access to Drinking Water (ml)	80	80
Sanitation Coverage (%)	5	5
Cross Environment (%)	77	85
Primary Completion (%)	88	88
Adult Literacy (%)	31	40

Source: Government of Bangladesh, *Accelerating Goals for the Children and Development for the 1990's* (Dhaka, 1991), p. 9 (p. 100)

Table 2
National Programme of Action Bangladesh
Environmental Health Goals for the 1990's

Indicator	1990	1995	By 2000
Health			
IMR(/1000 live births)	110	80	50
U5MR(/1000 live births)	184	135	70
MMR (/1000 live births)	7	4.5	3.5
Immunization (0-1 year, %)			
BCG	75	85	85
DPT	68	85	85
OPV	68	85	Eradication
Measles	65	85	Reduce deaths by 95%
TT	72	85	NNT Elimination
Delivery by trained personnel	5	50	
Nutrition Control of Goiter-			
With Lipiodol (%)	70	100	
With Iodised Salt (%)	10	100	100
Vitamin A Coverage (%)	66	90	Elimination
Avg. / capita Energy			
Intake (in Kcal)	1850	2100	Reduce malnutrition by half.
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation			
Access to Drinking Water (%)	80	Universal Coverage	Universal Coverage
Sanitation Coverage (%)	6	35	80
Education			
Gross Enrolment (%)	77	85	95
Primary Completion (%)	35	45	65
Adult Literacy (%) (15-35 years)	31	40	45

Source: Government of Bangladesh, *Achieving Goals for the Children and Development for the 1990's* (Dhaka, 1992), p. 9. (progoti).

Mortality Rate: Infant mortality rate (IMR) in Bangladesh is 184 per 1000 live births (before 1990). Twelve in 1000 die within hours of birth. Another 23 die within first week of life. After first week upto the end of one year another 75 die. This neonatal and perinatal deaths are due to premature birth tetanus, acute respiratory infection (ARI), diarrhoea and other causes. Infant mortality under 5 years accounts for half of the total deaths in the country. About one third of these deaths are claimed by diarrhoea. Next in order comes ARI (about 18%), birth injury (about 16%) and tetanus (about 8.5%).²³ As a result diarrhoea and vaccine preventable diseases like tetanus, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, TB, polio are in the government's priority list for improving child health and reduce IMR.

Diarrhoea: In Bangladesh every year over 65 million episodes of diarrhoea occur in children under 5 years of which about 260,000 die. Children under one year are more vulnerable to water diarrhoea. Water diarrhoea can best be treated with an oral rehydration; solution made out of ingredients like boiled water, salt and *gur* (a sugarcane product). Bangladesh is now self-sufficient in the production of oral rehydration salt (ORS). The oral rehydration therapy (ORT) is now used in Bangladesh in nation wide scale. Mothers have learnt to prepare the solution and they now understand its effectiveness in treating diarrhoea. In spite of large scale use of ORT there has been little effect on diarrhoeal disease incidence rate. This is due to the fact that though 80 per cent of the population use tube well (TW) water for drinking but only 12 per cent use it for other household needs.

Bloody diarrhoea of children between the age of one and four and persistent diarrhoea with nutritional wasting are more problematic and needs antibiotic treatment.²⁴

The existing control of diarrhoeal diseases (CDD) will be expanded to cover all Districts by opening 34 District CDD centres and 60 ORT centres. CDD will be incorporated in the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) plus strategy.²⁵

EPI Plus: EPI has been a dramatic success. It has raised the immunization level to 70 per cent. It has also created a delivery system that reaches every parts of the country. Moreover, mothers see the value of EPI and are prepared to make the extra effort to bring their children for immunization. The EPI plus distribution system can therefore be used for other interventions such as Vitamin A distribution system, breast feeding, family planning services and so on.²⁶ EPI plus will be followed to achieve the health goals of the 1990's. The ultimate goal of the government is to achieve universal immunization of children against major vaccine preventable diseases.²⁷

Maternal mortality rate (MRR) is also very high in Bangladesh. It is 600 in 10,000. This is due to closely spaced pregnancy, poor nutritional status, poor health care during prenatal pregnancy and after birth, traditional birth practices, use of traditional birth attendant (TBA) and so on. Maternal care is a must for sound child health and reduction of IMR.²⁸

NGO and Health : According to Ministry of Social Welfare about 10,000 NGOs operate in Bangladesh.²⁹ About 200 of them receive funds directly from overseas donors. Most of these NGOs have some environmental and health components such as improvement of environment, supply of clean water, sanitation and personal hygiene. Some of them are engaged in the spread of health education and awareness about environment and health.

BRAC is one of the largest NGOs in Bangladesh. Some of its activities in the health sector may be mentioned as an example. BRAC spends 35 per cent of its annual expenditure on its various health programmes. It has popularised the ORS preparation and ORT nation wide. Groups of its health workers visited 10 million households to teach mothers the home preparation method of ORS with home ingredients. The Programme has been highly successful. BRAC is now playing a catalytic role and assisting the government in social mobilization and training staff for EPI and Vitamin A distribution.³⁰

NGOs are no longer simply relief agencies but active partners in development. A major advantage of NGOs is their flexibility in responding quickly to community needs.³¹

6. Water supply and Sanitation

Bangladesh has made impressive strides in improving the quality of its human environment and improving the quality of health of its citizens. The Government's strong commitment to improve rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) is reflected in its financial allocations for the programme during the period 1992-1995 (see Table 3). There was a need assessment of the water and sanitation programme in 1993 under the auspices of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and the UNICEF.³² The study was intended to help the government in successfully complete its programme.

Tube Wells: As has been mentioned elsewhere in the paper that provision of clean water, improved sanitation and personal hygiene are basic elements of primary health care. These are also essential preconditions for child health and development. Bangladesh has made impressive progress in the last 18 years in the supply of safe water. So far 1517580 TW, both government and private, have been sunk providing on average one TW for 114 persons. This TW figure includes 574000 public TW in addition to existing 200000.³³ Today 80 per cent of the population have access to TW water. But there still exists regional disparity in the TW coverage. In the shallow water table (SWT) region one TW covers 90 persons while in the coastal belt the coverage is one TW for 416 persons and in the low water table (LWT) areas it is one TW for 724 persons.

Table 3

Government of Bangladesh-UNICEF
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS)
Programme 1992-1995

SUMMARY SHEET

Name of the Programme	: Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme	
Duration	: July 1992- June 1995	
Government Implementing	: Department of Public Health Agency Engineering (DPHE), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives	
Programme Cost		<u>"000 US \$"</u>
	: * Approximate Govt. Contribution	= 18,063.0 (30%)
	Approx. Beneficiary Contribution	= 16,257.0 (27%)
	UNICEF Contribution	= 25,891.0 (43%)
	Total	= 60,211.0 (100%)

Phasing of UNICEF Assistance by Project
(In thousands of US \$)

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	Total
1. Village Sanitation (Intensive Sanitation & Hygiene Promotion)	2,776.0	3,175.3	3,516.6	9,467.9
2. RWSS in LWT Area	1,873.9	1,826.0	1,910.2	5,610.1
3. RWSS in Coastal Belt	981.2	844.2	836.6	2,662.0
4. RWSS in SWT Area	1,396.7	63.1	63.1	1,522.9
5. RWSS in Urban Slums and Fringes	185.8	185.5	185.0	556.3
6. RWSS Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Upgrading	<u>920.2</u>	<u>808.2</u>	<u>808.2</u>	<u>2,536.6</u>
Sub-total	8,133.8	6,902.3	7,319.7	22,355.8
Project Support Services:	488.0	414.1	439.1	1,341.2
TOTAL	8,621.8	7,316.4	7,758.8	23,697.0
Price & Physical Contingencies (5%, 10%, 15%)	406.6	690.2	1,097.9	2,194.7
GRAND TOTAL:	9,028.4	8,006.6	8,856.7	25,891.7

* Only direct cost of the Government, excluding overhead and establishment cost.

Source: Government of Bangladesh- UNICEF, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme 1992-1995 (Dhaka, 1991) viii.

The reasons for the regional disparity in TW coverage is due to the fact that coastal ground water is saline and reaches down to 100 to 700 feet. For equitable coverage of the coastal belt it would need a large number of Deep TW (DTW) which is nine times more expensive than shallow TW (STW) suitable for SWT area. Already there are 25000 DTW in the coastal belt. In the LWT area water level is beyond the range of cheaper suction type hand pump TW. During dry season the water level goes further down in many areas.³⁴

To overcome the problem of falling water level a new TW known as the TARA has been introduced which costs 50 per cent less than the traditional deepset hand pump. TARA pump can be locally manufactured and maintained by the beneficiaries without hand tools. In early 1991 researchers developed a mini TARA, based on the TARA technology which can fit into existing shallow suction TW with minimum modification to the latter. This alternative has the potential of keeping the existing TWs in the area operational throughout the year even in the declining water table zones.

Water coverage is still inadequate even in SWT areas. The system is also to be improved to make it convenient to have water. An ICDDRDB study shows that *per capita* daily TW water consumption has risen from 19 to 51 litres. The use of TW water for drinking and all other household purposes may be achieved when the level of service reaches one TW per *bart* (a cluster of houses). This would put the government and other donor agencies under serious resource constraints.³⁵ Already 80 per cent of the country's ADP is financed by foreign aid.

Most of the cities and towns have reasonable public water supply system. This of course covers the core area. The peri-urban fringes and urban slum pockets need attention. The ongoing rural water supply programme of the DPHE does not extend to the fringe or peri-urban areas of the municipalities. The government with UNICEF assistance has taken up a programme to address the water supply problem of the urban slums and fringes. The progress so far has been insignificant.³⁶

Sanitation : In the past the DPHE gave priority to the supply of clean water through TW and the programme became highly successful. However, sanitation has lagged behind. Bangladesh has developed a successful programme for the production and sale of water-seal latrines (WSL). The programme was started in the 1970's with assistance from the UNICEF and the WHO. Initially demand for WSL was low. The use and maintenance of the latrines were also poor.

However, during the 1980's demand for WSL has grown which now exceeds the supply. The use and maintenance of 80 per cent

latrines have improved. The present production capacity of 1000 production centres is well over 500000 units of latrines a year. Due to government demonstration, social mobilization, a favourable situation has been created for accelerated sanitation programme. But the coverage is still low (only 7%). The coverage is expected to be 35 per cent in 1995 and 80 per cent in 2000. The government programme alone can not achieve the objective. For this a new approach is needed with emphasis on people's participation, social mobilization and affordable technology. Many people even at the low cost subsidized rate cannot afford WSL technology. Emphasis is now given on do-it-yourself (home made) hygienic simple pit latrines which can be made with locally available materials at a very low cost. Both the WSL and pit latrines will have to be used to promote sanitation.³⁷

In order to speed up sanitation programme the DPHE is forging alliances with institutions like the Ansar-VDP, the NGOs and the school network. It is also seeking the role of women, both as active collaborators and as a target group because the convenience and privacy of women are the major benefits of latrine installation.³⁸

Need for Integrated Approach (IA): It is now understood that to achieve significant health impact supply of clean water is not enough. The need is to combine improved sanitation and improved personal hygienic practices with supply of clean water. The integrated approach to water supply, sanitation and hygiene will be introduced in the country partially by 1992 and nation wide by 1995. It would involve beneficiary participation in installation of TWs and latrines and sharing of costs. The government will reduce subsidy gradually and ultimately withdraw it completely (see table 4, 5 and 6). At the time of installation of a new TW the beneficiaries will be asked to construct WSL or pit latrine. A nation wide social mobilization campaign is to be carried out to bring about a behavioral change in the sanitation and hygiene practices of the beneficiaries of the TWs and latrines.³⁹

RDA Action Programme: The Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogra is now conducting an action programme of rural water supply for small irrigation and drinking and household purposes. The programme was initiated by the RDA after a number of feasibility study by the FAO-RDA and Hydrotechnica. The CIRDAP with financial assistance from Japan decided to start 10 pilot projects of this innovative system of rural water supply one each in its member countries in 1990. RDA was given the responsibility to run the Bangladesh project. RDA selected the village Bogulahar in Erulia Union of Bogra Sadar Thana.

Table- 4

Installation of New Water Supply System Beneficiary Contribution

Type of technology	Estimated total cost based on current price	Estimated labour cost for installation based on current price	* 1991-92 beneficiary contribution	* 1992-93 beneficiary contribution	* 1995-97 beneficiary contribution	* 1997-2000 beneficiary contribution
Deep tubewell	Tk. 40,000	Tk. 21,000	Tk. 1,000 (5%)	Tk. 1,750 (8.5%)	Tk. 3,000 (15.5%)	Tk. 5,000 (24%)
TARA deepset Wells	Tk. 12,500	Tk. 3,700	Tk. 350 (9.5%)	Tk. 700 (19%)	Tk. 1,500 (41%)	Tk. 2,500 (68%)
VSST	Tk. 2,800	Tk. 1,900	Tk. 350 (19%)	Tk. 700 (37%)	Tk. 1,500 (79%)	Tk. 1,900 (100%)
SST	Tk. 3,500	Tk. 2,300	Tk. 350 (16%)	Tk. 700 (31%)	Tk. 1,500 (65%)	Tk. 2,300 (100%)
PSF	Tk. 18,000	Tk. 9,000	* Free	Tk. 1,750 (20%)	Tk. 3,000 (34%)	Tk. 5,000 (56%)
STW	Tk. 3,800	Tk. 1,000	Tk. 350 (35%)	Tk. 500 (50%)	-	-

* According to the implementation guideline the beneficiaries are supposed to contribute in kind equivalent to Tk. 1,500 approximately.

** % of contribution is calculated based on labour cost only, excluding inflation cost.

Source: as in Table 3.

Table 5

Water Supply Maintenance, Rehabilitation & Upgrading Beneficiary Contribution

Type of technology/ Activity	Estimated total cost based on current price	Estimated labour cost for installa- tion based on current price	* 1991-92 beneficiary contribution	* 1992-93 beneficiary contribution	* 1995-97 beneficiary contribution	* 1997-2000 beneficiary contribution
Spare Parts for HP	Tk. 70/yr	-	free (1)	purchase	purchase	purchase
No. 6						
Spare parts for TARA	Tk. 70/yr	-	free	free	purchase	purchase
Desanding of choked up STW	Tk. 40	-	TWM/free	TWM/fee	self-help	self-help
Resinking of choked up STW	Tk. 2,700	Tk. 1,800	Tk. 350 (20%)	Tk. 500 (28%)	Tk. 1000 (55%)	Tk. 1,500 (84%)
Construction of IRP	Tk. 3,000	Tk. 1,900	free (2)	Tk. 400 (21%)	Tk. 1000 (53%)	Tk. 1,900 (100%)
Repairing of HP NO. 6 (physical work)	-	-	TWM/ Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Repairing of TARA (physical work)	-	-	TWM/ Beneficiaries	TWM/ Beneficiaries	TWM/ Beneficiaries	TWM/ Beneficiaries

(1) Selling started from December 1988 but stopped after six months on the ground of flood

(2) According to the implementation guideline the beneficiaries are supposed to contribute in kind equivalent to Tk. 400 approximately.

* % of contribution is based on labour cost only, excluding inflation cost.

Source: as in Table 3.

Table 6
Latrine Production and Sale Beneficiary Contribution

Item	Current Production Cost (Tk.) (1991-92)		1992-95 Production Cost at current price		1995-2000 Production cost at current price	
	GOB	UNICEF	GOB	UNICEF	GOB	UNICEF
Fc slab with (one)	62	84	62	84		
RCC ring (one)	47	40	47	40		
Total:	109	124	109	124	233	233
Proposed selling cost of one slab and one ring	Tk. 70 (70% subsidy)		Tk. 110 (53% subsidy)			

Source: as in Table 3.

Latrine Production & Beneficiary Contribution Table 6

The project uses a electrically operated DTW. Water pumped out by the TW is divided into two portions. One portion is used for small scale irrigation. The other portion is pumped through water pipes into ten concrete water reservoir situated in different places of the village depending upon the concentration of population. Each tank has two water taps for taking water out of it. The project with the existing DTW is expected to run for ten years. The people have accepted the system even on a cost sharing basis, the total costs is to be recovered by easy instalments over a period of ten years. The project also has a sanitation and Hygienic component, as the beneficiaries are encouraged to use hygienic sanitation practices. So far the project has been a success.⁴⁰

7. Conclusion

The Bangladesh experience in the improvement of environment and health is one of success and failure. The country can now respond far more quickly and effectively to natural disasters. Great stride has been made in supplying clean water to 80 per cent of the people. The coverage is expected to be universal by 1995. There is an appreciable decline in infant mortality rate. Diarrhoea which claims one third of child death has been controlled by the ORT. The EPI plus has been a great success. Most of the vaccine preventable diseases have been effectively checked. Family palanning is showing signs of some success. There is growing awareness among the people, specially the women about environmental health. The health infrastructure has significantly expanded.

Still much remain to be achieved. Infant and maternal mortality remains unacceptably high. Poverty remains a curse which affects health environment very badly. Population is growing at an alarming rate which will reach 140-145 million mark by the year 2000. Rate of literacy, specially women literacy is one of the lowest in the world. Investment on human capital is very low. Sanitation and personal hygiene remains matter of vital concern. In spite of government efforts sanitation coverage is expected to be only 35 per cent by 1995 and 80 per cent by the year 2000. In spite of ORT the incidences of diarrhoea remain high. The situation of children and women remain critical. Basic health care lags far behind the needs.

The alleviating factor is that the government is aware of these problems and is making valiant efforts to solve some of the problems with the aid and assistance of foreign governments, international agencies, NGOs and other voluntary organisations.

The government has shown its commitment to environmental improvement by declaring the 1990's as the Decade of Environment and by announcing a National Environment Policy in 1992. It has also participated in the UNCED in 1992 in Rio. The Government has shown its support for human development by becoming signatory to the declaration of the world summit for children and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The government has introduced universal free primary education from 1992. The present government gives highest priority to improve natural environment by reforestation. In fact large scale tree plantation has become a campaign. Among other things the government is making pisciculture a campaign to increase protein production in the country.

In view of resource constraints and in view of the fact that immediate economic growth cannot be expected the government is to change its budget priorities and focus attention on urgent matters like education, basic preventive health care, sanitation so that the country can move along the road to sustainable development.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP	Annual Development Plan
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infections
BARC	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BCG	Bacillus Calmette Guérin (TB vaccine)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BARC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CDD	Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCES	Directory of Country Environmental Studies
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus (vaccine)
DTW	Deep Tubewell
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GNP	Gross National Product
IA	Integrated Approach
ICDDR,B	International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
LWT	Low Water Table
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NGO	None-Governmental Organization
OPV	Oral Polio Vaccine
ORS	Oral Rehydration Salts
ORT	Oral Rehydration Therapy

RDA	Rural Development Academy
RWSS	Rural water Supply and Sanitation
STW	Shallow Tubewell
SWT	Shallow Water Table
TB	Tuberculosis
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TT	Tetanus Toxoid
TW	Tubewell
U5MR	Under Five Mortality Rate
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDP	Village Defence Party
WHO	World Health Organization
WSL	Water-Seal Latrine
ESA	External Support Agency
IRP	Iron Removal Plant
LDC	Least Developed Country
PSF	Pond Sand Filter
SST	Shallow Shrouded Tubewell
TWM	Tubewell Mechanic
VSST	Very Shallow Shrouded Tubewell

BANGLADESH ENVIRONMENT : THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF DEGRADATION

Muhammad Hasan Imam*

ABSTRACT

The historical formation of Bangladesh as a nation-state, the nature and interest of the ruling and non-ruling elites and the ill-formulated development strategies are also found to be responsible for environmental degradation. By incorporating ecological values in political thought and actions, ruling and non-ruling elites can bring about a qualitative change in development initiatives. In restoring the environment, politics can play an important role at local, national and regional levels.

Introduction

Societal perception of environmental imbalances reflects not simply the geographical factor in social life, rather, it goes beyond the natural forces to account how far the environment is socially governed and forced to the present state of instability. Uptill now, the biospherical aspect of the environmental degradation and challenges got prominence while the socio-political causes and remedies are largely left unexplained.

Bangladesh is characterized by less commercialization, low technology use and lower urbanization compared to the industrially advanced societies. Marked differences can also be observed in the sphere of environmental change and degradation. The incidence of untended consequences of development efforts, unavailability of

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commercial and industrial substitutes, and low technology profile suggest that the environmental problems of the country largely center around the management and mismanagement of her limited resources. Moreover, delayed recognition of environmental concerns, incapable institutions, and improper state interventions can be held responsible for augmenting the degenerating spiral. If the past degradation as well as the future restoration are considered in a broader context, however, the causes show regional-political and global implications.

This paper attempts to elaborate the basic idea of emphasizing on the socio-political factors of the problem. To attempt this, the political ecology of the degradation is discussed here with reference to the major issues like population, land and water. It is no exaggeration that population, land and water are mutually interacting and totally conditioning factors that predominate the character of the life process in this region. Because of such importance they are preferred here to other areas of concerns.¹ Certainly, our discussion is introductory and limited in scope. However, the paper is organized in three sections following an 'introduction'. Section-1 deals with the nature of state formation in the region. Section-2 focuses on the nature of anti-environmental politics and development in the country. Section-3 is the discussion of the regional context of the problem. The face of the political-ecological dimension of environmental degradation is emphasized in all the following three sections. Political Ecology is comparatively a new perspective for explaining environmental degradation.² While ecology deals with the relationship of living organisms with each other and with their environment, political ecology can be defined as the relationship between organized political actions and the environment where development is being practised. In the following discussion the concept of political ecology is applied to interrelate the organized political actions - especially those which are observable in creating, running and using the state - with ecological backlash. Contradictions between social and environmental change are also partially discussed in relation to the political economy.

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State Formation and Degradation

Geopolitical origin of Bangladesh suggests a number of unfavorable terms and conditions that the country had to accept so far. Besides, colonial and neo-colonial exploitation subverted many possibilities in the long period of stagnancy. Most important among them are the followings:-

- (a) Self-reliant industrialization;
- (b) Rational land management;
- (c) Greater commercial and employment opportunity;
- (d) Greater territory with broader resource base;
- (e) Greater control over the regional ecosystem;
- (f) Regionally broader political base.

Scope for elaborating the above areas in full length is limited here. Nevertheless, they may provide the implicit framework for later arguments. Historical formation of the man-environment interaction is important as it brings about the qualitative and quantitative changes in the socially controlled bio-physical space. The ecological concern or environmental consideration has not always come as active ingredient in shaping the 'politics for independence' of the newly emerged subcontinental states. The social aspect of present environmental problems can be traced to the past misfortunes and mismanagements.

State formation and 'nation - building' in the Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh subcontinent experienced a number of endogenous and exogenous factors of social, economic and political nature. The combinations and contradictions of the diffused and evolved forces under the regimes of pre-British, British and Pakistani dominations complicated the nature of self-determination as well as fulfilment of national aspirations. The partition of India in 1947 as a result of 'nationalist movement' had serious ecological consequences. A cursory look at the political development of the Indian subcontinent reveal that 'politics' did a lot to lead Bangladesh towards ecological marginalization. It is also true for the whole Indian sub-continent.

Political struggles during colonial rule gave exclusive importance on the boundary creation which means outright failure even to achieve states on the basis either of culture or religion.³

The politics of state-formation could not accommodate the importance of ecological value which was important for a comparatively small state like Bangladesh. Creation of East Bengal (later East Pakistan and now Bangladesh) as a province of Pakistan had confined the majority population in the least developed areas, thus constraining on the ecological viability. Farouk says,

Without the riots and the consequential insecurity to life and property, the present boundary of Bangladesh could hardly have emerged as an acceptable solutions of the problems or of the ideals cherished by the common man⁴

Economic viability of East Pakistan was seriously questioned by some Muslim leaders even in those days. Mr. Syed Muazzam Husain, a former Minister of Bengal and an experienced administrator condemned the Mount-batten scheme as an mutilated, truncated, moth-eaten East Pakistan.⁵

Therefore, it may be concluded that the 'independence' of 1947 is the imprisonment of the population. It confined inter-regional exchange in terms of migration and mobility, trade and commerce, and natural resources. Bangladesh does not have control over the flow of rivers and adjoining foot-hills that influence flooding, erosion, and deposition all over the country. The combined effect of flood, drought and riverbank erosion threatens the ecological stability. Besides, rise of sea level, tidal surge, and tornado are constant threats to coastal life and property. The land is so densely populated that any rate of irregularity leads to displacement, disease, and death. Environment, economy and nationalism may not synchronize in their development. What is important is the failure to realize the power of such combination, at least theoretically. These ideas may also provide insight into the understanding of the scales and effects of ecological imbalances in the newly emerged states like Bangladesh.

Development Politics and Degradation

Post-colonial politics in Bangladesh is characterized by an unholy alliance between politicians, bureaucrats and top military officials. With few exceptions, power elites managed to form political parties after assuming to power through extra-constitutional means. To legitimize their position, maximum vigor is invested to brew conspiracy against dissidents or non-ruling political parties. Islam points out that:

The survival of the regime and the maintenance of its own interests are more important to the administrative elites than the promotion of the interest of any particular class.⁶

Gradually, the alliance permeated in the wider spectrum of the society. Development expenditure, political patronage and power consolidation process are intermeshed through corrupt practices. There is always a trend to use 'rural development' as slogan for political advantage, and to abuse the project disbursements for mobilizing power base of the ruling classes.⁷ Looking for the rural collaborators of the ruling elites influenced the way the development funds are utilized. This practice is also preferred by the 'democratic governments' who feel themselves insecure under constant threat from aspirant forces. However, comparatively organized political parties have special advantage to abuse power base for personal material benefits. Local leaders of different categories work together for mutual gain and patronage.⁸ By orientation and motivation these middle class people are aspirant for having their own linkages with the outside world of resources, power and privileges. Consequently, the situation offered a complacent bureaucracy and interested politicians rather than development administration and better management practices.

Therefore, post-colonial state could not but ignore the urgency of sound development. In fact, some sources of environmental degradation can be identified with the state-sponsored development projects. For the very nature of the state apparatus, planning and implementation could not discover the roots of the development problems. Because of the top-down planning and development

strategies of the government and the absence of the viable local level planning and implementing institution, the skill of local leaders in managing local natural resources has not been tested so far. Moreover, the political instability and indecision throughout the post-colonial period largely minimized the potential of planned actions towards the major issues like population control, land use and water management. Superficial attempts and policy indulgence also made the issues complicated over time.

Land reform and family planning may be considered as two important programs representing land and people which are equally deprived of commitments and concerted efforts from both governments and political parties. It is well-known that from land - the principal resource of the country - surplus extraction was always a fact. Hierarchy of interests in land in terms of ownership, operational holding, transfer and sale is a complex product of historically gained legal and social arrangements. Thus, environmentally sound land management involves eradication of such socio-political arrangements causing land degradation. Improved management through greater social involvement and equitable sharing can be experimented immediately. Among others, tenancy, fragmentation, absentee landlordism, litigation, reclamation are some issues which deter more collective and uniform use of land. So far, land reforms did not coincide with the principles of 'equity, productivity, and conformity' in rural life. Nothing is clear about the better management and institution-building for greater care of the soil. Serious participatory management viewpoint is absent which could improve and preserve the quality of land. Moreover, land acquisition for public and private purposes does not always follow any rational guidelines. Fertile agricultural lands are increasingly being transformed into commercial, industrial, and administrative or housing areas. Land-related litigation, conflicts and social unrest are common features throughout the country. Road-building, flood control, surface water development etc. are attempted without sufficient impact assessment. These along with the use of modern technology in agriculture are reported to have negative impacts on land. Land degradation due to top-soil erosion, lack of vegetation, and river-erosion is widespread. Failure to organize the

unemployed and the landless might have depleted the common property resources. A broad-based land development strategy is not yet accepted that can really address the productive, distributive and environmental issues. Like land development, delay in population control alarmingly reduced the chance of making its environmental impact positive. About population control, available recommendations and policy suggestions include emphasis on education, family planning, and integrations of women in development. However, these would prove fruitless unless simultaneous socio-economic upliftment is ensured.

It is also found that aid dependence characterizes political decisions which ultimately cause environmental consequences. For instance, groundwater extraction is preferred to surface water use by some experts.⁹ Involvement of aid-financed technology in the former case and the socio-political risk in the later case might have influenced such policy consideration. More cautious steps can be taken if the overall socio-economic impact of either attempts is envisaged. The 'striking relationship between groundwater table and diarrhoeal incidences during dry season'¹⁰ is a unique example which substantiate the urgency of technology assessment for environmentally sound development.

In some cases, without prior consultation and communication with politicians, researchers and specialists, government approves large scale national plans. The Flood Action Plan is said to be a systematic and well-coordinated plan supported by UNDP, ADB, WB and other donors. But such massive projects undertaken with great hope raise confusion about its actual impacts.¹¹ As the embankment approach to flood control and drainage in the past brought about numerous social and environmental disturbances, such attempts in future should be carefully adjusted to the cost to be incurred. The dialectic between development and environment should, therefore, be understood at all levels. It seems that the state actions largely contradicts environmental interests. In some cases, where state policy is officially in favour of environmental conservation, it also functionally failed to stop depletion. The condition of the dwindling state forests or obstructed natural drainage system may be mentioned here.

Diplomacy and Degradation

The environmental issues with farflung ecological linkages beyond the political boundary have important implications for a development strategy combining economy and ecology.¹² At regional level, diplomacy dominates the sense of cooperation. India-Bangladesh relation is practically urgent for advancement of environmentally sound development of the ecologically shared regions. Mannion¹³ very clearly expresses his view that many popularly known factors, deforestation in Himalaya for instance, may not be the cause of flood in Bangladesh but cooperation in this region is necessary. He continues:

In view of the diversity of the environment, the variations in cultural, social and political organization as well as rapid population growth, there is an overwhelming need for development and management plans that are practicable at a local level, politically acceptable to all Himalayan nations and are equally beneficial to those extra-Himalayan regions that are affected by intra-Himalayan policies.¹⁴

But, in practice, the level of cooperation could not proceed so much as to sense the urgency of the problem and to learn the 'emerging global language of trust, goodwill, cooperation, and understanding.'¹⁵ Virtually, the relation is too cold to understand the legacy of politically nourished environmental degradation. Conventional reciprocity or exchange may prove worthless. Bangladesh and India may look for new opportunities for collaboration and exchange between them. Politicians of this region rhetorically remember their common heritage without making efforts to avert the most forceful threat to the future generations. The value of ecology is yet to be discovered, held and imputed as rules for the coming game of politics. Without such values politics could only involve 'one side of the river' as the following comment reveals:

..... disputes arose after partition on almost all the rivers of Bangladesh. The two countries have been competing with the another to protect the lands on their side of the river.¹⁶

An international study on the waters of this region opined that India's approach toward water development is nationalistic rather than regional. It is said that India could follow what would ultimately be more cooperative basin/regional policies in several ways: 'by taking longer time perspective in which national and regional interests coincide; by doing projects within India that have accidental beneficial externalities for neighbors; by taking action within India for benefiting neighbors anticipating reciprocity; and by taking actions within India for benefiting a neighbor without immediate expectation'.¹⁷ The diplomacy still has to learn the fact that nothing other than the earth and natural resources can contribute to the ultimate precondition for existence.

Conclusions

The foregoing brief discussion on the politically relevant environmental degradation is perhaps indicative of the facts that ecological awareness of the relationship between environment, economy and society is not up to the level to bring about qualitative changes in politics. Practically, awareness is essential in respect to the utilization of resources, potential of local ecosystem, and the limits imposed by global and regional socio-economic and political structures.

It has been observed that politics in its various manifestations - state-creation, public administration, socio-economic upliftment programs, and even the everyday collective political actions - could not make significant difference in providing and protecting better environmental condition even after achieving independence. Time has come to reevaluate the successes and failures of the state-sponsored strategies. The community life of the past can be compared with that of today for taking account of net environment change. The present day environmental degradation in Bangladesh is largely influenced by a number of socio-cultural factors. Political changes over the period of last two centuries have significant indications for understanding the 'marginal' state of Bangladesh society.

Political decision is essential on a number of socio-economic issues Bangladesh faces today. The human-induced environmental changes and their restoration also demand politically organized actions. Unfortunately, the present trend of politics largely favors the institutions responsible for perpetuating degradations. Political parties do not have the initiative to analyse or recommend policies regarding the environmental issues. Instead, flood, cyclone, tidal surge become fierce issues of mudthrowing. Political parties can clear their positions, commitments, and alternative strategies regarding population control, land-management, disaster preparedness, flood control, etc. Such contribution may help reach consensus and coordinated actions.

The emerging Green views of politics and economy have important implications for greening a resource-poor land like Bangladesh. Politicians and political parties can play significant role in contributing ideas from their own experiences towards implementing Green principles. Empirical research on the relationship between socio-political policy and environmental degradation is necessary to strengthen such movement.

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2. Blaikie and Brookfield pointed out that the 'political ecology' combines the concern of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself, they added. Blaikie, P. and Brookfield, H. *Land Degradation and Society*, (1st ch.), Methuen, London, 1987, p. 17.
3. It may be noted here that the environmentalist view, popularly known as green perspective, recommends culturally homogeneous community as the basis of state formation. Friberge and Hettne identified that: Most states are, after all, artificial territorial constructions, usually the result of internal colonialism and international wars. The concept of national state implies that the territorial boundaries of the state coincide with the boundaries of a culturally homogenous nation. This is exception rather than the rule in a world with about 1500 peoples or nations but only 150 states. Friberge, M. and Hettne, B. "The Greening of the Third World: Toward a Non-deterministic Model of Global Processes " in Addo, H. et al. *Development As Social Transformation*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1985, p. 221. However, we do not have the scope here to discuss green views in relation to ecological marginalization of Bangladesh.
4. Farouk, A. *Changes in the Economy of Bangladesh*, University Press Ltd. Dhaka, 1992, p. 5.
5. Farouk, A. *op. cit.*, p. 6.

6. Islam, Syed Serajul. *Bangladesh: State and Economic Strategy*, University Press Ltd., Dhaka, 1988 p. 3.
7. Blair comments on the situation as follows: "In the Pakistan and Bangladesh experience, stagnation, corruption and elite domination have been the rule, followed by termination of the whole stratum and replacement with a new one." Blair, H. W. "Participation, Public Policy, Political Economy and Development in Rural Bangladesh, 1958-85," *World Development*, Vol. 13, No. 12, 1985.
8. Abecassis observes the link between the rural leader and the government in the following way: "An aspiring village leader would want to be able to demonstrate that he is on good terms with the police and local government officials, and they in turn like to deal with village leaders because of the personal advantage that accrues from doing so. In this way, most of the resources have been made available to the rural areas under Government schemes" Abecassis, D. *Identity Islam and Human Development in Rural Bangladesh*, University Press Ltd., Dhaka, 1990. p. 67.
9. Gisselquit, D. "Groundwater Resource in Bangladesh: An Overview." *National Seminar on Environmental Aspects of Groundwater Development in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, 1989.
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11. See: Rashid, Salim, "Flood Action Plan," *Grassroots*, Vol. 1, 1991; Adnan, Shapan "Floods, People and the Environment: A Critical Review of Flood Protection Measures in Bangladesh", *Grassroots*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1991.
12. There is a tendency to conceptualize economy as something in equilibrium and that has no international linkages. See: Lecomber, R. *Economic Growth Versus the Environment*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1975. p. 13; But as the linkage and interaction between economy and environment is growingly recognized and the term environment increasingly involves global care, sharing of the task ahead necessarily implies global responsibility. It is being said that: "Thinking globally and acting locally is not enough. We must act globally as well..... sovereign states must stop regarding themselves as self-reliant units ..."

- IUCN/ UNEP/ WWF. *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living*, Gland, Switzerland, 1991. It is maintained that 'global actions are needed to compensate countries that will not be able to be self-sufficient'. See: Falkenmark, M. and Suprpto, R. A. "Population - Landscape Interactions in Development." *AMBIO*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, February 1992.
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FARMER RESPONSES TO DROUGHT IN BANGLADESH: A CASE STUDY OF THREE VILLAGES

- Md. Zahidul Hassan *

Abstract

The agriculture of Bangladesh is largely governed by seasonal rhythm of flood encroachment and persistent drought. This is because of the tropical monsoon climate and monotonous flat land intersected by numerous natural drainage. Rainfall mostly occurs in Bangladesh during four months (June to September) of the year and rivers bring large volume of water and silt from their upper courses and this is the characteristics of rainfall of all the regions of this country. Based on the nature and pattern of climate and topography, a sample survey was conducted on three villages (Boglahar, Shihipur and Kuripara), of Bogra district during 1991-92. The main purpose of this study was to focus on drought hazard as perceived by the farmers and to find out the various alternative choices for making adjustment with the drought for cultivating land. It has been observed that most of the farmers are aware about the consequences of drought hazards in their agricultural operation for which they have certain long-term adoptive capacities and short-term adjustment practices.

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Introduction

In tropical monsoon climate, the distribution of rainfall throughout the year is not uniform and water is regarded as the most important single determinant of tropical agriculture (Hodder, 1973). Since Bangladesh is within the zone of tropical monsoon climate, the variability of rain in the months from March to May and again from September to October is of real concern to farmers. In this matter it is important to note that 'even chances of adequate rainfall for cultivation are still gambles' (Johnson, 1975).

Now a days with the introduction of ground water irrigation techniques, the drought situation has changed a lot. But the pattern of irrigational system has not been developed uniformly because of physical and cultural factors (Hassan, 1991). Physical factors are the characteristics of land, water and soils. While cultural factors can be summerized as the ability (mental and economic) of the farmer. Wallace (1984) points out that the Bangladeshi farmers has shown willingness to accept more productive and profitable agricultural systems provided these are presented in such a manner that they belive them to be compatible with their overall perception of the situation.

Under the existing conditions of our country, it becomes imperative to examine the existing mitigation techniques and understanding of the 'actual decision-makers in agriculture' (farmers). This study investigated the farmer responses to drought (a natural hazard) in three villages of Bogra district, Bangladesh.

In its most general sense, the concept of this study denotes the farmers attitude to, and adjustment to, drought hazard in agricultural operation. It includes three variables as evaluated by the respondents- such as

- (i) exprience relating to drought hazards;
- (ii) prediction concerning the future occurence of drought hazard; and
- (iii) alternate choices for adopting ways during drought.

The Study Area:

Bogra district ($24^{\circ}32' N - 25^{\circ}07' N$ and $88^{\circ}58' E - 89^{\circ}47' E$) situated in the north-west part of Bangladesh (Fig. 1.A). It is bounded

on the north by Gaibandha and Joypurhat districts, on the east by the river Jamuna (young Bramaputra river) which separates it from Jamalpur district, on the south by Sirajganj and Natore districts and on the west by Naogaon district. It comprises a total area of 2920 sq. km.

The relief of the study area is more or less plain and very gently slopes from north-west (19 m above MSL) towards the southeast (11m above MSL). On the basis of physiography, drainage pattern and parent materials, the district can be subdivided into three major units: (a) active floodplain; (b) normal floodplain and (c) Barind tract (Fig. 1. 8)

The active floodplain occurs along the eastern margin of the district. It comprises numerous chars (accreted lands) and infilled channels in the braided channels of the Jamuna river and adjoining alluvial lands. The morphology of this area is changing drastically through flood action, and the soil of the area is either eroded or new alluvial material is deposited due to flashflood. The deposits are stratified sand and silt. Normal floodplain is a complex landscape containing sediments of diverse ages. The relief of the floodplain comprises broad ridges and some basins. Some of the ridges are above normal flood level but most of the ridges and basins are flooded during the monsoon. The deposits are mainly silty on the ridges, clayey in the basins. The Barind tract is mainly a level plain with a few uplifted terraces. The soil is locally known as khlar which is a hard compact clay of reddish colour. It becomes sticky mud in the rainy season but in the dry season it becomes very hard to plough (FAO, 1988)

Like other parts of Bangladesh, Bogra district enjoys tropical monsoon climate with periodic thundershower during summer. The maximum temperature recorded during May-June 43.9⁰ C and the minimum being 4⁰C in the month of January. The level of humidity around 90 per cent in the month of June and around 45 per cent in the month of March. The amount of total rainfall varies from 1800 m m in the east to 1500 m m in the west. The monsoon commences from the Mid-June and continues till Mid-October. The area receives more than 80 per cent of the annual rainfall during July-September Which seems quite heavy.

In 1991, the district has a total population of 2.57 million (BBS, 1992) with a density of 879 persons per sq. km. More than 90 per cent of the total population live in rural areas (BBS, 1992 a) and about

71 per cent of the total land is under plough (BBS, 1992 b). Similarly, 70 per cent of working force is engaged in agriculture which alone supports 47.42 per cent of gross regional product (BBS, 1992 b). Irrigation covers 52 per cent of the cultivated land and the intensity of cropping is 201.91 (BBS, 1992 b).

Objective of the study

This study focuses upon the farmers perception of drought hazard and their agricultural adjustment strategies. Hankins (1974) conducted almost similar study in Tanzania. In Bangladesh, a number of studies conducted on perception and human adjustment to natural hazards (Islam, 1974; Ralph, 1975; Paul, 1984; Haque, 1986, 1988, 1988 a; and Hassan, 1991). Of these the work of Paul (1984) and Hassan (1991) deal with the problem of farmers perception to some extent in selected localities of the country. No attempt has yet been made on drought hazard except some observation made by Brammer (1979) and Hassan (1991). To fill the vacuum, this study is a preliminary attempt in this regard. Basically, the objective of this study is intended to investigate the farmers long-term and short-term agricultural practices to drought hazard in Bangladesh.

Method of Study and Data Sources

In this study information were mainly collected from the primary sources. The methodology of the research includes empirical field observation and field level data collection through a questionnaire survey. Three villages were selected purposively and a total of 99 farmers from villages (taking 33 farmers from each village) were interviewed. For the purpose of better result, villages were taken from three different environmental characteristics-such as (i) village Boglahar taken from the Barind tract which represents high drought prone zone (HDPZ). Here soil becomes heavy and hard during dry season due to the absence of moisture and very difficult to plough without irrigation. Village Kuripara represents medium drought prone zone (MDPZ) of the active floodplain where loamy or sandy loamy soils underlain by sand at a shallow depth. This type of soil can retain moisture but crop leaf burning is frequent in the dry season due to radiation from adjacent char (accreted land). Village Shhipur from normal floodplain represents low drought prone zone (LDPZ) where light textured silty or clay loam soil retained sufficient moisture

throughout the dry season and very helpful for showing Kharif-1 (early summer crops) and rabi (winter crops) crops. All collected data and informatic were tabulated and interpreted in the form of simple cross table analysis.

Perception about drought hazard

In the study area, the amount and the distribution of rainfall in dry season is erratic. This is the characteristics of pre-monsoon and post monsoon rainfall, which typically comes from thundershowers. Such showers are often local in occurrences. Therefore, there is a lot of difference among the farmers about the occurrences of severe drought and for this reason farmers' expectation for future drought hazard also differ. However, all the sample respondents (99) have reported that drought in dry season is an annual features. About absolute drought occurrence, 24.24 per cent farmers in high drought Prone zone are uncertain, about 30 per cent expect in a few years interval and 45.45 per cent expect it even every year. In the medium drought prone zone, 9.09 per cent farmers are uncertain, 48.48 per cent expect in a few years and 42.42 per cent expect it 'soon'. While in the low drought prone zone, 39.39 per cent are uncertain, 27.27 per cent expect in a few years and 33.33 per cent expect it 'soon'. In general most of the farmers are pessimist about the occurrence of future drought hazard which is unlikely in the case of the study area where irrigation facility is relatively developed. Brammer (1979) points out that human memory provides a highly unreliable guide for assessing the effect of past weather on agriculture. He also stresses that even during the drought many people of Bangladesh forget rainfall scenario that had occurred only a few days or week before. Thus the farmers perception of drought hazard is highly influenced by their emotion which causes differences between actual situation and popularly belief 'absolute drought'.

The causes of farmers expectation about future drought hazard is shown in Table 1. A total of 16 causes is reported by the farmers. Of them, five causes are related to various belief system and altogether account for 21.21 per cent farmers. Such a, 'fatalistic view' actually implies that such believers perceive the domain of hazard as out of their hand or deny to justify the existence of hazard (the threat) by their own reasoning (Burton & Kates, 1964; Haque, 1988a; Saarinen, 1976). The rest eleven causes account for 78.79 per cent farmers have

some logic behind. However, if the causes mentioned by the farmers in respect to drought expectations are compared, there a lot of discrepancies emerges. For example, in case of the high drought prone zone 12.12 per cent farmers express that drought is coming every year while 9.09 per cent farmers express that it comes after certain interval. Similarly, 6.06 per cent express that there was no drought in last year while 12.12 per cent farmers express that last year was very droughty. Careful explanation of the causes of farmers perception about future drought hazard also justify the statement that 'inspite of common physical elements the farmers perception and reaction to such element will vary according to his personality, it is for this reason that an understanding of how and what basis perceptions are made is elusive' (Tidswell, 1976).

Agricultural adoptive capacity

The term 'adoptive capacity' is used here to refer to permanent elements of the farming system, in contrast to the term, 'adjustment practices' which is used in reference to those activities practiced only during or in direct response to specific drought occurrence (Hankins, 1974).

The common features of an agricultural system is reflected in crop landuse pattern. Drought hazard frequently occur during the rabi (winter crops) and Kharif-1 (early summer crops) seasons. The proportion of rabi-kharif-1 crops in the total cropped area is 46.38 in high drought prone zone, 73.54 per cent in medium drought prone zone and 65.08 in low drought prone zone respectively. Lower proportion of dry season crops in high drought prone zone is indicative that farmers of this zone are highly dependent on wet season crops. In this respect it can be said that drought in this region is common phenomena and every year the people suffers from drought in the dry season. The main reason of the drought or drought occurs mainly from the absence of rainfall during winter season and if at all rainfall occurs, it does not exceed 35 mm (the average of last ten years data). The other reason of drought is the nature of the soil. The moisture retaining capacity of the soil of this zone is absolutely zero and immediately after the rainy season soil becomes hard and dry and very difficult to plough.

So the field remains cropless for several months and natural hazard occurs.

In case of the medium drought prone zone the proportion of dry season crops is higher which is mainly because of the severe flood hazard in this area during the wet season. This zone is lying outside the Brahmaputra (Jamuna) Right Bank Embankment (inner side of the river) where seasonal (monsoon) flooding is very severe. Here cultivation of land during wet season is impossible, but some amount of land which is relatively high is cultivated with great difficulty. Therefore, the farmers of this area have undergone for dry season crop cultivation and naturally suffers from the consequences of drought hazard.

The proportion of drought resistant crops in the total cropped area indicate a greater adoptive capacity in the medium drought prone zone (57.82%) followed by low drought prone zone (30.91%) and high drought prone zone (17.40%). Crops which withstand the drought best are kaun (Indian millet), sweet potato, til (sesame), sugarcane and chillies and those withstand drought much better than generally expected are broadcasted aus paddy and Jute (Brammer, 1979). The higher proportion of drought resistant crops in the medium drought prone zone is indicating adoptive capacity in this area where the proportion of dry season crops is also higher. On the other, the proportion of net irrigated area in the net cropped area is higher in high drought prone zone (75.65%) followed by low drought prone zone (71.00%) and medium drought prone zone (14.89%). The second highest proportion irrigation facilities and the light textured loamy soils of the low drought prone zone are the main causes for second highest dry season crops cultivated area. Similarly, the index of crop diversification (Gibbs-Martin, 1962) is 0.62 for medium drought prone zone followed by low drought prone zone (0.50) and high drought prone zone (0.28).

Thus it can be said from the above fact that through experience, farmers are aware of the natural hazard for which they have adoptive capacity. To minimise the drought damage, farmers of the high drought prone zone concentrated their cropping pattern on wet season crops and practice irrigation. Farmers of the medium drought prone zone diversify their cropping pattern and cultivate some water standing crops like jute to minimise the drought as well as flood damages.

Similarly, the farmer of the low drought prone zone moderately diversify their cropping pattern with the help of their irrigation facilities.

Drought adjustment Practices

The farmer of the sample villages mentioned a number of short-term adjustment practices to drought hazard (Table 4). Among the 13 adjustment practices listed by the farmers 'weeding' and 'raking' are commonly practised by majority of the farmers. The percentage applicability for weeding is 75.75 followed by raking (61.62%), irrigation (40.40%), work for wages (35.35%), apply more fertilizer after the end of drought (29.29%) and etc. However, 5 farmers (5.05%) also stated that they avoid cultivation during the dry season and majority of them (4) are from high drought prone village. Besides irrigation, farmers are used to soil moisture conservation practices such as weeding and raking. Raking the soils after showers reduces the evaporation loss from the soils and weeding reduces the transpiration loss through weed plants. Farmers long experience with drought affecting aus paddy, Jute and other has made these soil moisture conservation practices part of the farmer's traditional knowledge (Brammer 1979). Where seed germination is poor leaving large gap between surviving plants gap filling (seedling taking from better parts of the same field or other field being transplanted in the gap) is practised by 20.20 per cent farmer. Cultivation of drought resistant crops reported by 29.29 per cent farmer is an indicative of their experience with drought. To over come the problem of late sowing or late transplanting, some farmers reported for cultivation of quick maturity crops such as lal shak (*Amaranthus*) and patal (*Pulwal*). Praying for rainfall is reported by 14.14 per cent farmer is the reflection of their belief system. However, one thing is important to note that no farmer has reported government relief operation for drought hazard adjustment.

Six farmer mentioned an interesting features of drought while stating their adjustment practices to drought hazard that 'drought burning increases soil fertility'. Because they observe a dramatic crop recovery after the drought is over. There may have accumulated some

nitrate nitrogen under dry soil conditions (Bammer, 1979). The more likely explanation of the rapid crop growth is that plants had established a bigger than normal root system in search of moisture during the drought and thus could exploit a bigger volume of soil for moisture and nutrients before or after monsoon rainfall eventually are soaked in the soil.

Conclusion

Effort have been made in this study to explain the farmers perception about drought hazard and their adoptive capacity as well as adjustment practices. It has been observed that most of the farmers are pessimist as regards to future occurrences of the drought hazard (extrem event). But the causes of their consideration provide an unrealistic guide to accept their views. On the other hand, farmers long experience of drought affecting crops, they have made certain long-term adoptive capacities. Similarly, they have some common short-term agricultural adjustment practices to overcome drought hazard such as weeding and raking the soil for moisture retention. Besides the traditional practices they also adopt modern irrigation techniques to overcome the effect of drought.

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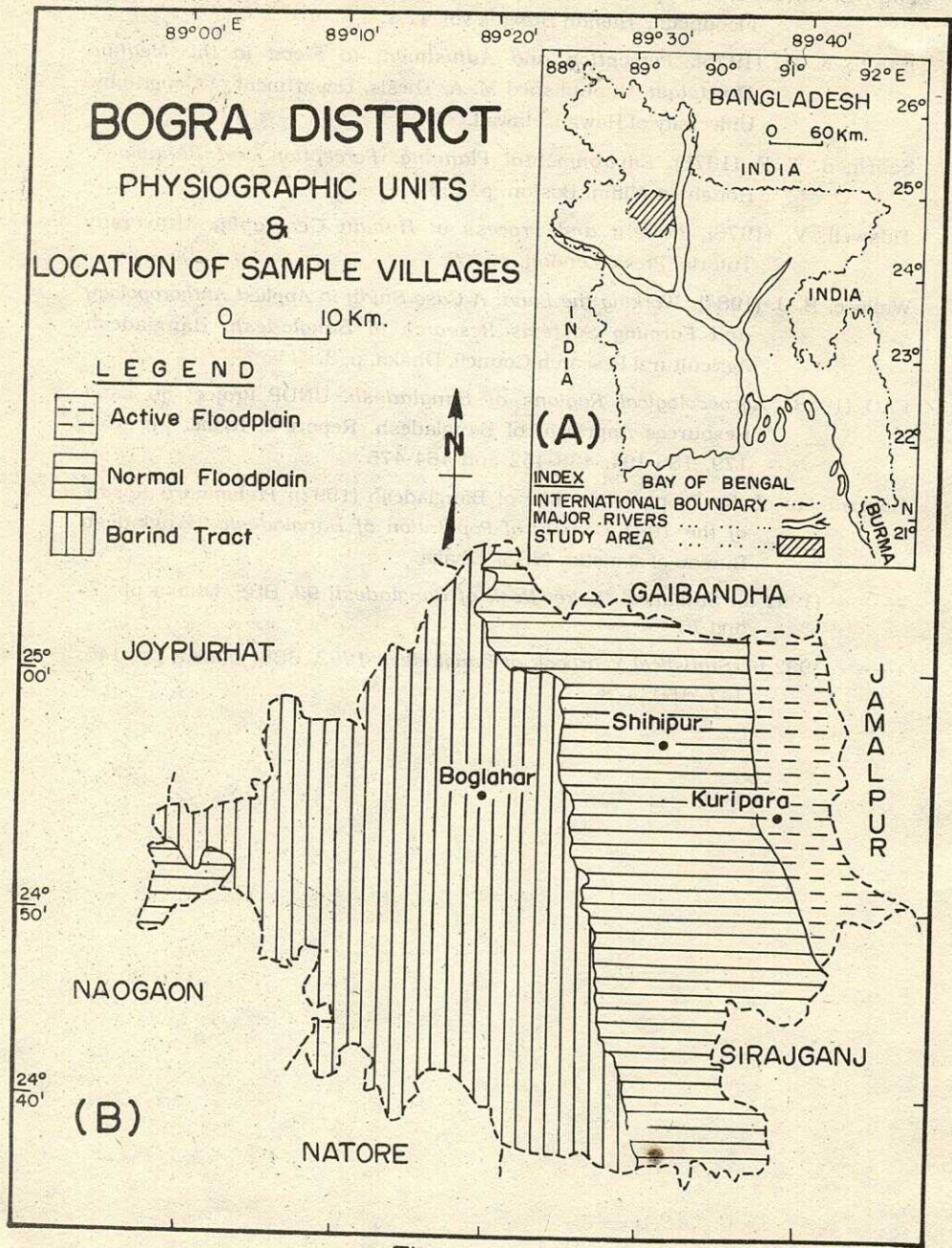


Fig. 1

Table 1 Farmers expectation about future drought hazard and their causes of consideration.

Causes	Per cent of the farmer			Total N=99
	HDPZ Village- Boglahar) N=33	MDPZ Village- Kuripara) N=33	LDPZ Village- Shihipur N=33	
Drought is coming every year	12.12	12.12	3.03	9.09
Last year there was no drought	6.06	-	9.09	5.05
Symptom of the 'day of doom' started	9.09	3.03	3.03	5.05
People are sinful	6.06	3.03	6.06	5.05
Climate has changed	9.09	3.03	-	4.04
Indiscriminate cutting of trees	3.03	-	9.09	4.04
Flood and drought Comes together	-	0.09	3.03	4.04
Barren charland radiate heat	-	12.12	-	4.04
Expect in Few Years				
It comes after certain interval	9.09	6.06	18.18	11.11
Last year was very drought	12.12	12.12	6.06	10.10
It depends upon the climatic condition	3.03	24.24	-	9.09
It depends upon the will of Allah/God	3.03	6.06	-	3.03
Allah/God is not so unkind	3.03	-	3.03	2.02

Uncertain

None can predict about nature	18.18	6.06	24.24	16.16
Allah/God knows when it will come	3.03	3.03	12.12	6.06
How can I say	3.03	-	3.03	2.02

Source: Field Survey 1991-92.

-1 Means nil.

HDPZ Means High drought prone zone.

MDPZ Means Medium drought prone zone.

LDPH Means Low drought prone zone.

N Means number of farmer.

Table 2 Sample Farms: Landuse and Intensity of Cropping 1991-92

Categories of landuse	Area in hectare (s)		
	HDPZ	MDPZ	LDPZ
Total operated area	30.75	74.75	31.14
Not available for cultivation	3.75	33.60	5.15
Culturable waste	0.15	3.14	0.71
Current fallow	0.03	0.95	0.14
Single cropped area	12.25	15.74	5.79
Double cropped area	14.57	18.42	17.82
Triple cropped area	-	2.90	1.53
Net cropped area	26.82	37.06	25.14
Total cropped area	41.39	61.28	46.02
Net irrigated area	20.29	5.52	17.85
Intensity of cropping	(154.33)	(165.35)	(183.05)

Source: Field survey 1991-92.

'-' means nil.

(' ') means per cent.

Intensity of cropping is calculated as $\frac{\text{total cropped area}}{\text{net cropped area}} \times 100$.

Table 3 Sample Farms: Cropping Pattern 1991-92

Crops	Per cent of the total cropped area		
	HDPZ	MDPZ	LDPZ
Kharif-I crops	35.56	58.14	44.33
Aus Paddy	12.37	28.66	13.62
Boro Paddy	22.03	1.50	22.40
Jute	0.92	12.83	7.89
Kaun (Indian millet)	-	14.96	-
Vegetables + Spices	0.24	0.20	0.39
Others	-	-	0.02
Kharif-II crops	50.79	26.45	32.59
Aman Paddy	50.42	26.40	32.59
Others	0.36	0.05	-
Rabi crops	10.82	15.40	20.75
Wheat	3.31	0.38	9.63
Pulse	2.05	0.28	0.87
Oil seeds	1.01	2.15	1.24
Vegetables + Spices	4.45	3.13	8.69
Others	-	9.46	0.33
Annual crops	2.83	-	2.32
Sugarcane	2.83	-	2.04
Others	-	-	0.28
Total cropped area	(41.39)	(61.28)	(46.02)
Index of crop diversification	0.28	0.62	0.50

Source: Field survey 1991-92.

'-' means nil.

(')' means area in hectare (s).

Index of diversification (Gibbs-Martin) is calculated as:

$1 - \frac{\sum X^2}{(\sum X)^2}$, where X is the per cent of total cropped area occupied by each crop.

Table 4 Farmers adjustment practices to drought hazard

Adjustment Practices	Per cent applicability			Total N=99
	HDPZ N=33	MDPZ N=33	LDPZ N=33	
Weeding	54.55	100.00	69.70	74.75
Raking	39.39	90.91	54.55	61.62
Irrigation	54.55	6.06	60.6	40.40
Work for wages	39.39	30.30	36.36	35.35
Apply more fertilizer when the drought ends	36.36	18.18	33.33	29.29
Late sowing or late transplanting	21.21	42.42	24.24	29.29
Cultivate drought resistant crops	6.06	33.33	21.21	20.20
Gap filling	9.09	36.36	12.12	19.19
Praying for rainfall	9.09	21.21	12.12	14.14
Taking loan	3.03	9.09	6.06	6.06
Avoid cultivation during drought	12.12	-	3.03	5.05
Cultivation of quick maturity crops	6.06	-	-	2.02

Source: Field Survey 1991-92

'-' Means nil.

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE RECORD

DATE: 10/10/50

TO: SAC, NEW YORK

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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TRADITIONALISM IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH

Dr. M. Shairul Mashreque *

M. Ruhul Amin **

Abstract

This paper depicts the order of things prevailing in rural Bangladesh which continues to maintain traditional 'value orientation pattern'. This society lagging far behind in terms of technological change is reminiscent of a civilisation that existed in the remote past. The mobility of the people is, thus, constrained and diffusion of scientific knowledge and modern ideas are withstood. The realities about traditional ways of patterning life and social relationship have been reflected in the functional aspects of traditionalism. By treating these factors, the frontier of traditionalism is delineated here.

Introduction:

From the hour of birth a child is socialised in accordance with the accepted norms and values. In fact human life is patterned through a set of values contained in the socio-cultural system. In a traditional rural society values penetrate deep into the peasant's thought process - his world view as manifest in his verbalised and non-verbalised expressions. This phenomenon is described as the 'image of limited good'; in other words, the cognitive orientations of the peasants (Foster 1967). Peasants' superstition and fatalistic beliefs are couched in some concepts, proverbs and common sayings.

Zaidi (1970) has beautifully depicted the socio-cultural life of the Bengali rural communities. He enquired into the villagers' orientation

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to life and their love and respect for their customs which still generate rituals and beliefs. He presented a pen-picture of the religion and religiosity in the under-developed rural areas which have left the people fatalistic and pessimistic. Primitive society is a typical example of traditional culture which does not provide any scientific basis for gaining control over nature. Overwhelmed by the atrocities of nature the people in the backward community turned towards some rituals and customs and these have come to be accepted as a traditional value system. This phenomenon is related to the ecological condition of the backward agrarian community with primitive technology and subsistence economy. Unscientific attitude coupled with non-materialistic bias is found in backward rural areas in Bangladesh and expressed in agricultural rituals, superstitious sayings and idioms.¹ The "age-long conservatism and orthodoxy planted in them by customs, traditions and religious heresay still dominate the ways of life, and outlook and aspirations of many people in the villages" (Khan & Solaiman 1977: 12). These have demoralising effects on the activities of the peasants and on the community as a whole. The influential village personalities endowed with traditional prestige and status are found to be nurturing fatalistic beliefs. They are spiritual guides establishing pseudo image as an incarnation of truth and virtues.

Purpose and Method

The purpose of this paper is to examine the traditional social order in the rural setting of Bangladesh. It also aims to indicate the functional aspects of traditionalism. The paper uses secondary materials such as journals, newspapers, studies and reports on rural development, and literature on socio-cultural life in rural Bangladesh. Findings presented follow from analytical treatment of the collected information.

Traditional Social Order in the Rural Setting

Much fatalistic belief and pessimistic attitude - products of the functioning of the traditional social order - inhibit social change. The institutional conditions of living in a backward community make the people timid, feeble, dolt, depressed and despondent. Modernisation calls for a scientific mind full of sophistication, innovation and onward outlooks. A modernised society with scientific foundation is characterised by continuous innovation, flows of new ideas, and a

succession of qualitative changes in all aspects of social order. For a backward rural community to achieve the preconditions of modernity and development, the social order must be flexible enough with the passage of time to reconcile with emerging trends in social relationship.

An interesting example from a backward village community in Bangladesh surveyed by the authors may be presented below for illustration.²

This is a traditional village named Ratanpur (pseudonym). The most backward section of the village is the western neighbourhood known as Mominpara.³ Previously its name was Petnipara.⁴

It is necessary to explain the reasons behind the recent naming of the para as Mominpara. Following the emergence of the village a number of devastating diseases in epidemic form visited this para. These epidemics left the people psychologically depressed. This state of mind understandably led to rituals and fatalistic beliefs. Perhaps in the later phase of the 19th century Petnipara was a dark place, overgrown with foliage and dotted with clumps of trees, masses of shrubs and undergrowth all matted together. Its physical features were also characterised by marshy land, dirty swamps and stagnant ponds. It was widely believed that bushy and marshy lands were haunted places frequented by female ghosts, water nymphs and a headless ghost. People strongly believed that this para was inhabited by the petnis who caused manifold diseases. Accordingly, they had identified it as Petnipara. The following occurrence reinforced their belief in the existence of supernatural forces and in the mysterious origin of all inexplicable events.

There is a story about a man who suffered from cholera and died of it fifty years ago. While he was alive and well, cholera broke out in the village. Many people believed blindly in the efficacy of *jharfuk* (to cast out disease by charms and incantation) and *tabiz* (amulet used by the believers in the hope that it would exercise the evil forces) and, as a result, died. At the time of epidemic this man was walking around the jungle in the evening. When three other villagers were passing through the jungle he started mumbling in an indistinct voice and then fell flat on the ground. They saw him and tried to resuscitate him as he was senseless. They carried him to his residence. When he came to his

sense he was asked by his father what had happened to him. He replied that while moving around in the jungle area after sunset he saw three tall women wearing red *sartis* (a piece of cloth dropped around the whole body worn by Bengali women), coming towards him. As they passed him and were about to enter deep into the jungle they became short with every step they took and then faded away altogether. Realising that they were *petnis* he became senseless. Later in the night he was attacked by cholera. The following day the neighbours visiting his home to see him became overwhelmed by the incredible story of diabolical mischievousness (the transmittal of disease) of the three *petnis*. Though the affected man was given blessed water and *tabiz* he succumbed to cholera at last.

Following this occurrence the mullas⁵ of the para advised the clearing of the jungle. They had become convinced that the evil spirits living there bred diseases. As per their direction many jungle areas were cleared and turned into fields for cultivation. They established a mosque and a *maktub* (a primary school giving religious lessons to children), and renamed the para as Mominpara which name expresses religious devotion of the community. The people acquiesced in the change of the para's name heeding the call of the religious leaders. The change of the name *Petnipara* symbolises the extermination of the evil forces and satanic elements from the neighbourhood. Establishing a religious atmosphere the mullas exercised their influence on every aspect of social organisation. The mosque, thus founded, became a centre of religious activities and a meeting place of the religious leaders who went there to take important political decisions. This indicates the involvement of religion in the exercise of social control.

The traditional caste system in the underdeveloped areas to-day constituting the core of community organisation determines a person's position, perhaps his occupation, socio-economic status and the level of his social mobility. Rural India presents a glaring example of the caste-system. The caste is an endogamous group characterised by rigidity, closeness, isolation and the hereditary nature of occupational specialisation. The system thus restricts peasant's occupational mobility and differentitation and discourages any attempt to rise to higher position through personal achievement. So the cases of shifting to other professions for self-amelioration are few. The rigidity of the structure of caste is marked by the principles of purity and pollution

prescription and prescription. Among the Muslims in traditional Bangladesh villages the weavers have the tendency to isolate themselves from the cultivator's community rarely going for the exchange relationship with them. This attitude leads them to nurture this traditional occupation. So, the quasi-caste system operates within the social structure in Muslim villages. The rule of endogamy is followed in the Muslim community where two occupational groups peasants and weavers exist.

The institution of kinship system prevailing in underdeveloped areas is a case in point. The values of the system are operative in traditional rural settings where the cases of agricultural modernisation are few. In societies like these the system of kinship has a wider connotation, the concepts involving the system are inclusive and extensive. Extended family structure, i.e. joint family, reinforces kinship relationship and creates a large circle of kin including cousins, uncles, and distant relatives. Here the structure of kinship is the foundation of socio-political super structure. The traditional lineage groups enjoy special privileges and position of power by the criterion of ascription. Kinship is the core of political organisation and shapes the configurations of power relations in traditional political system. It is the nucleus around which factions and groupings are developed. The traditional political structure is, as such, parochial, ascriptive and non-participant. It gives rise to preferential distribution pattern thus furthering the interests of dominant kinship group. "Kinship, as a vehicle for manipulation, is as useful for a leader as wealth to an entrepreneur who has earned a fortune through trade" (Islam, 1974: 156).

Concomitant with the politics of kinship factionalism hinders villagewide co-operation and joint efforts. Meaningful mobilisation of the forces of development is shakened by the frequency of factional conflict. Nicholas thus observes:

Villages which appear to be the most natural of human communities and the most obvious basis for co-operative development organisation, frequently proved to be cockpits of bitter struggle, factionalism, and the very opposite of co-operation: no one has any effective remedy, but is clear that the rural development is severely hampered by the prevalence of such conflict (Nicholas, 1973:26).

Patron-Client relationship is another manifestation of social order in changeless societies with dominant agrarian orientation. This corresponds to somewhat unequal exchange involving vertical relations of dominations and sub-ordination. Such a lopsided relationship - an expression of the traditional social order in rural Bangladesh - may have a semblance of exploitative social structure based on unequal terms and conditions, opportunities and privileges, and is almost similar to the Jajmani system prevalent in caste-ridden Indian villages (Lewis 1958, Opler and Sing 1948, and Srinivas 1955)". Viewed from dependence perspective this is a sort of dependence relationship on a smaller scale. Such relationship persists into succeeding generations in primitive agrarian societies where traditional feudal values are still operative and the capitalistic mode of production with modern technology is yet to take place.

Functional Aspect of Traditionalism

Conventional thinking about traditionalism usually regards it as anaemic to development. Traditionalism is blamed for social stagnation and backwardness of the rural areas in underdeveloped countries. This conventional approach demands an overhaul in the existing institutional structures with primitive values, belief system, mores and traits. In real life situation this approach may prove to be vague and superfluous. Traditionalism, viewed objectively, is inspirational in some cases, providing somewhat stable institutional infrastructures which are a real base for social construction and development. The process of development generated by the forces of traditionalism is natural and justified both ecologically and operationally. It is rather misleading to transplant ideas from the top without thoroughly knowing traditional technologies and skills that are deeprooted and familiar to the people.

Traditional social institutions have positive functions too. Much stimulus for the institutionalisation of balanced relationship in an otherwise diversified peasant community is provided by time-honoured customs and value framework. Traditional mode of exchange reinforces solidarity among various groups within a limited range of interaction. In this sense traditional institution functions as an integrative sector ensuring stability and continuity of the on-going structures, accommodating them to the need and knowledge of the people. Social acceptance accounts much for the viability of the system.

Traditional sector often works towards the maintenance of the indigenous system and resists any development efforts that are considered disruptive and imposed from outside. These development efforts "squeeze the local job markets, increases the income inequalities and fosters, above all, dependency" (Chowdhury, 1986). They gradually lead to lopsided growth disrupting the traditional protection system and indigenous potentials for self development. It may be recalled that modernisation efforts during the colonial period destroyed the bases of small scale industries that worked within the framework of indigenous economic system rendering a great many artisans unemployed, helpless and destitute. They had led to cumulative development of underdevelopment and added to the pauperization of the rural sector.

Traditional institutions protect the interest of the poor. The vulnerable elements may claim favour and shelter from their respective patrons. The affluent leaders bound by traditional obligations extend patronage and rewards to the poor. If such favourable conditions had not prevailed the vulnerable elements (majority in all rural communities) would coalesce to create disruption and thereby affect the existing balance of power. As long as the poor are protected, their life is insured under the institutional conditions of living, there would have been no chance of horizontal alliance and the resultant disintegration of the system. Unbalanced economic growth may occur in rural areas as a result of rural development. Yet, this would not bodily affect the position of the vulnerable. Because the benefits then would trickle down to the poor as the affluents continue to favour their poor dependents in exchange for loyalty and support they usually obtain and expect from them. So the rich contribute to the redistribution of benefits.

Kinship and patron-client relationship constitute the social foundation of a traditional society. They bind the hierarchically ranked peasants in a common social group characterised by intimate relationship, loyalty and solidarity. The continued cohesion in the kinship or factional groups functioning as sub-systems or small groups ultimately lead to social harmony and progress.

Power relationship in a traditional society is supposed to ensure stability and balance of power. Factionalism is said to 'reinforce norms' as it allows for factional competition within the existing institutional

framework. Factionalism in this way is a strategy designed to maintain status quo and to ensure subordination of relatively less powerful. The traditional elites representing their respective factions would like to limit conflicts within themselves in their endless quest for integrity of the traditional power relationship. They are ready to resist any external force attempting to change the established institution. Realising this situation the government representatives or voluntary groups coming down to the rural areas with their modernisation projects would like to approach traditional elites rather than to think in terms of grandiose project changing the entire fabric of social relationship. They cannot but come in compromise with the existing power structure. Any attempt at injecting radical ideas in the mind of the villagers by any leftist change agent will be treated as presumptive and obnoxious.

The traditional village as an indigenous community is "endowed with a culture of its own, which is historically formed as a result of its own dynamics" (Chowdhury, 1986). It appears from the empirical evidence that real learning process is anchored in the system of indigenous knowledge. The process that may provide us with useful background information about social dynamics is appreciable. The thrust of our analysis is that indigenous knowledge system as the basis or real development may be achieved through traditional value framework. As a matter of fact villagers' wisdom, inherited technologies and skills, and their desires and expectations have practical ramifications for rural development.

Conclusion:

Culture bears testimony to the gradual formation of knowledge and communication system shaping people's thought process, their perceptions about fundamental problems of life and their solution. The dominant role played by the indigenous culture is that it operates to articulate the real values of the society that are adapted to the ecological settings. This phenomenon may be described as 'cultural relativism'. Indigenous medical system, indigenous irrigation techniques, small industries operating with traditional skill and technology may be cited as glaring examples of this area.

In a traditional type of social order characteristic of a rural backward community in Bangladesh, development process is rivalled by belief system, value orientation, rigid type of occupation, stratification, religion, kinship, factional politics and elitism. Development of the rural sector is thus dependent on the proper treatment of the traditional institutions.

Notes

1. S. M. Zaidi explores interesting facts about non-economic aspects of life in rural Bangladesh and has presented a huge data-bank on superstitious sayings and fatalistic beliefs. We can mention some of them collected by Zaidi: If an owl boots at night when a person is lying ill in the house, it is belived that the person will soon die. If dogs howl at night during a general epidemic, it is feared that the epidemic may break out in that particular area. At the time of severe cyclone and storm, if Azaan (call for prayer) is recited loudly and repeatedly, the fury of the wind will die down. The first sight in the morning of a barren woman is considered inauspicious to begin a day. Don't comb hair at night or look in a mirror because your life will be shortened, and you will become poor. Do not cut your nail or hair at night, for the family may become poor. When a child breaks his baby teeth, he should deposit them in a rat hole: for by doing so he will cause fine and sharp teeth to grow. Don't cross over or walk over a person who is lying down because it will stop his growth. See S. M. Zaidi, *The Village Culture in Transittion: A Study of East Pakistan Rural Society*. Honolulu: East West Press, 1970. pp. 100-101.
2. Adapted from M. Shairul Mashreque, "Kinship and Power Structure in Rural Bangladesh: A Case Study." Unpublished M. Phil Thesis, Rajshahi: Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1980 pp. 28-31.
3. Momin means a strong believer, a pious Muslim. A person who knows and practices Islamic tenets with great devotion is called a momin.
4. Petni means female ghost. It is also a derogatory name with a derogatory meaning. The word is applied to ugly-looking women black in complexion.
5. Those Muslim devotees who in a rigorous way follow the teachings of Islam as spelled out in the religious books, praying five times a day without fail.

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ROLE-PERFORMANCE OF UNION PARISHAD MEMBERS *

- A. H. M. Mustafizur Rahman**

Abstract

The paper examines the state of condition of the actual carrying out of prescribed function and obligations by the Union Parishad members. Based on field data collected from 50 members in four Union Parishads in the district of Jamalpur, the paper explores that the actual roles performed by the respondents significantly differ from those that are prescribed for them by the Local Government Ordinance of 1983. It is found in the study that there were more low performers (60%) than high performers (40%) among the 50 respondents interviewed for the study. The scores on the performance of specific functions show that half of the total 20 functions were performed above average by the respondents and a ranking of the scores show that 4 out of 5 highly performed function were under 'civic' category. These findings imply that the UP members are mainly concerned with the execution of projects under the Rural Works Program. The other functions which were expected to be performed by the members were not performed satisfactorily. The results of the Chi-square tests show that the level of role performance of the UP members is significantly affected by some demographic and socio-economic characteristics, these are age, education, average annual income, membership in organization, leadership experience and special training experience. Specifically, high role performers tended to be those who are younger, have attained more than secondary level of education, have higher incomes, are affiliated with various types of organizations and have had leadership experience.

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Introduction

Bangladesh has a long history of local government institutions but, such institutions have contributed very little to the development process. Currently, the union parishad (UP) is the lowest local government unit in Bangladesh. While other local government units are expected to assume certain responsibilities in carrying out governmental functions, the union parishad is entrusted by law to perform the major role. Development enthusiasts hope that the union parishad will provide the democratic framework leading towards self reliant villages through cooperative endeavours. The union parishad members, therefore, should necessarily perform important functions in local government administration much of which rest on the overall role-performance of these people.

While a number of significant studies (See among others Shah Nazrul and Jabbar: 1979, Saqui: 1980 and Siddique, 1984) on local government have brought about useful insights on its administration, very little beyond nostalgic recollection is known about the role performance of the union parishad members. There are of course a few studies (See among others Karim: 1988, Quadir: 1982, Rahman 1978) on the topic but the authors concentrated more on the project related activities of the member. It is important, therefore to trace out actual role performance of the UP members against the roles prescribed for them by the Local Government Ordinance 1983. Keeping this fact in mind the present paper will principally focus on

- (i) The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the UP members.
- (ii) Some related information about the UP members; and
- (iii) Their overall role-performance.

Hypothesis of the study

This study hypothesized that

1. There will be differences between the prescribed roles and functions of the UP members and the actual role and functions they carryout.
2. The role-performance of the members will be associated with certain demographic and socio-economic attributes such as age, sex.

marital status, household size, occupation, family income, educational attainment, membership in organizations, leadership experiences, training and leadership style.

Operational definition of some important concepts

Union Parishad: The lowest local government unit in Bangladesh. It is composed of chairman and 9 members elected by the qualified voters of the village and 3 nominated women members. Generally, a UP comprises several villages.

Union Parishad members: refer to all the elected and nominated officials of the union parishad.

Role-performance: refers to the actual execution of carrying into effect by the members of their prescribed functions, duties and obligation in line with the objectives of Bangladesh local government ordinance 1983.

Prescribed roles: are the duties and functions of the UP members as provided for by the Bangladesh local government ordinance of 1983. These are shown in table-2.

Demographic characteristics: in this study are the village leader's age, marital status and household size.

Economic characteristics: are UP members' occupation, family income and land tenure status.

Social characteristics: refer to the member's educational attainment, membership in organizations, leadership experience and leadership style.

Membership in organization: UP members' affiliation with any civil or religious organization.

Leadership style: refers to the manner or method which respondents use in performing their roles, categorized into democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire.

Leadership experience: is the actual number of years a member had served as formal leader in any organization before and after becoming UP member. This was categorized as with or without leadership experience. "With experience" suggested one or more formal leadership positions occupied by the respondent and "without" means no leadership position.

Training: refers to the number of non-formal training activities attended by the respondents. This might be in the form of conference, seminars, and workshops, apart from the regular training conducted by the local government. It was categorized into "with training" and "without any training."

Level of role-performance: the state or condition of the actual carrying out of prescribed functions and obligation by the UP members. The level or role-performance was categorized into high, for those whose scores were above the mean and low, for those whose scores were equal to or below the mean. The average or mean was also the basis for classifying the extent to which the specified prescribed functions were performed. Those functions with total points or below the mean were classified as below average, those with total points above the mean were classified as above average.

Methods of study

The study area: The field work for the present study was conducted in Sarishabari Upazila, under the district of Jamalpur. It is one of the 12 upazilas in this district. It comprises 8 UPs. It has an area of 100 sq. miles with a population 226 thousand. The density of population per square mile is 2260 which is second highest in the district. The upazila enjoys a good reputation all over the country for being a jute business centre since the British rule. The then Sarishabari thana was upgraded to upazila by the government on November 7, 1982.

The sample: A multi-stage sampling technique was followed to select the respondents for the present study. Firstly, one Upazila was chosen at random from among 12 Upazilas under the district of Jamalpur. To consider the other important objectives of the present research, we had to choose for comparison both the best performing and the poorest performing UPs in the Upazila. So, secondly, two best performing and two poorest performing UPs were selected from among 8 UPs in the upazila employing the reputational approach. All the members of each of the four UPs were included as respondents for this research. Thus, the sample of the study consisted of a chairman, three nominated female members and nine male members in each UP, a total of 52 members.

Collection of data: Like many sociological research, social survey method was chosen for the study to collect information. Considering the inadequacy of a single method the survey was supplemented by scientific observation and document studies. Information about organizational characteristics of the UPs were collected from the official documents of the respective UPs. A personal interview with the respondents using a printed questionnaire was conducted to collect original data for the study.

The survey started in the first week of January 1987 and lasted for three months. Most of the respondents were interviewed in their homes. Due to the unavailability of two female respondents because of their long absence from the village residence, 50 out of 52 respondents were interviewed.

Analysis of data

Measures of central tendency, frequency counting, percentages, standard deviation and the chi-square test were the statistical techniques used in the analysis of the data. The chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between some selected variables and the role-performance of the respondents.

To determine the role-performance of the respondents, a set of specific questions were asked in accordance with their roles as prescribed by the local government ordinance of 1993 (see table 2). The researcher was very tactful in getting responses to those questions that determined their role performance. The performance of each role was categorized into three. The quantification of the response is as follows. (Chugbo: 1979).

In case where the answer was "fully", a score of 3 points was given; where the answer was "partially", 2 points; and if the answer was "none" a score of 0 was given.

That is,

Fully = 3, Partially = 2, None = 0

$$RP = \frac{RSO}{s}$$

Where: RP = role-performance of each respondent

RSO = summation of role-performance scores of each respondent

S= total number of prescribed functions.

$$\overline{RP} = \frac{RP}{N}$$

Where: \overline{RP} = average role-performance of all respondents.

RP = Summation of role-performance of each respondent for all respondents.

N = Number of respondents.

A frequency count was used to determine the number of village leaders who performed either fully, partially or none of the prescribed functions.

The scoring system for determining the level of role-performance was also utilized for determining the ranking of the level to which each of the specific functions was performed.

That is,

Fully = 3, partially = 2, None = 0

$$PSF = \frac{SSFS}{TSP}$$

Where: PSF = performance of the specific function

SSFS = summation of the specific function scores

TSP = total number of specific functions.

$$\overline{PSF} = \frac{PSF}{N}$$

Where: \overline{PSF} = average performance of specific function

PSF = summation of the role-performance for a specific function of all the respondents.

N = total number of respondents.

Major findings of the study

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Union Parishad Members.

A preponderant majority (78%) of the UP members selected for the present study were young, most probably in their early manhood

and in their productive stage. The age range was between 25 to 44 years. All of the respondents were long residents in their respective village in the sense that they had been living there since their forefathers. The respondents were predominantly male (80%). All of them were Muslims. In terms of the marital status of these respondents all of them were married. The average number of children for these UP members was 4.23. Most of them belonged to a medium to large extended type of household. The average size of the household was 7.3. A vast majority of the UP members (78%) were farmers and the average landholding size for all of them was 7.4 acres. The average annual income of the respondents was Tk. 60,000.90. Except for 14% of the respondents, all of the rest had more than 6 years of schooling and quite a considerable number of respondents (48%) had attended or completed a college education.

Some related information about the respondents:

A vast majority of the UP members (70%) were also members of some other organizations. More than half (58%) had leadership experience before they became UP members. One half of the members (50%) had received special training. With regards to leadership style the combination democratic style of leadership was favoured by 50% of the respondents followed by the democratic (36%) and non-democratic (14%) style of leadership. Out of a total of 50 UP members selected for the present research, 62% of them had some member of their families who previously occupied positions in the UP. A vast majority (78%) were holding their position in the UP for the first time. Slightly more than half (54%) of these members presented their candidacy with a desire to improve the condition of the village and 26% of them had the desire to serve the people. With regards to the feelings of the members about their position in the UP, 70% were happy and the rest were not. Nearly two thirds (74%) of the members referred to the status factor and to satisfaction derived from being able to serve people when asked about the benefits they derived from their positions in the UP. More than half of the respondents (54%) showed their interest to run for re-election in future. The 36% of the respondents who had no interest in re-election gave varied reasons in this regard. Nearly two thirds (70%) of the respondents had consulted the Upazila chairman or UNO about their problems and a great majority (71.44%) of them were satisfied with such consultation. Fifty two

percent of the respondents were very much familiar with the UP's expected roles as prescribed by LGO, 1983. There were 7 respondents who were not aware of these roles.

More than half (58%) of the respondents attended all of the meetings held in the year 1986 while 38% of them attended only a few of the meetings. With respect to problems regarding their role performance in the UP, 66% of the respondents mentioned that they did not have any problem while for 34%, scarcity of funds was major problem in being able to perform their roles efficiently.

Role-performance of the respondents*

Using the mean score of (1.34), the respondents' role-performance was categorized as either "high" or "low". Those who scored above the mean were classified as high performers while those with scores equal to and below the mean were classified as low performers. The data show that there were more low performers than high performers. Sixty percent of the respondents scored below the mean while 40% scored above mean. (table-1)

Summary of Ranking of Specific Functions (table-2)

The mean which was used as basis for categorizing the performance of a specific function into high and low was 67.6 with a standard deviation of 34.9. To obtain this mean, the total performance scores for a specific function were calculated by adding the performance scores for the function of all respondents. Then the summation of the total scores of all the functions was divided by the total number of specific functions. Thus the five specific functions that were highly performed ranked from the highest points to the lowest were:

1. Reconstruction of public ways and public streets/construction of new ones, 124 points;
2. Provision of relief measure in the event of any fire, flood, hail storm, earthquake or other natural calamity, 122 points;

* Based on the performance and activities of the members from the assumption of the office in December 1983 to December 1986.

3. Provision and maintenance of wells, water pumps, tanks, ponds and other works for the supply of drinking water, 115 points;
4. Relief measures for the widows and orphans and the poor, and persons in distress, 113 points;
5. Settlement of petty disputes between or among conflicting parties, 90 points.

The ranking of the specific functions according to total points showed that out of 20 specific functions half of the functions were performed above average and half of them were performed at a "low level".

These functions were categorized generally into civic (10 functions); Judicial (1 function); Regulatory (3 functions); Developmental (4 functions); and others (2 functions) functions. (siddique: 1984).

However, more of the functions were under civic functions. The respondent's level of performance was high for 4 out of 10 civic functions. The only judicial function, i.e., settlement of petty disputes between conflicting parties and maintenances of law and order, was found to have been performed by the respondents at an above average level. The respondents had a high level of performance for 3 out of 4 development functions. Out of 3 regulatory functions, in only one of them did the respondents perform above average. There were two 'others' categories of functions in the list. For one of these two functions namely "holding of fairs" the respondents' level of performance was above average.

Summary of Categories of Prescribed Functions Performed by UP Members

When the respondents were asked to answer whether they fully, partially or not at all performed each of the functions, their answers were varied, as shown in Table-2. Out of 10 civic functions only two were fully performed by nearly half of the respondents. These were: (a) Provision of reconstruction of public ways and public streets/construction of new ones (46%); and (b) Provision of relief measures in the event of any fire, flood, hail storm, earthquake or other natural calamity (42%). Slightly more than one third (34%) of the respondents fully performed the function of maintenances of wells, water pumps, tanks, ponds and other works for the supply of drinking

water. Twenty six of the respondents fully performed the function of relief measures for the widows and the orphans and the poor and persons in distress. The number of respondents who fully performed each of the rest of the civic functions was negligible. It is noteworthy that no respondents was found to have fully performed the functions of (a) plantation and preservation of trees, and (b) of provision of first aid center. More than half of the respondents partially performed six of the civic functions. There were four civic functions more or less performed by the respondents satisfactorily. These were: (a) Provision of reconstruction of public ways, (b) Maintenances of wells, etc. for the supply of drinking water, (c) Provision of relief measures in the event of any fire etc, or other natural calamity, and (d) Relief measures for the widows and orphans and the poor and persons in distress.

The only judicial function, i.e., settlement of petty disputes between conflicting parties and maintenance of law and order was fully performed by 20% of the respondents, partially by 60% and was not at all performed by 20% of the respondents.

Out of three regulatory functions one was fully performed by only 2 (4%) of the respondents while no respondents fully performed the other two. The data show that of the three functions of this category only one, i. e., registration of birth and deaths was better performed by the respondents.

For the developmental functions, the number of respondents who performed these fully was almost negligible. Out of four functions under this category three of them were partially performed by a good number of respondents. The function of adoption of measures for population control was very poorly performed by the respondents.

There were two functions under the 'other' category. The data show that 84% of the respondents partially performed the functions of holding of fairs and shows and celebration of public festivals. The function of promotion of public games and sports was performed partially by a little more than half (58%) of the respondents. The number of respondents who performed these functions fully was very negligible.

To summarize, the data on whether the respondents fully, partially or not at all performed the specific functions indicate that two of the functions under the civic category were fully performed by nearly

half of the respondents. For the rest of the 18 functions, the number of respondents who fully performed these was quite insignificant. For half of the functions each one was performed by more than half of the respondents. There were as many as 8 functions which were not at all performed by a considerable number of respondents. It is quite evident from the table that the performance by the respondents of the specific functions was poorest for regulatory functions which was followed by civic functions.

Relationship between socio-economic factors and respondents' role performance

In this study nine selected variables were examined for their relationship with the level of role-performance of the respondents. Five of these variables showed a significant relationship with the level of role performance of the UP members. These variables were age, average annual income, membership in organizations, leadership experience and training. The results of the study indicated that the young UP members, the members with high average annual income and those with membership in other organizations, leadership experience and training tended to have high role-performance. (see table-4)

Conclusion

The above discussion gives us a clear picture about the role-performance of Union Parishad members. It is found in the study that the members' level of role-performance is very disappointing. There were more low performers among the respondents. Moreover, actual performance of these respondents show significant difference from their performance as prescribed for them by the LGO 1983. The study reveals that even nearly half of the respondents are not aware of their prescribed roles. Ranking of specific functions has depicted that the UP members were mainly concerned with the execution of projects under the Rural Work Programs. The others functions which were expected to be performed by them were not done satisfactorily. In support of the hypothesis the study shows that the role-performance of the members are significantly related with some demographic and socio-economic factors like age, family income, membership in organization, leadership experience and training.

The Tables

Table-1

Distribution of respondents on basis of their role-performance score.

ROLE-PERFORMANCE SCORE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Low (0- 1.34)	30	60
High (1.35 and above)	20	40
Total	50	100

Table-2

Summary of the ranking of prescribed functions according to points scored for each function.

FUNCTIONS	RANK	TOTAL POINTS SCORED*	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE
Civic :			
a. Provision of reconstruction of public ways and public streets/ construction of new ones.	1	124	high
b. Plantation and preservation or trees in general. and plantation of trees on public ways, public streets and public places in prticular.	12	60	low
c. Sanitation, conservation and the adoption of other measures for the cleanliness of the union.	13	43	low
d. Regulation of the collection, removal and disposal of measure and street sweeping.	19	29	low
e. Regulation of the disposal of carcasses of dead animals.	14	40	low
f. Maintenance of wells, water pumps, tanks, ponds and other works for the supply of drinking water.	3	115	high
g. Adoption of measures for preventing the contaminaiton of sources of water supply for drinking.	18	30	low
h. Provision of relief measures in the event of any fire, flood, hail storm, earthquake or other natural calamity.	2	122	high
i. Relief measures for the widows and orphans and the poor persons in distress.	4	113	high
j. Provision of first aid centre.	17	36	low

Judicial:

k.	Settlement of petty disputes between conflicting parties and maintenance of law and order.	5	90	high
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Regulatory:

l.	Registration of births and deaths and maintenance of such vital statistics as may be prescribed.	10	68	high
m.	Assistance in the collection of taxes or revenues.	20	4	low
n.	Regulation of offensive and dangerous trades.	16	38	low

Developmental:

o.	Agricultural, industrial and community development; promotion and development of cooperative movement, village industries, forest, livestock and fisheries.	8	83	high
p.	Adoption of measures for increased food production.	9	78	high
q.	Adoption of measures for population control.	15	39	low
r.	Adoption of measures for increasing literacy.	6	89	high

Other:

s.	Holding of fairs and shows/celebration of public festivals.	7	87	high
t.	Promotion of public games and sports.	11	64	low

* Summation of the role-performance for a specific function of all the respondents.

Table-3

Summary of categories of prescribed functions performed by UP members.

FUNCTION	FULLY		PARTIALLY		NOT AT ALL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Civic:						
a. Provision of reconstruction of public ways and public streets/construction of new ones.	23	40	26	52	1	2
b. Plantation and preservation of trees in general and plantation and preservation of trees on public streets and public places in particular.	0	0	30	60	20	40
c. Sanitation, conservation and the adoption of other measures for the cleanliness of the union.	1	2	20	40	29	58
d. Regulation of the collection, removal and disposal of measure and street sweeping.	1	2	13	26	36	72
e. Regulation of the disposal of carcasses of dead animals.	2	4	17	34	31	62
f. Maintenance of wells, water pumps, tanks, ponds and other works for the supply of drinking water.	17	34	32	64	1	2
g. Adoption of measures for preventing the contaminaton of sources of water supply for drinking.	2	4	12	24	36	72
h. Provision of relief measures in the event of any fire, flood, hail storm, earthquake or other natural calamity.	21	42	29	58	0	0

i. Relief measures for the widows and orphans and the poor persons in distress.	13	26	37	74	0	0
j. Provision of first aid centre.	0	0	18	36	32	64

Judicial:

k. Settlement of petty disputes between conflicting parties and maintenance of law and order.	10	20	30	60	10	20
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Regulatory:

l. Registration of births and deaths and maintenance of such vital statistics as may be prescribed.	0	0	34	68	16	32
m. Assistance in the collection of taxes or revenues.	0	0	2	4	48	96
n. Regulation of offensive and dangerous trades.	2	4	16	32	32	64

Developmental:

o. Agricultural, industrial and community development; promotion and development of cooperative movement, village industries, forest, livestock and fisheries.	1	2	40	80	9	18
p. Adoption of measures for increased food production.	4	8	28	56	18	36
q. Adoption of measures for population control.	1	2	18	36	31	62
r. Adoption of measures for increasing literacy.	1	2	43	86	6	12

Other:

s. Holding of fairs and shows/celebration of public festivals.	1	2	42	84	7	14
t. Promotion of public games and sports.	2	4	29	58	19	38

Table-4

Summary of chi-square test result on the relationship between socio-economic factors and the respondents role-performance.

FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DECISION FOR NULL HYPOTHESIS
Demographic		
age	6.79*	Rejected
Household size	4.665ns	Accepted
Economic		
Occupation	3.23ns	Accepted
Income	11.08**	Rejected
Social		
Educational attainment	2.05ns	Accepted
Membership in Organization	19.43**	Rejected
Leadership experience	19.73**	Rejected
Training	21.32**	Rejected
Leadership Style	1.02ns	Accepted
* Significant at	.05 level	
** Significant at	.01 level	
ns not significant.		

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NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INFORMAL TRANSACTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

In rural societies, there exists various traditions and customs of transactions and exchanges which the people practise for mutual benefit. These transactions are part of the traditional social system, emanate from interdependent relations and are ingrained in traditional values and norms. These could be found in different spheres of life in perpetuating their daily livelihood, in repairing and constructing their houses, in village politics and in festivals, ceremonies and religious rituals. Most of these practices are not usually classified as informal credit. But it was found that when these informal transactions fail to meet the need, an individual has to turn to the credit market in an attempt to borrow from formal and informal sources.

Social life is based on interdependence. This mutual dependence may be viewed as give-and-take system (reciprocity) among members of relatively close social groups. The system of reciprocity or transaction has developed in the rural society as an important ingredient for the preservation and continuation of group life.

An individual is always dependent on other members of his community and he interacts with them on different socio-economic aspects of their mutual interest. In a rural society, the villagers "must establish families and relate to kinsmen in ways that presuppose mutual obligations and expectations. They must get along with fellow villagers well enough to be able to call on them for economic, social and ritual aid in time of need" (Diaz & Potter 1967:54). Rights and obligations of

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neighbours, kins, fellow villagers, faction and formal leaders form the bases of social relationships. Mutuality and interdependence do not mean that interactions and exchanges occur on equal terms. The major questions are: who needs whom, and what resources do the parties have for exchange (Biesanz & Biesanz, 1978:26)? An individual's position in his community determines the nature of exchange relationship. He may be dominant or subordinate, powerful or weak, rich or poor. His access to productive resources and credit facilities is deeply influenced by his position in the structure of his community (Donald, 1970:82). As Jahangir (1982:84) has pointed out, the villagers in Bangladesh live their life and operate in different structures enmeshed in a variety of ties which facilitate or accentuate his accessibility to resources or means of livelihood.

It will be an oversimplification to reduce these multiple bonds to a single purpose creditor-debtor relationship (Donald, 1970: 54-55). These transactions are part of the traditional social system and emanate from interdependent relations and, are ingrained in traditional values and norms.

Role of informal transactions in rural society

Innumerable village studies have been conducted in different parts in order to understand village life of Bangladesh.¹ As would be expected, these studies varied in content, methodology and perspectives on village life. Most of these studies did not give adequate attention to the nature of informal transactions and their implications for the village society. Some of these studies however indicated about the persistence of non-market transactions and exchange systems in village life. Quadir (1960:55-56) noted that 'badla' or labour exchange was widely practised in the Comilla village in 1960s. Even as late as 1980-81 in Baraipara of Bogra, Herbon (1985:52-53, 77-78) noted the existence of certain non-market forms of reciprocative labour exchange ('Dhara' and 'Gata') as well as redistributive works festivals and 'Jajmani'-type employment of village craftsmen by local cultivators. A comparable 'micro-credit'² system was also observed by Herbon (1985:54-55) in the same village. Jansen (1987:102-3) found that there were 'horizontal' debt transactions amongst the landless and the poor

in village of Bhaimara in Dhaka during 1976-80. Most of these households were so destitute that no rich persons were willing to lend to them. Consequently, they used to lend to each other in times of need and the relationship was reciprocal in the sense that the roles of lender and borrower would often be interchanged from one day to another.

It is obvious that such transactions not only strengthens the village solidarity but also reduces the need for formal credit. In view of the importance of various forms of informal transactions in rural society, the present study was undertaken to make a detailed analysis of the nature and implications for informal transactions among the people in a village.

Methodology of the study

The data presented in this study was collected during 1986-87 in Daksin Charkumaria village. The study village is situated in the remote south-eastern alluvial plains of Shariatpur district. The Upzila headquarter, Goshairhat, is about eight miles away from the village. The houses of the village have been built on raised land and are clustered together, and are surrounded by cultivable fields. The village in many respects, has the general economic and socio-cultural features of south-eastern region of Bangladesh. It had 163 households comprising 927 persons of whom 498 (53.7%) were male and 429 (46.3%) female. The data for the study were obtained on the basis of participant observation, supplemented by case illustrations.

Informal transactions in the study village

Like other traditional societies, Daksin Charkumaria is inhabited by a group of loosely integrated families. Extended kinship ties are of significant importance. Other unifying bonds are those of neighbourliness, friendship and patron-client relationship. The bond of unity is sustained by a set of informal practices of exchange of labour, capital and consumption goods including gifts. These transactions are to be found in different spheres of life in cultivation, in earning the daily livelihood, in house repair and construction, in village politics, and in festivals, ceremonies and religious rituals.

Many of these practices are not usually classified as informal credit. But they contribute to social transactions and influence the

need for credit. For many years, the people in the villages has been practising these as their way of life. These are very simple forms of assistance which require no security, formal contract or payment of interest, even if some of them involve exchange of cash or kind. It is extremely difficult to ascertain their actual magnitude and frequencies. But it can be ascertained that if and when these informal exchanges fail to meet the need, an individual has to turn to the credit market in an attempt to borrow from formal sources. These interpersonal transactions may be termed as a form of reciprocity which varies according to the type of things exchanged and the persons involved in the transaction. In Dakshin Charkumaria, these practices may be classified into four main forms: (i) give-and-take, (ii) short-term exchange of goods, (iii) exchange of gifts,⁵ and (iv) debt of gratitude.

Give-and-take

Occasional give-and-take was found to be the most common form of interpersonal transaction of goods and services. The villagers were used to offer assistance to fellow villagers during different emergency situations in their daily life. This was done as an expression of friendship, neighbourliness and kinship relations with the expectation that similar assistance, might not of the same kind, will be offered in their own emergency. The only obligation of the recipient was a sense of gratitude which induces him to reciprocate.

Cooperative labour was another form of transaction. In the village we found two major forms of cooperation: group work and exchange work. In group work, neighbours, relatives and friends got together for certain labour-intensive tasks: clearing a man's fields, erecting a house, etc. The system was locally known as *begar* (i. e. free labour). In some occasions, the neighbours, local relatives and friends were invited to work. The invitees felt obligated to come and the host provided them with a meal after the completion of the work. The well-to-do villagers also adopted this practice to get their labour-intensive work done within a short time without hiring a large number of labourers. They, however, had to feed the labourers well after the completion of the work. Even than it was cheaper and quicker.

The exchange-work was practised mainly by the lower class people who could hardly afford to hire labourers. This was a sort of labour sharing⁶ and was locally known as *jub*. In this system, several households worked on each other's land in turns. This mutual sharing

of work was done with an implicit understanding that it would be returned whenever other's are in need of such assistance.

As would be expected, the villagers of Daksin Charkumaria occasionally helped their relatives, neighbours and friends by giving bullocks to plough the land, boats to carry crops from far away fields, and by providing with other necessary accessories during the busy period of work. For this, they did not charge any rent and in this way, helped save a good sum of money of the fellow-villagers. Of course, the recipients also had to reciprocate. The practice was however gradually declining due to the socio-economic changes.

Give-and-take during ceremonies was also in practice in the village. At the time of special occasions like marriage ceremony or *mejanti* (communal feast), a person had to feed a large number of guests. But even the rich person of the villagers did not possess sufficient number of crockeries and utensils. In such situations, villagers helped each other. It required no payment of rent. But except for close relatives, necessary compensation had to be paid for missing or broken crockeries utensils, other articles borrowed for the occasion. Such mutual help and cooperation saved the host from an additional expenditure. But the practice was also on the decline.

Short-term exchange of goods

A woman occasionally approached a neighbouring woman for some kitchen supplies and other related things. This was locally known as *dhar* or *karja*. To make such a transaction, it required only a simple request. But the woman who was approached for such a transaction, usually took the decision to lend on the basis of strength of relationship and previous experience in such dealings with the woman who had approached. Often cooked food and other titbits were exchanged. This led to the strengthening of the relationship. This also some time led to quarrels and bickerings if a woman failed to repay goods and articles borrowed, or if she showed reluctance in reciprocating. This type of exchange often occurred without the knowledge of the male head of the family. Usually, the period for such transactions was for a short period of time. Sometimes, a woman might pretend to forget about the things borrowed, or might politely refuse to accept any repayment. But the extent of such short-term borrowing and exchange could only be sustained through reciprocity.

Gift giving

Reciprocal giving of gifts as a token of love or friendship or during a special occasion, was a common practice in Dakshin Charkumaria. A gift given to some one on any occasion was usually reciprocated by the recipient whenever chance came. If a dish of food was received from one's house, the plate was usually returned with food or other things instead of sending it empty. If anybody went to any of his relatives, he was supposed to take seasonal fruits, sweets or biscuits. Usually, this was done to strengthen the bond of relationship. And sometimes some one might give a gift to another person in order to establish friendship. Any gift when accepted should be reciprocated duly and the failure to do so left him in a position of debt to the giver. Of course there was no obligation as to how soon and in what form this should be reciprocated. Gifts performed various social as well as economic functions.

It was found that the villagers preferred cash money to any other form of material gifts during social occasions like marriage and *khatna* (circumcision). A plate with a silver coin was laid before the guests at the *majltsh* where the invitees offered gift of money in cash. This was locally known as *thalpata* (laying a plate for collecting gifts). The gift of cash money on such occasions usually compensated some of the expenses (and debts) incurred for the occasion by the host. This is illustrated from the following case:

At the time of data collection, one Noor Mohammad Mridha, a medium farmer of the village, was asked about the amount of expenditure he incurred during the marriage ceremony of his elder son and the amount of money he got from the invitees. It was found that the gift-money was not only enough to pay for the major part of his expenditures but was also used in repaying a part of the debt he incurred for arranging the marriage.

Usually, the amount of cash gift one received during a marriage ceremony depended on the status, social relationship and or the number of invitees. It was also depended on the payment one has already made to others in similar occasion. For an affluent family, the amount received would be a large sum, for a poor family, it would be a small sum. The amount one may collect during an occasion was however uncertain. The villagers often talked about whether one had got a small or a very large sum of money during a marriage in one's

family. And from this, the people often evaluated the social status and generosity of the guests. There were some expectations on the behaviour of different categories of villagers on these occasions.

On my way back from the field investigation, I entered in a tea-shop. There I found three persons of the village talking about the different aspects of the marriage ceremony of the son of a rich man of the village. One of them said the money received on the gift-plate was unexpectedly small in terms of the social status of the family. They analysed the reasons and came to the conclusion that the rich man was miser in giving gift in different marriage ceremonies that he had attended earlier. So, his guests were not generous, just reciprocated his own miserly attitude.

We were told that the practice of gift-giving was not the same as it had been some years back. In earlier days, gift-giving was supposed to be good wishes and blessings to the new couple, no matter, whether or how much had given as a gift. No list of gift payees was maintained. But the situation had changed due to economic pressure. It was observed that a list of gift -payees with the amount was maintained carefully so that one could follow the same at the time of reciprocity. Above all, expectation of getting gifts in such occasions had become one of the important objectives of inviting certain number of guests who were obliged to pay according to their social status and expectations of the *samaj*. Thus, if any one one failed to return up to the expectation, there arose stress or tension among the involved parties. Most villagers considered gift-giving a nuisance and social evil because, it had lost its spontaneity and original meaning.

Some form of gifts were exchanged without any specific expectation of return. Gifts given in the marriage ceremony of a daughter by her parents or elder brothers and at the time of sending one's daughter or sister to her father-in-law's house after the birth of the first child, etc. were as such gifts. But in recent years these were taking the form of dowry, instead of being voluntary gifts of love and affection. These were being considered as "demand" by the bridegroom party on the brides' family. We came to know that several tragic incidents including divorce /eperation had occurred due to the failure of the bride's family to meet the demand of the bridegroom's family. The villagers agreed that the practice was a social evil, and economically

harmful to the society. The law against the dowry did not have any positive influence on this harmful practice in Dakshin Charkumaria.

The practice of gift-giving without special occasions occur among the people of the same stratum and as well as across the strata. The purpose of giving a gift by a person of lower status to a person of higher status was not same as it was from the higher status to the lower status. The person of lower status gave a gift to a person of higher status for maintaining a good relation, or as an expression of loyalty or as a partial repayment of debt of gratitude. Sometimes, a gift was given as bribe by a person of lower status to a person of higher status for obtaining support in a village arbitration (*shaltsh*) or for getting a reliefcad from the *Unton Parishad* or for getting some other special benefit which was under the control of the latter. A gift by a person of higher status to a person of lower status was given either as a charity or for serving some other socio-economic and political purpose. Usually, a gift given by a person of higher status was a favour or patronage which helped improve his factional power. Thus, the purpose of gift-giving was profoundly influenced by the rank and status of the giver and the receiver but most gifts are no longer simply as expression of love and affection.

Debt of gratitude

In the study village there were a few well-to-do families. Most of the villagers were poor peasants, day labourers, *rayots*, fisherman and petty traders. These two classes depended on each other, and often entered in to an unstable relationship of mutual dependence. It was an informal relationship involving an interchange of non-comparable goods and services between the actors of unequal status, and set the rights and obligations of both the parties. This relationship imposed reciprocal obligations of different kinds: protection and favour in return of loyalty and support.

We have already discussed the nature of interpersonal transaction of goods and services among the landlord and his *rayots*. This was based on mutual obligation. There were other forms of transactions where a person of higher status showed special favour to a person of lower status. In such circumstances, the recipient knew that he was not in a position to repay the debt, rather he ought to show gratitude and loyalty. The recipient might also give occasional gifts to the one to

whom he was indebted. Thus, full repayment was not expected, the repayment was symbolic. Such type of debt which were not equally reciprocated may be called as a debt of gratitude.

The social status of a person in the village was primarily determined not only by his wealth but also by the number of his followers and dependents. A village *matbar* or an influential person often showed special favour to a person of the lower status, by supporting him in a village *salish*, by negotiating an institutional loan, by mediating in a dispute with the local police station, by giving agricultural or other accessories, and sometimes by extending interest-free loan in cash or kind. In this way, he could retain and increase his followers and strengthen his position and status in village politics and factional feuds.

Concluding remarks

Thus, there was various practices in the village life where inter-personal dependency, cooperation and transactions occur among villagers. It was not possible to estimate the extent and magnitude of such practices. But these were no less important and meaningful than other forms of informal credit practices in the rural society. The people of Dakshin Charkumaria had traditionally been accustomed to these practices. But recently, the nature and extent of these traditional practices had been undergoing rapid changes. These practices should be included as an integral part of the rural informal credit system because, the existence of these practices in the rural social system helped in minimizing the credit need of the villagers and thereby reduced their indebtedness. These practices were found to remain at the base of greater social integration among the people of both equal and unequal status in the village. We could however discern some symptoms of social disintegration by examining these practices of informal transactions. Since many of these practices were changing or being distorted, the need for credit from formal organizations went up.

Notes:

1. Mukherjee (1971), Islam (1974), Quadir (1960), Bertocci (1970), Haq (1973), Ellickson (1972), Chowdhury (1978), Arens and Van Beurden (1977), Jahangir (1979), Hartmann and Boyce (1979; 1983), Van Schendel (1982), Thorp (1978), Westergaard (1980), Siddiqui (1982), Herbon (1985), Rahman (1986), Arefeen (1986), and Karim (1990) had an attempt to understand village life of Bangladesh.
2. 'Micro-credit' system was operated with in a group of about 10 households, including landless labourers and widows, who were not considered credit worthy by other villagers. When without employment or facing starvation, these households would help each other out with whatever surplus they had. These loans did not involve interest, but were repaid as soon as possible by the borrowers.
3. Marcel Mauss (1967), a French anthropologist studied the form and functions of gift in archaic societies. He found the important role of gift giving to establish and strengthening the social relationship.
4. In some villages of Bangladesh, non-market labour transactions were found to persist up to relatively recent times. Quadir (1960) noted that 'badla' or labour exchange was widely practised in the Comilla village in 1960. Even as late as 1980-81, in Baraipara of Bogra, Herbon (1985) noted the existence of certain non-market forms of reciprocative labour exchange ('dhara' and 'Gata': respectively, dyadic and polyadic) as well as redistributive 'works festivals' and jajmanitype of village craftsmen by local cultivators.

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RELATIVES' NETWORK OF A VILLAGE IN BANGLADESH

- Dr. S. M. Zillur Rahaman *

Abstract

Like other societies, there exists an indigenous relatives' network of the village, Mukhait. It includes several categories of relatives, i.e., *nijer bari* (relatives of one's own or patrilateral home), *mamar bari* (relatives of one's affinal home) and *dharma-atmiya* (fictive relatives). Apart from these, the villagers conceptualise another category to group and cluster their relatives. They call the relatives of this category 'own people' compose of *atmiya*, *svajan*, *ghati* and *kutumbu*. The groups and cluster under each category of the relatives' network has almost different relative composition. Its inter-personal relations, roles, functions, duties or obligations etc. are also different. In spite of these differences, relatives' network often helps integrating the social life in the village.

Introduction

A person in a society is surrounded by a large number of relatives. These relatives belong to the different groups, and categories. The total complex of this relationship in a society is termed as relatives' network. Either scatteredly or systematically a large number of social

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anthropologists and sociologists around the world have focused their attention to the relatives' network (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950, Fox 1967, Fortes 1958, Hershman 1981, Kerve 1964, Strauss 1969 and many others). They have shown the compositions and explained roles, functions and the socio-cultural relations of the relatives' network in the societies they have dealt with. Being predominantly the villages are the basic units of Bangladesh social structure. It is, therefore, important that villages should get the proper attention to know any aspect of the rural social structure. So far, sufficient number of studies have not been conducted covering several aspects of the village society, more particularly, very little attempts have been made to study relatives' network of the villages (Hara 1967, Mashreque 1986, Rahaman 1990, Aziz 1979, Sarker 1985). This condition necessitates that more systematic studies should be conducted on the area of study in the village communities in Bangladesh. It may help us in generalizing the subject, and help developing the science of social anthropology and sociology of Bangladesh. This paper of an attempt to these ends.

Acquaintance with the village

The name of the study village is Mukhait. It is located in Gotapara Union of Begerhat Sadar thana, in Bagerhat district of Khulna division. Mukhait is seven miles north east from Begerhat District head quarter, bounded in the south by village Gotapara, in the east by Hegelbungia canal and village Parchimvagh, in the west by village Bishnupur, and in the north by village Mulghar. The Bagerhat-Chitalmari road is the only means of communication by land to and from the village. The village is connected with Bagerhat town by a small steem launch service. It is well connected with several places by boat.

Mukhait is a Muslim village. The total population of it is 1096, 580 (52.92%) are males and 516 (47.08%) are females. The number of males per 100 females is 112.4 considerably higher than that in Bangladesh figure (population Census 1981:45). The total number of households, in Mukhait is 203, and the average persons using in these households is 5.0.

Methodology

Data used in this research were gathered through a direct participation of the author for a period of ten months in the field. This method is socio-anthropologically viable for such study (see Wilkinson and Bhandarkar 1984, Srinivas *et al* 1979, Chowdhury 1985).

During the field work, the interview with the villagers was unstructured. No questionnaire was used. A schedule and a notebook were carried respectively for controlling and recording the experiences. A good rapport was built up with the villagers. However, for the sake of reliability experiences gathered were cross-checked from various sources, such as governmental offices, and key informants.

Relatives network in Mukhait

In Mukhait, a person lives within a large relatives' network. He or she is related with a number of persons by kinship, based on affinity and fictive relationships, and there are indigenous categories to group and cluster these relatives. Firstly, a person relatives are categorised into three principal clusters, namely, *nijer bart* (one's own, i.e., patrilateral home), *mamar bart* (one's mother's natal, i.e. matrilateral home), and *shasur bart* (one's affinal home). Secondly, there are fictive relationships. And thirdly, the villagers categorise their *nejerlok* (one's own people) into *atmya*, *svajan*, *ghatt* and *kutumbu*. The composition, interpersonal relationships among the relatives of these categories of the relatives' network are discussed. It may be noted here that the interpersonal relationships of these categories are subject to change in course of time. What is pointed that the 'developmental process'¹ is important to understand the categories of relations. For an example, a man's relatives' on his wife's natal side are affinal, but they become matrilateral for his children in the next generation.

Relatives of patrilateral home

A person's patrilateral relatives are the persons who reside his/her father's household, family or lineage. In broader sense, it includes people who live in the whole environment of father's side.

Person's relations with patrilateral relatives begins right at the time of his/ her birth. These relatives render all major services during his/her delivery period. When the child is born, the rituals associated with birth, i.e., *akika* (Islamic ceremony connected with new born

baby), *milad* (gathering for hailing the prophet of Islam) etc. are performed by the patrilineal relatives. The infant child is brought up amidst the relatives of patrilineal home. They provide the child, according to their socio-economic status, all basic necessities, such as food, clothing, medical treatment etc. When the child grows patrilineal relatives start working about his/ her schooling. Slowly and slowly the child imbibes whatever is there around his/ her patrilineal home environment.

Patrilineal relatives help a person in building up the behavioural pattern in the village society. He or she is taught and is supposed to follow a particular code of conduct and discipline and adhere to the customs and culture prevalent in the society around. These relatives impart a person the necessary skills in running his/ her separate household or family on maturity. A village daughter learns from the patrilineal relatives her future roles to be performed after marriage. Similarly, a village son learns what will be his future roles when he establishes his own household or family.

Above are some of the facets of one's relations with the patrilineal relatives. These do not, however, mean that the relations among the patrilineal relatives go on smoothly always. Tension, discord, conflict and disputes are also very common among them. These may accentuate because of host of reasons. Of them, property distribution, damage to crops caused by domestic animals, distribution of agricultural produce, socio-familial ceremonies, lending money, local politics, legal battle are important.

Relatives of matrilineal home

Matrilineal relatives are the persons who live in one's mother's natal home. These relatives are also identified in two senses. One, narrower, and in the other, wider. In narrower sense, these relatives are persons who reside in mother's father's household, or family or lineage. And in wider sense, the persons live in the whole environment of the mother's father's.

The village children are always very eager to visit their matrilineal relatives. *Mamar bart* (mother's natal home) is a place of joy for the children. The village people say, 'the mother's natal home is the second home for children'. The children have affectionate and loving relationships with *mama* (mother's brother) and *mami* (mother's

brother's wife). They get much affection and importance from *nana-nani* (mother's parents). *Nani* is especially indulgent to them. A child's relationship with maternal grand parents, i. e., *nana-nani*, is qualitatively different from that with paternal grandparents, i.e., *dada-dadi*. The paternal grandparents sometimes admonish their *puta-puti* (son's children) because the grandparents may feel that they should teach their children something for the sake of discipline and socialization. The maternal grandparents, on the other hand, think about their *nani-puti* (daughter's children) differently. The daughter's children have come to visit their home only temporarily and are guests in their home. They will soon go back to their parental home. So, not only the maternal grandparents but even other on their side do not even think of disciplining the children. They all affectionates and loves the children.

Although, the children have affectionate and loving relationships with the maternal relatives, there may be situations in which the children do not receive expected affection from them, particularly from *mami* (mother's brother's wife). Some of these situations are: (i) if the mother of the children reverts to her natal home owing to divorce or widowhood, (ii) when the mother had more than one married brothers and she surrenders her share of property to one brother after death of parents, and (iii) when in familial affairs, the mother shows favour towards any brother and his wife, and criticises others.

The children's ties with their matrilateral relatives do not always continue to be the same. They get reduced when the children grow up. After marriage the girls go to join their husband's household. Then they do not have much time to visit their matrilateral relatives. The boys also, after their marriage get involved in their domestic life. Then their visits to matrilateral relatives gradually becomes less frequent. However, one can always count on help and support from one's matrilateral relatives in times of need (Aziz 1979, Bhuiyan 1978).

Relatives of affinal home

Affinal relatives are also identified in two senses. In the narrower sense, the affinal relatives are persons who live in one's wife's parental household, family or lineage. And in the wider sense, affinal relatives are those persons who live in the whole environ of the wife's father's.

A man's affinal relatives' home is a place of enjoyment for him. He gets importance, comfort and hearty hospitality at this place. On every

important occasion, i. e., marriage, *mitlaa'id* etc., the son-in-law is invited by the affinal relatives and the former's participation and cooperation are expected. He is usually the most prominent participant. The frequency of man's visits to his affinal relatives' place depend upon certain factors, such as location, social and familial necessities etc. If the place is nearby the visits are more frequent (Rahaman 1990).

A woman's affinal relatives' place is not like of a man's. It is not recreational for her. She is permanent member here. This is her own home. Immediately after her marriage, she is a new wife, and has almost no duty. Then gradually she has to shoulder responsibilities and obligations. When she gives birth to children her responsibilities and duties increase even more. Then she has no time even for visiting her own natal home. Sometimes her husband and children visit her natal home but she cannot.

It is not that one's relationships with the affinal relatives are always smooth. There are a number of factors which result in tension, quarrel, and even dispute between them. In case of a man, negligence towards a woman's need by her husband, wife's bad moral character, nonpayment of agreed dowry during wedding are the most important factors which aggravate tension between a man and his affinal relatives. Similarly, in case of a woman, her inefficiency in household chores, lack of ability to adjust, bad moral character, high expectation from husband's are the factors.

While tension may emerge in the interaction between a person and his/ her affinal relatives, there are members on both the sides to take initiatives to ease out the tension through tact, intelligence and experience. Besides, a person's relationship with affinal relatives does not remain the same through out the life. In the case of a man, his relationship with affinal relatives continues to be close usually till his parents-in-laws are alive. The villagers say, 'A man's affinal home is as long as the parents-in-law are alive. After that, no body is there to think about importance and hospitality of the son-in-law.' So, the developmental process is a factor of changing a man's relations with affinal relatives.

In the case of woman, her relationship with the affinal relatives changes in the developmental process. Frequently, even the lifetime of

parents-in-laws, and definitely after their death, the son and his wife establish their own household. Her husband's brothers may also form their own households, none of them is now under the parents-in-law's command. So, a woman's relationships with affinal relatives changes.

Fictive relatives

The villagers usually call the relatives of this kind as *dharma-atmiya* or *dharma-kutumbu* (Sarker 1985, Khan 1984, karim 1990). There are two ways to form fictive relationship in the village. One, on the basis of religion, and the other, without it. In the first form, two persons establish fictive relationship in the name of religion, though there is no religious ceremony performed to establish it. Merely a ceremonial feast is arranged at which the relatives from both the sides participate. In the second form, religion does not play any role and no ceremony is required for the purpose. The fictive relatives of these category are neighbours, political followers, fellow villagers and others (Aziz 1979). According to Karim (1990), "Fictive kinship ties are usually an asymmetrical relationship between a powerful person and a less powerful person by which he gains/sustains prestige and political status in the village" (1990:81).

Fictive relationships in Mukhait are established by the villagers with some purpose or interests. Sometime, the relationship is terminated after the purpose or interest is over. Table 1 presents basic data on the purpose of fictive relationship in the village.

Table 1. Purpose leading to the practice of fictive relationships by men in Mukhait.²

Purpose of relationships	Number of relationships
Economic help	13
Friendship	8
Help in hard non-economic situation	7
Help in social adjustment	3
Same personal name or physical appearance	2
Others	2
Total	35

Of the total 35 relationships, 13 partners had joint economic activities. 8 men were earlier friends, and now they have bound themselves in fictive relationships to continue their friendship. 7 relationships have been built up due to help provided in non-economic situation. An example may be cited in this connection. The village was a battle field during the liberation struggle of Bangladesh in 1971. At that time most of the villagers fled away the village and took shelter in far off villages. The people of those villages offered shelter to them because they realised the hard situation. When the liberation war ended, some villagers from Mukhait built fictive relationship with members of those villages.

Three persons have built up fictive relationships because of help in social adjustment. This means that these persons have formed relationships to extend their circle of acquaintance. A few households have settled in the village very recently. Being new shelters they wish to be associates with the established people. A person having less number of relatives established fictive relationship to broaden his circle of relationships. For example, Hasim is a new settler in Mukhait, and has therefore a very small circle of relatives. So, he has formed fictive relationship with a man in Mukhait. This practice has increased Hasim's circle of relatives in the village since the man whom he has established relationship is from a big lineage.

Two fictive relationships have been established for having the same personal name or physical appearance. For example, Amjad is an inhabitant of Mukhait. There is another man in Mukhait who bears the same name but the two men have no kinship or affinal relationship between them. Then these two have formed fictive relationship.

When a person establishes fictive relationship with another person they decide to use certain kinship or affinity term to address each other. The quality of relations depends upon this term of address. For instance, if the term of address is *mama* (mother's brother) or *chacha* (father's brother), then the quality of relation is one of respect. The fictive relationship established between two persons affects other persons related to them. For example, A establishes fictive relationship with B, and address him *abba* (father). Then the relatives of B are

addressed in the light of this fictive relationship. Not only that, this affects the behaviour pattern, duties, obligation and responsibilities also (Rahaman 1990).

Villagers' own People

If the villagers are asked, whom will you invite to your son's or daughter's wedding? Who will come to you while you are in problem? or who will help you in your need? The answer to all the questions is *nijerlok* (own people). The villagers themselves conceptualise the categories of these own people as *atmiya*, *svajan*, *ghat* and *kutumbu*. They are as follows:

Atmiya

A person is called *atmiya* when he/ she is closed to one's *atma* (soul) (Inden and Nicholas 1977). As per villager's ideas, the *atmiya* are those persons: who are related by blood, marriage and fictive relations; who are close to soul, or close proximity of mind; who are giving a supportive hand in problems and need.

While all the relatives are generally describe as *atmiya*, all of them are not really so. That is why the villagers classify *atmiya* into two categories: ordinary *atmiya* and real *atmiya*. The former includes persons related by blood, marriage and fictive relations but do not care to maintain close links and constant interaction, i.e. not visiting one another's home or being anxious about one another's well-being. The real *atmiya* includes persons who may or may not be related by blood, marriage and fictive relations but always maintain close link and interaction as already mentioned. So, non-relatives can also be an *atmiya*. On the other hand, a relative may or may not be an *atmiya*.

So, the *atmiya* is basically a moral or ethical category but is applied in the field of kinship. Accordingly, while all relatives are *atmiya*, all of them are not real *atmiya*.

Svajan

It is a particular category of people who are closest among the *atmiya*. The important characteristics of this category of people are: most of them are to be found among the blood, marriage and fictive relatives: *svajans* are always eager to keep themselves abreast with the latest news about each other; they are called for advice, suggestion

while taking decision on his/her important social or familial affairs; svajans are anxious to resolve problems and sufferings of each other; sometimes, they take pain for the welfare of each other.

Ghati

The villagers generally use the term *ghati* on three occasions: one, when some outsider asks him about of his lineage, two, when a villager introduces his lineage member, and three, when any member of one's lineage becomes an issue of discussion owing to his/her significant achievement or failure or bad luck. Simply and more clearly, *ghati* indicates a member of the same lineage (Inden and Nicholas 1977, Fruzzetti and Oster 1984, Rahaman 1990).

Sometimes, the term *ghati* is replaced by other alternative terms, such as *gushterlok* (persons of same lineage), *akirakterlok* (persons of same blood) etc. *Ghati* is thus a restricted category of people. Direct blood relationship is the main criterion of identity among the members of the same *ghati*.

Kutumbu

It is a category of people related by affinity or marriage. This word is used in two senses: one, narrower, and the other, wider. In the case of former, this includes people who live in the household, family or atbest the lineage of the wife's natal side. And, in the case of latter, it extended to the persons who reside in the whole environ of the side of wife's father's.

In any sense, however, *kutumbu* relationship is reciprocal. They have most honourable status. It is generally expected that they should receive cordial welcome and hospitality when they visit each other's residence. When they come to a villager's house, the latter's household or family members are all busy in honouring them. They dress up in their best cloths and provide many things for hospitality. The villagers arrange good food for them. The *kutumbu* are also the *atmiya* of the villagers. They may be *svajan* as well. Finally, they are special category among the *atmiya*, deserving honour and hospitality.

Conclusions

The groups and clusters of the different categories of relatives in *Mukhait* form the relatives' network. The relatives in this network play significant roles in multifarious social, economic, and political activities

in the village. These roles often become very decisive and crucial (see Rahaman 1990, Aziz 1979, Mashreque 1986). It is observed from the foregoing discussion that the relatives' network often plays a positive role in the day to day village affairs. But at the same time, it has a negative impact as well. At one side, there are elements of unity, cohesion and integrity in the relatives' network but on the other side, it has also the elements of discord, dispute and conflict. However, the relatives network is now swiftly declining due to recent socio-economic changes in the villages, and due to economic mobility this relationship is now becoming very flexible (see: Jahangir 1979; Arefeen 1986; Karim 1990).

Notes

1. Shah is the main proponent of the concept 'developmental process' (Shah 1973). He used it in criticising the concept 'developmental cycle' used by Fortes (1958), and Leach (1967). Any way, the concept 'developmental process' denotes the changing phases of the life cycle of a person taking account into birth, death, marriage, reversal etc.
2. As mentioned elsewhere, Mukhait is a Muslim village. The women in the village maintain *Purdah* (veil). So, the information on the fictive relationships established by women were not reliably possible to collect. For that reason, the data presented to discuss village fictive relationships limit to the men only.

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RUNGPUR KSHATRIYA SAMITI- HISTORY OF A CASTE ORGANISATION

- Sib Sankar Mukherjee*

I

Caste remains a central element of Indian society. Even while adopting itself to the values and methods of the western world the caste system in essence remains the same. Social classes or strata consisting group of people are created within this system, each group enjoying prestige according to criteria of evaluation in the stratification. The stratification system is a hierarchical structure of relative positions of different groups continuous along its vertical dimension. The criteria of stratification are based on relative socio-ritual purity of each group determined by the guardians of society and religion. Indian caste system always permitted a certain amount of mobility upward or downward. Such movements were between one relatively lower or higher to another relatively higher or lower social stratum. In the past acquisition of economic and political power followed by the process of sanskritisation of customs and rituals was found to be the commonest way of moving up the stratified system.

A caste association undertakes to upgrade the position of the caste which it represented in social hierarchy. These organisations are based on modern concepts of associations formed on democratic principles deriving their power and authority from the collective desire of the caste members. They articulate their members' aspiration for social mobility upwards.

Modern means of transport and communication broaden the caste base by binding together the geographically scattered groups of

* The author is indebted to Dr. Amalendu Guha, Rtd. Professor of Economic History, Centre for Studies in Social Science, Calcutta for valuable suggestions in writing this article.

people belonging to the same caste. A condition is created in which the significance and power of the caste depend on its numerical strength rather than on its socio-ritual status. The shared sense of culture, character and status tends to create a solidarity of a much higher order than is usually found among the caste members previous to formation of the association. The caste members accumulate sufficient wealth in the form of landed property. They enter highly valued occupations. They feel the need for evaluation of their socio-ritual position and aspire for higher social rank commensurate with their secular position. This is strengthened by a subjective appreciation of their past history to meet the present demand. A caste having an autochthonous origin with a fairly identified territorial base and a political history may conceivably develop further aspiration for a sense of nationality or political identity. Formerly the approval was granted by the king as the social guardian and traditional hereditary leaders of the caste group represented their case in the form which satisfied the absolute rulers. With changing political condition leadership shifted from heredity to ability to articulate and represent in the proper form acceptable to the new rulers. A new group of leaders with educational and occupational background emerges whose skill has moved them to the position of social guardianship of the caste.

Most of these caste associations started appearing from the close of the nineteenth century because the census of population which started seriously from 1881 provided means of legitimisation of the aspiration for upward social mobility. There was a general idea that the object of the census was twofold; estimating numerical strength of each social group of people and fixing their relative status in the social hierarchy. Hence census was used by the caste groups as an occasion to improve their ranking in the social hierarchy by claiming a position higher than usually assigned to them in the social scale. Caste association was used as the spokesman of the social group and caste guardian to see that their desired status was recorded.

The objective of the present article is to make a critical appraisal of the activities of a caste organisation in north Bengal- the Rungpur Kshatriya Samiti (RKS), in the light mentioned above. An attempt will be made to trace the growth and development of the Samiti in the historical background of the Rajbanshi social group which it represented. Some works are available on the Rajbanshi community

their aspiration in the early twentieth century for higher socio-ritual position than what was assigned to them: but most of them suffered from the methodological limitations and anthropological approach of the study.¹ Our primary sources for the history of the RKS are the proceedings of the annual conferences of the Samiti, its monthly Journal *KSHATRIYA* and unpublished and published memories of the former samiti leaders. The orthography and its jurisdiction throughout the discussion would follow what it was before the partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

II

Rungpur Kshatriya Samiti² was founded on 1317 B. S. (1910 A. D.) at Rungpur in a convention of about four hundred delegates of the Rajbanshi community from Bihar, Bengal Assam and native state of Coochbehar. It was established at the initiative of the elite Rajbanshi group of Rungpur led by Raishaheb Panchanan Burman M. A. B. L. M. L. C., known to his community as Thakur Panchanan. The immediate objective of the RKS was to regain the 'lost' social status of the Rajbanshi community in the Hindu social system. This social objective, later on, had taken a political turn in 1920s. It remained the single largest caste organisation of Bengal till its dismemberment by the partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947.

III

The Rajbanshis are a Hindu social group whose territory was spread over a vast tract of northern and north eastern India from the river Mahananda in Bihar in the west to the river Manas in Assam in the east. In 1921 their number was 17,27,211 souls of whom 88.6% was found in the districts of Rungpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and State of Cooch Behar.⁴ The heartland of the Rajbanshi territory could thus be narrowed down to the limit of the rivers Dharla and Teesta in Cooch Behar State and Rungpur.

The number of the Rajbanshi people varied from census to census due to confusion in their identity. It was the official view of the census authority in the beginning that the Koch, Poliya and Rajbanshi were ethnically identical. Later on the authority became conscious of 'true' Rajbanshis, being people from which the princely family of Cooch Behar State descended and 'imposter' who claimed to be returned as the Rajbanshi but had no relation with the royal lineage. Though the

census authority issued instruction to enumerate 'true' Rajbanshis carefully yet it was found that the name was a title claimed by others, such as the Tiyars who were a fishing caste.⁵

The variation in number of the Rajbanshis alluded to and discrepancy of the data in successive census enumerations since 1872 can be attributed to the obscurantist view of the origin of the community given by the Rajbanshi historians and the ethnic origin of the related people by the nineteenth century reporters and ethnologists. The community historians⁶ traced their their origin to the legend of the *Kalika Purana*⁷ which stated that all the Kshatriyas fled to jungles and hills to escape the wrath of *Parasuram* and assumed the guise of low caste. A large number of low caste people desired to be socially upgraded by referring to this *Parasuram* myth. Various reports written by the administrators and treaties prepared by the observers in the colonial period mentioned the Koch, Poliya and Rajbanshi as the cognate tribes of north eastern India.⁸ The census authorities, in the beginning, subscribed to the view of T. E. Dalton⁹ that tribal groups of northern Brahmaputra Valley. W. W. Hunter¹⁰ mentioned in his account the observation of Francis Buchanan Hamilton that the Rjabanshi, Koch and Poliyas considered themselves distinct though ethnically they were identical. H. H. Risley¹¹ held the same view and the census authority accepted this view as official guideline. Hence, in the census of 1881 and 1891 all the Rajbanshis were recorded as the Koch and, later on, the Koches as the Rajbanshi. Similarly, the Poliyas were returned as the Rajbanshis in the census of 1881, 1891, 1911 and 1921.¹² W. W. Hunter commented that four out of five Rajbanshis in Dinajpur were called the Pallyas. A. E. Porter observed in 1931 that the returns of the Rajbanshis probably included a number who should rightly have been returned as the Tiyars, Kaibartas and other fishing and boating castes of the deltaic Bengal.¹³

III

The immediate objective of the RKS was two fold : to popularise the view that the Koches and the Rajbanshis were separate people, the former being inferior in social status to the latter and to legitimise the demand that they belonged to the *Kshatriya* caste. The second objective of the community had the general characteristic similar to the demand triggered by the census authority among other social groups of the lower echelon of the Hindu society during the early

twentieth century. The distinction that the Rajbanshi people could claim over lower caste Hindu groups on such demand was the past history of this community. Francis Buchanan Hamilton mentioned in his account that well-to-do Rajbanshis in Rangpur and Goalpara districts described them as *Kshatriya*. He explained this claim historically. The Rajbanshis, he wrote, were the Koches who had adopted the Hindu rituals and manners following the princely family of Kuch Bihar since the early sixteenth century. The poorer section of the community remained in the tribal fold where as the affluent section, with the help of their wealth and resource, elevated themselves up the social ladder.¹⁴ The same story was repeated by B. H. Hodgson and W. W. Hunter. Emulation of the upper caste Hindu customs and manners could be supported with wealth and resources. It required considerable expense to buy the status from the social guardians. Only a relatively small group would appear to be well established to purchase the position and maintain the life style. Access, therefore, to upward social mobility in this way was possible for the wealthy members of the autochthones. No wonder that all the claimants to the *Kshatriya* caste status mentioned by the early nineteenth century observers belonged to the upper echelon of the Rajbanshi society.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, especially since 1881, the claim took a change and it became the aspiration of the mass. This quantitative transformation was made possible, among other factors, by the census operation because only this operation provided each individual opportunity to express his feeling on caste status and be it recorded officially. Individuals through census enumeration found themselves fixed as member of various demographic groups of a particular dimension. Mention by the census of a claim by a group for elevated social positions even a careful consideration of the claim, gave this people a sense of social recognition. A reference to their claim, whether real or imaginary, and accepted or rejected, signified that the government had recognised both their existence and importance. These people turned to the census reports for a record of their own success or failure with the passing of each decade.

Since 1881 the census authorities not only listed and described various Hindu castes but also ranked them in a hierarchy based on ancient *varna-jati* system of the Hindu society. By the turn of the century there arose extensive campaigns seeking to change the position

of a given caste in the census listing. This practice of turning to census for support was strengthened and heightened during the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁵ The *Kshatriya* status claim on a mass scale by the Rajbanshis was a part of this process. If one goes through the successive census reports since 1881, he would make an interesting observation that the largest number of castes who claimed higher social status than they enjoyed at that time desired to be regarded as *Kshatriyas*. The reasons are not difficult to seek. To begin with, the flexibility and diversity of the *Kshatriya* style of living provided scope to accommodate any group of people who could reorient life style in conformity with the norms prescribed for that category. These norms themselves were flexible enough to include the habits and manners of the social group on whom the elevated status was bestowed upon by the social guardians. Secondly, unlike the *Vatsya* caste no specific hereditary occupational specialisation was necessary in order to be included in the *Kshatriya* social status. In case of desiring to be included in the *Vatsya* social status hereditary occupational specialisation other than agriculture was a necessary condition. Though originally *Kshatriya* was a warrior *Varna* yet the absence of that virtue could be explained by the story of living 'incognito' for a period of time well beyond historical verification. The *Parasuram* legend mentioned in the *Kalika Purana* lent support to this "loss" of real identity which the caste "rediscovered" later on.

Evidences were abundant in Indian history where social groups of low or obscure origin rose to political ascendancy and established princely families who ruled for a considerable period of time.¹⁶ The brahmins made a genealogical table and prepared a *Kurastname* to ascribe divine origin and *Kshatriya* status to the royal family for which service they were amply patronised. The Rajbanshi community, especially the Rangpur Rajbanshis could boast of a tradition which would give support to their demand for *Kshatriya* caste status as a traditional claim of such origin.

IV

The historical background of the *Kshatriya* caste status claimed by the Rajbanshi community of northern Bengal can be reconstructed from their long standing connection with feudalistic political organisation. The geomorphology of the land of this part of the country, henceforth be called the Rajbanshi land, indicated it was the latest

formation of the new alluvial deposits. This region can rightly be called the flood plains of the river system of Karatoya, Teesta, Dharla and Brahmaputra. The age of the alluvial deposits of the region can be determined by the proportion of sand, loam and clay in the soil. The proportion of sand in the soil decreases and that of clay in it increases as one goes downwards from the river Dhurla to the river Teesta, i. e. from Kuch Behar to Rungpur. The oldest settlement area was that part of the country which was contiguous to Gour-Poundravardhan and extended upto the south west and central part of the state of Kuch Bihar. The present distribution of population in this area was the result of changes in the courses of the rivers Teesta and Dhurla towards the close of the eighteenth century and alignment of railway communication in the late nineteenth century. Before railway communication, population was distributed along the major river courses, and it was evident from the abandoned river channels that these rivers had a more north-south course than what was found in the last few centuries.

The region had an ecotype based on routinised wet rice cultivation depending on monsoonal rain. Land being abundant, the major task of the landholders was to get adequate supply of labour. Because of the soil and climatic condition, no local or supra local cooperation was necessary for agricultural activity, such as construction of dams or irrigation canals. Units of agricultural management were small and scattered over the region, hardly giving any compact form found in other parts of the country. Trade routes from the plain to the hill passed through this region. Of them, two were important Chamurchi-Jalpesh and Buxa-Kuch Bihar, both of which met at Rungpur. The riverine route to Assam along the Brahmaputra touched the eastern boundary of the heartland.

Agrarian settlements showed the characteristics of the frontier society. Settlers were often induced to open virgin land for cultivation and labour was virtually forced to remain on land by various means. Economic process implied the extension of routinised wet rice cultivation from the lower (Rungpur) to the upper part (Kuch Bihar and Jalpaiguri) and social progress was measured by the degree of sanskritisation of people which followed the extension of settled cultivation.

Ecotypically the Rajbanshi heartland had two divisions: the lower region adjacent to Gour Paundrvrdhan and the upper region. Exact demarcation of the two regions was not possible but some antiquarian evidences indicated a rough boundary. Some historical remains are still in extant in this region, such as *Dharma Pal's Rajpat*, *Mainamati's Kote*, *Prithu Rajar garh*, *Gosanimari (Kamatapur)* etc. The Jalpesh temple in Jalpaiguri and the Sidheswari temple in Kuch Bihar are mentioned in the *Kalika Purana*. Quite a few blackstone images of *Vishnu* have been found in Mathabhanga subdivision of Kuch Bihar. They were dated to the later Pala period. All these evidences indicated that this tract of the country had a fairly long period of connection with the Gour region of Bengal. These evidences are put forward by the Rajbanshi historians to establish a continuum of their *Kshatriya* tradition.

A fertile agricultural tract like new alluvium deposits would surely attract the adventurous immigrant population followed by a struggle for its control by the political powers. In this way the longer standing connection of the Rajbanshi land with political organisatin developed. It was initially the land of autochthonos people who were organised on tribal form of social and economic institutional patterns. The property relation probably developed with the brahmin immigration here.¹⁷ The brahmin settlements generated two dynamic forces : emergence of a class who alienated them form the mannual labour of coutivation and subsisted on surplus generated by others and, in this process, created a status symbol, and sanskritisation process forming an ethnic caste out of tribe. In this way social and economic stratifications began on which was built the political organisation of the region.

Inspite of little evidence of the political control exercised by the Gour-Paundravardhan, existence of a political relation between the Bengal rulers and the people of the Rajbanshi land could not be denied. Due to the topography, unfriendly climate and communication difficulties the ruling power of Gour-Paundravardhan could hardly keep this region under their direct control. They were satisfied with a share of the produce as tribute transferred to them. Usually the tribute was levied area-wise and the headmen of the locality was responsible for collection and transfer regularly. When the central political power become weak, these locally powerful family of tribute collectors assumed kingship. The decline of the power of the Bengal kings and engagement of the Bengal sultans elsewhere provided opportunities of

this sort and petty kingdoms under the sanskritised autochthonous chiefs were established. Most of them lacked strong military power to sustain such a polity under control and a short life of such semi-states was the rule rather than exception. Dharma Pala, Prithu, Jalpesh and the Khen Kings of Kamatapur provided illustrations of this type of segmented short-lived polities. The scene started changing from the period of the Koch Kings (1515-1947) followed by the Mughal occupation, and under the impact of the colonial administration the present social and economic structure took its final shape. The state of Kuch Behar was in shambles due to internal feud since it came to peace with the Mughals and ultimately became a feudatory state to the Company in 1773. The tract of Jalpaiguri remained, at first, under the control of the Koch Kings. Later on it was handed over to the Bhotiya by the East India Company in 1774 only to be retaken by the British Rja in 1864 out of which the present district was created in 1868.¹⁸ The Rungpur portion was ceded to the Mughals by the Koch Kings in the seventeenth century and it became Sarkar Kuchwara.¹⁹ This portion had been brought under the Regulation of the Company.

The above sketch of history of the Rajbanshi land has an important bearing on the social mobility movement of the community. The socio-economic differentials and the relative degrees of political consciousness of the Rjabanshis of Rungpur, Kuch Bihar and Jalpaiguri could be explained with the help of this historical development. The historical background also substantiated partly to the *Kshatriya* claim of the Rajbanshis which placed their demand in a relatively different level than the similar demands made by other low-caste Hindus. Finally the differentials also help to explain the relatively progressive attitude of the Rungpur Rajbanshis compared to their brethren in Kuch Bihar, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur.

V

Inspite of the northeast frontier of Indian subcontinent remaining virtually a separate political entity, contact with the society and culture of the mainland evident from the vedic age. Immigration of the brahmins with vedic rites and customs was mentioned in the *Satapatha Brahmana*.²⁰ This fertile riparian tract attracted the political powers both from the east as well as the west. Fragmentary information on society, economy and polity of this area was available from the travel

accounts, chronicles of the Muslim invasions and historical remains. An attempt is taken for a tentative reconstruction of the society, economy and polity of this region on the basis of information collected from the above sources.

The tract of the country lying between the rivers Karatoya-Teesta and Dhaurla was more prosperous and populous than the rest of the area. In late medieval period, the north eastern part of the region lying between the rivers Rydak-Kaljani and Champamati-Saralbhunga was also found to be a developed country; but later on, this tract was left to be covered with thick jungles on political ground. The heartland of the Rajbanshi people remained always populated and cultivated throughout the different periods of history. This tradition helped the Rajbanshis of Rungpur largely to build up their historical root from the past.

We can presume the autochthonous society was initially based on an economy of simple commodity production. There was, like any society of this type, hardly any stratification based on status or wealth. Land was abundant. Sandy loam or sandy clay constituted the soil which could easily be ploughed by wooden implements. Bamboo, reed and grass were used as materials for building dwelling houses. Residential houses were built on raised platforms to protect them from flood water and wild animals. Land of any indefinite size was taken on verbal agreement and brought under cultivation with available labour. The scarcity of the last factor probably limited the progress of cultivation. Cultivators and labourers were imported from the neighbouring regions by the big landholders or local chiefs and were settled with livestock, implements and consumption loan. In order to block the scope of bolting of these cultivators or to desist them being enticed away from the settlements by other land-holders, a leader was appointed to watch over them. These small scattered pioneer settlements could hardly be called villages. The pioneer or leading cultivators built a big house on raised platform and the others would build theirs around that big house. These houses would be surrounded by areca nut trees, banana plants and bamboo clumps. This picture of the rudimentary hamlet remained unchanged even in the late nineteenth century.²²

The brahmin settlements introduced into this near-homogeneous social system a degree a status based stratification. They were non-cultivating people living on surplus production by others who did the manual job. Living on surplus became a symbol of high status. Spread of sanskritisation created caste status. In this way the horizontal structure of the autochthone society gradually became stratified. The autochthones who had resources and wealth to meet the demands of the brahmins and to bear the expensive socio-rituals of the brahminic Hinduism separated themselves from those who had no such means to follow the elevated life style.

Further stratification was introduced when the ruling power imposed a tribute on this part and made arrangement for its collection and remittance. An influential local landholder having sufficient resource and control over the cultivators around him was selected as the head of the local tribute collection. When the tribute was substituted by a regular revenue collection two important changes took place. On the one hand individual proprietary holdings were given a designation, known in this area by the common name of jote, and encouragement was given to expansion of cultivation. The latter change created an intermediary tenancy system and provided scope for upward mobility in the agrarian society from a simple cultivator to a tenancy holder or jotedar. The revenue collection machinery helped emergence of a rural aristocratic class with attendant aristocratic standard of life.

Throughout history till the colonial period this structure of the agrarian society of the Rajbanshi land remained in essence unchanged. Political changes often implied redistribution of claims over land and its produce. Some changes were marked in the super structure of the society while infrastructure remained uninfluenced. The Muslim rulers introduced *Jajitr* system but each fief-holder maintained the old system of revenue collection, the only change being observed was the increased number of share holders of the surplus. The Mughal conquest brought more sophisticated revenue collection machinery into the picture and people conversant with the Mughal revenue system or, in other sense, the revenue system of the Muslims in

the posts of revenue collectors; the hereditary village revenue officers remained in their position but in a somewhat lower rank to the superior officials brought from outside. With the economic condition improving through upward mobility along the scale of landholding, number of people following brahminical rites and customs and life style of rural aristocracy increase. The separation of this elevated cultivators from the manual job of agricultural operation opened up a scope for share cropping. This economic changes made the stratification deepened.

The rule of the East India Company was imposed in Rungpur area-including Cis-Teestan part of Jalpaiguri and Goalpara districts of Assam. Kutch Biher remained to native state and Trans-Teestan part of Jalpaiguri was given to the Bhoitas by the Company for political purpose. The Company's portion was known as the Regulation area and the Permanent Settlement substituted the previous system of revenue administration.

The impact of the Permanent Settlement was felt in the Regulation Tract, and more specifically, the Rungpur district. The old zamindar families were mostly outsiders, and below them the Rajbanshi *jotedars* of different denominations created socio economic strata according to their size of land holdings and degree of sanskritisation. The khas lands were directly settled with the *talookdars*, and *jotedars* which positions were also controlled by them in the sense that most of the Muslim *talookdars* and *jotedars* of Rungpur were convertees from the autochthones. They also formed a land holding class paying rent directly the the Government. The Bengal Tenancy Act and the Rent Act gave legitimisation of the rayoti holdings and under tenancy, and this was another channel for social upliftment.

Thus, by the middle of the nineteenth century the following social structure in the Regulation Tract of the Rajbanshi Land would be found: at the top were big *jotedars* and land holders who formely held important positions in the revenue administration using the hereditary title of Pradhan, Bosnea, Pramanik,²³ etc. Below them those big *jotedar* class may be placed who had substantial land holdings without any symbolic position and title. Both these classes had been elevated to the

rank of the Hindu caste because of their life style, customs and rituals. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it was reported that they already started claiming *Kshatriya* caste status.²⁴ Below them was the intermediate rank of the Rajbanshis with different sizes of land holding from petty *jotedar* with one or two acres of land to owners of few acres. Though, by definition, many of them were *jotedars*, yet they were placed with the lowest echelon of the rural society,²⁵ i.e. share croppers and small owner-cultivators. They followed their traditional life style because their aspirations for elevated social position remained unfulfilled for pecuniary circumstances. The share croppers and landless agricultural labourers constituted the lowest rung.

In Kuch Bihar the *jotedari* system prevailed. The respective social position was not only determined by the size of the holding and lifestyle of a caste society but also the relation with the princely family of the state. In Jalpaiguri, the Western Duars tract, i.e. Trans-Teestan, remained most backward in this respect, because it was just beginning to be settled with a permanent population, the first precondition of a society.

When the census operation began in 1872, the Rangpur Rajbanshis were fairly advanced to protest against of social position ascribed to them in the report. The hereditary social leaders and the affluent jotear families already assumed the *Kshatriya* caste status. But they lacked skill in respect of formal representation of the demand and failed to take note of the importance of mass participation in achieving their goal. A new class of social leadership was necessary to meet the situation, and this class was the educated *bhadralok* Rajbanshis who emerged by the end of the nineteenth century.

The *Rajbansht bhadralok* class had a similar origin like that of the caste Hindu *bhadraloks* with the difference that their status was much inferior to the latter in the general Hindu society. The history of the origin of this class can be explained as follows. Formerly, the revenue system was very simple and it was realised from the cultivators by a collector known as *sezawul*. Revenue was assessed not on the area under ownership and on the basis of the classification of land but on its produce and the assessment was made on a rough estimate. Neither

any *pattah* was issued to, nor any kabuleat was undertaken from, the land holders in written form. The village *patwari* or accountant maintained records of holdings or *jotes* and the accounts of realisation of revenue, assessed. Big land holders appointed *sarkar*²⁶ to look after their revenue matter. All disputes regarding land were settled locally by the village headmen and social guardians of the community. But the system changed with the introduction of the Company's administration of land revenue accompanied by its various rules and regulation. A new class of people conversant to these rules and regulations were needed. Unless proper education was taken to understand revenue legislations and to maintain the records, the Rajbanshi *jotedars* and big land holders could not meet the situation properly. This urged them to educate their children in the way they could meet the need. English education was the only way, and such education could be acquired by attending schools in district towns. They set up establishment in district and subdivisional towns. These urban establishments initially were an extension of the rural establishment for the education of the children. The educated Rajbanshi was brought up in an urban environment dominated by the caste Hindus. The demonstration effect of the latter social group on the former gradually helped to develop a young generation who imitated the dress, manner and behavior of the caste Hindu *bhadralok* group. This educated group entered the profession and service whenever opportunity permitted because these occupations had high social esteem to them. In this way a Rajbanshi *bhadralok* class was emerged by the late nineteenth century.

The Rajbanshi *bhadralok* class was basically an extension of the big land holders class. They had strong mooring in their rural society and their principal source of income was earning from land. They assumed the social leadership from the hereditary social guardians because of the higher status added by their education and profession. In a sense they were the elite class of the community. They had the qualification necessary to articulate and represent the cause of the community to the British government. This elite class also felt more strongly than their rural counterparts the disadvantageous social position due to their low caste status assigned by the Hindu society. In schools, colleges, hostels, offices and bar they felt the odium of the caste Hindu

in the urban centres they were outnumbered by the upper caste group and the discriminatory treatment they received made them champion of the social cause.

VI

That the centre of the social upliftment movement was Rungpur and the Rungpur Rajbanshis took the lead were not a coincidence but conditioned by the objective situation. Rajbanshi people of Assam was found in Goalpara part of the country. It was brought under the Regulation Act of the East India Company at the same time with Rungpur. Internal communication was difficult except the riverine route along the Brahmaputra. It was connected to Bengal by the rail only in the beginning of the present century. Scope for higher education was lacking. The Rajbanshi community was distributed mainly on the northern part of the Brahmaputra river. The ethnic composition of the people showed distinct strains of their tribal stock. The only place of importance was Dhubri on the confluence of the rivers Gadadhar and the Brahmaputra. Backward communication, lack of social infrastructure, strong tribal strain in ethnic composition and absence of a dynamic elite class were responsible for the lack of potentiality among the Goalpara Rajbanshis to lead them in their social cause.

Jalpaiguri district was created in 1868. Its Cis-Teestan portion was a part of the Regulation tract of Rungpur and the Trans-Teestan part was the western Duars area of Bhutan which was annexed to the British India in 1864. The Western Duars area had three-fourth of the area of Jalpaiguri district but one-fourth of population.²⁸ Tea plantations opened up in this area from 1870's onwards and the plantation economy attracted agricultural settlers. The first survey and settlement of this western Duars tract was completed by 1895.²⁹ Jalpaiguri district town celebrated its centenary in 1968. Even towards the end of the nineteenth century the Jalpaiguri Rajbanshi community was in its infant stage. The relatively progressive section of the Jalpaiguri Rajbanshi society lived in that part of the country which was connected with Rungpur district. The Rungpur Rajbanshis were their traditional social leaders.

The native state of Kuch Bihar had the necessary infrastructural and other conditions to lead the movement but for her political-administrative and psychological factors which suppressed these potentiality. By the end of the nineteenth century the polity, economy and administration of the State were shaped in the model of the British India.³⁰ English education started in the State in 1861 and a first grade college with affiliation in teaching postgraduate and law courses of Calcutta University was set up in 1888. Members of the Bengal civil Service were deputed to man the State administration. The chief executive power of the state was vested on the State Council formed in 1885.

On the negative side comes the lack of internal communication of Kuch Bihar. For half the year various parts of the State remained separated from each other due to heavy rain. Roads were seasonal and became unfit for conveyance from May to October each year. This state of transport and communication hardly provided scope for organisation and coordination among the people of different parts of the State. The entire administration up from the top officials down to the clerical staff were imported from the British Bengal initially and that practice continued later on. A hiatus was developed between the caste Hindu professionals and service holders and the local Rajbanshi community due to a very low impression of the latter by the former. The princely family of Kuch Bihar did not encourage their subjects to demand the same social status which they thought was their exclusive privilege. Kuch Bihar being a native state under a ruler who had a long tradition of independent kings, the ruler became the ritual head of the local society whatever titular position he might have under the colonial government. Neither the state administration gave support nor the king favoured the idea of his subjects claiming the Kshatriya status.

The local Rajbanshi community was afraid of the Maharaja's displeasure which might result in their expulsion from the state and confiscation of their property. The obstacles put by the Kuch Bihar administration before the Kshatriya movement was mentioned by the Rungpur Kshatriya Samity frequently in its proceedings of the annual conferences.³¹

Rangpur had the necessary social, economic and political environment for the leadership to the social upliftment movement. Rangpur was well connected with Calcutta, Murshabad and Patna since the late medieval and colonial periods. During the Company's rule it was the headquarters of its territory in this part of the country.

Tradition of protest among the Rangpur Rajbanshis was present and uprisings of the cultivators against the oppression of Debi Sing's revenue management was recorded in folksongs and documents.³² A spirit of protest was latent among the rural community of Rangpur. Transport and communication connected virtually all parts of the district. The Eastern Bengal Railway connected the north south areas with Calcutta; the Assam Bengal Railway connected Assam with Bengal through Rangpur. The Bengal Duars Railway connected Jalpaiguri with Rangpur. The river steam navigation maintained a regular traffic along the Brahmaputra. All these networks of railways and steam navigation integrated the economy and society of Rangpur for more effectively with rest of the country than it would be observed in other areas of the Rajbanshi land. The full economic benefit of commercialisation and specialisation of agricultural production was realised by the Rangpur agriculturists, the Hindu element of whom were virtually all the Rajbanshis. High English School was established in Rangpur as early as in 1835 at public initiative. The level of education and culture could be measured from the information that two vernacular weekly newspapers were published from Rangpur in 1880's.³³ Outside Calcutta, only the Rangpurians had founded *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*. The democratic and liberal environment of Rangpur was further testified by the scope it provided to the educated Rajbanshis in profession and service.³⁴ Panchanan Burman had chosen Rangpur for his new place of living when he left Kuch Bihar. All these objective and subjective factors go to establish the rationale of the leading role taken by the Rangpur Rajbanshis in the social upliftment movement.

Among the new leaders of the Rajbanshi community one person deserved more than proportionate attention than the rest Raishaheb Panchanan Burman M. A. B. L. M. L. C. Born to a *Jotedar* family in Khalisamari village in Mathabhanga police station in Kuch Bihar State in c. 1865 he obtained his postgraduate and law degree from Calcutta University. He graduated from Victoria College, Kuch Bihar, obtained M. A. in Sanskrit from the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta in

and law degree in 1898. He expected an honourable position in Kuch Bihar administration commensurate with his academic qualification. His expectation was belied and he was given the post of superintendent of the *Rajgan*³⁵ Boarding attached to Jenkins School, Kuch Bihar. Realising that no better position would be offered to him in the State, he left for Rungpur and joined the Rungpur Bar in 1901. He spent the rest of his life at Rungpur for the cause of social progress of the community. He instrumented the organisation of the Rajbanshi community, Rungpur Kshatriya Samity, and let the Samiti to its goal.

The ground work for the Samiti had started since the census operation of 1881. In the first two census the three groups of people-Rajbanshi, Polya and Koch- were returned under the single ethnic name of Koch belonging to the category of semi-Hinduised aborigin. Like any other peasant community living in widely scattered rural areas having no formal education, organisation and coordination the Rajbanshis failed to realise the implication of the reported statement of their social position in the census. The fact was known only to the Rajbanshi employees in the Rungpur collectorate one of whom Haramohan Roy (*Khazanchi*) took exception to the remark of the census and started organising the community for a protest. Haramohan proceeded according to the tradition by convening a *Dharma Sabha* inviting pundits of Rungpur under the title *Rungpur Vratya Kshatriya Jatir Unnati Vidhayaka Sabha*³⁶ in March 1891 where the *Vyavastha* (sanction) was given by the religious leaders that the Rajbanshis were *Vratya Kshatriya* and distinct from the Koches. This *Vyavastha* was forwarded to the authority but no material success was achieved. The census of 1891 enumerated the Rajbanshis as the largest subdivision of the Koch. The report of the Census of 1901 recognised the difference between the Koch and the Rajbanshi but rejected outright their *Kshatriya* claim. Had the census authority been a little more accommodative in considering the higher caste status for the Rajbanshis at that time it might not have led to their enraging frustration, so as to be organised under the Rajbanshi intelligentsia to form their caste organisation before the Census of 1911.

The immediate objective of the RKS was to force upon the census authority their claim of Kshatriya caste status. In the first convention in 1910 the members present passed two resolutions reiterating the earlier statements : the Koch and the Rajbanshi were different people

and be enumerated separately and the Rajbanshis would be returned as *Kshatriya*. Deputations were sent to the Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam at Dacca and the District magistrates of Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur with representations supported by the *Vyavasthas* (sanction) of large number of Pundits of Kamrup, Nabadwip, Mithila and Kuch Bihar. The first request was granted by the census without hesitation but they turned down the other request with the remark that it was out of question to allow them to be returned by the generic and archaic name of *Kshatriya*. In the report of the census of India 1921 the authority mentioned the various types of *Kshatriya* claims by different social groups and Rajbanshis were described as Rajbanshi *Kshatriya*.³⁷ It was also mentioned in the report that many of the Rajbanshis were prepared to use force in support of their claim. Thus, after a decade of representation and persuasion, sometimes with excesses the RKS succeeded in getting official recognition of the desired caste status of *Kshatriya*.

VII

Mere claim to a higher varna category did not necessarily serve to elevate its status in social hierarchy at the local level. Castes wanting to raise themselves socially almost invariably changed their customs and practices and tried to reorient pattern of their relationships with other castes in their territoriality. On the one hand they discarded those social customs and practices which tended to lower them in social estimation, on the other side they adopted the customs of higher castes they wanted to emulate. The RKS became seriously engaged in this business, i. e., giving up non-*Kshatriya* rituals, customs and manners in favour of those practised and followed by superior caste groups.

The first step to this reform was the ritual purification of *Sudhi* from *Vratya* status by donning sacred thread. Until they put on sacred thread, the Rajbanshis were debarred from practising rituals of *Kshatriya* caste and enjoying prerogatives of that higher social rank. The samity organised a mass investiture ceremony (*upanayana*) at perolbari on the bank of the river Karatoya near Debiganj railway station in Jalpaiguri district on Magha 27, 1318 B. S. (c. 1913 February 9). Such places of investiture were known as *Milan Kshetra* (Meeting Place). The brahmin-pundits from Mithila (Bihar), Kamrup (Assam) and

Nabadwip (Bengal) were present there to preside over the ceremony.³⁸ The next ritual practice they adopted was to shorten the *asauch* period (ceremonial uncleanness after bereavement) from thirty days prescribed for low castes or *sudras* in general to twelve days for *Kshatriya* caste. The community members were asked to follow *Dashakarma* or ten sacraments from birth onwards and other rituals of the twice-born castes. The samity engaged a pundit, Rajendra nath Goswami, to preach and teach the people proper scriptural rituals of the *Kshatriya*. The Pandit wrote in Bengali norms concerning funeral rites, daily duties, ten sacraments etc. which were published by the Samity and sold at a nominal prices. All the Rajbanshis were asked to use the service of 'pure' brahmins, and select proper Guru (precept) for them instead of *Kamrupi*³⁹ brahmins who upto that time did the traditional priestly service to the community. The members of the community also took the *gotra* name of the brahminical system. There was one anomaly in this *gotra* adoption they all took same *gotra* name- Kashyapa. In pure *gotra* based society intermarriage among the same *gotra* was prohibited. When this was pointed out to them by upper caste Hindus through caustic remarks, they adopted different *gotra* names such as *parasara*, *Gautama* etc. etc.

Emphasis on ritual emulation reached a feverish activity during the second decade of the twentieth century. As Varna Hindu sacred thread sellers, who were mostly widows of Hindu brahmin, refused to sell sacred threads the Samity asked the women to learn spinning for *Upabit* and started selling this from its office. To build up proper character, *Vrahmacharya asram* was set up at various places where Rajbanshi youths were trained properly through ritual education. Two such *asramas* were set up in Cooch Behar state- one at Gadaikhola and the other at Gitaldah.⁴⁰

An organisational structure was evolved to carry on socioritual activities of the Samity. Besides the head-quarters of the Samity at Rungpur with a sixtyfive-member executive committee to conduct its activity, Units were established at village level to introduce socio-ritual reform among the rural mass. The lowest village level unit was *Mandali*. Each Rajbanshi *Kshatriya*, by virtue of his social origin became automatically a member of the *Mandali*. Several *Mandalis* constituted one *Antar Mandali* which was below the apex body. The constitution also provided for two types of special membership- *Ganya* membership

by paying rupees two within the first half of the year, and *Manya* membership by paying rupees one hundred or more at a time. Criteria for selection of *Ganya* or *Manya* members were fixed- (a) community feeling, (b) desire, ability and initiative to do social activities, (c) pure character (d) selfless sacrifice for community. By 1926, the number of such *Mandalis* were as follows : 144 in Rangpur, 81 in Dinajpur, 34 in Cooch Behar and one in Bogra, and total number of special members were only 100.⁴¹ Provision for paid *Pracharak* or preacher was arranged who would travel village to village to organise *Mandalis*.⁴² One such earnestly devoted *Pracharak* was Jogendra Nath Debburma Sarkar of Sukhandanga Baghmara village in Mathabhanga Police Station in Cooch Behar State where he settled after his duty as *Pracharak*. He wrote many short family histories highlighting the past glory of the Rajbanshi *Khatriyas* some of which were published in a Calcutta based Bengali monthly.⁴³ It was a matter of speculation to what extent this *Mandalis* were participated by the community members but there was no denying that *Mandalis* became the focal point of the social movement at grass root level.

Along with emulation of rituals of higher caste people, the Rajbanshis were asked to replace their non-*Kshatriya* social customs, manners and habits by those followed by the superior caste people. For economic and social necessities many Rajbanshis, specially the poorer section of the community, practised some of the autochthonous customs, manners and habits such as liberty given to women in work and movement, high marriageable age of the girls, widow remarriage, informal connubal relations, habits in the matter of drinks and food, dresses of women and and men etc. All these customs, manners and habits the RKS instructed its members to change by curbing the women's lib, lowering marriageable age of the girls, prohibiting widow remarriage and informal connubal relations, giving up using *phota* or *Patni*⁴⁴ for saris by women, tabooing drinking spirituous liquor and eating fowl and pork etc. The RKS acted as social guardian of the community by prescribing 'do' and "don't" commandments and punishing the offenders according to nature and degree of offence by fines and other measures including ostracism.

The Rajbanshi elite group realised the backward state of education among the community members. One factor was the lack of accommodation for students in district and subdivisional towns where

english education was available. In the hostels attached to these institutions prejudices of the caste Hindus students would not allow the Rajbanshis' students to stay. A separate community hostel was set up with the help of donations from the community members and contribution from the government.⁴⁵ Request was made to wealthy *Jotedars* to open schools in the rural areas for spread of education. A student wing of the RKS, *Kshatra Chatra Samaj*, was set up in 1324 B. S. (1917 A. D.) in Rungpur to organise the students section. In order to spread the ideal of the Samiti, raise social consciousness and communicate and coordinate geographically scattered members, a monthly journal, *Kshatriya*, had started publishing from 1327 B. S. (1921 A. D.). For a broader participation of the Samiti affiliation from *Kahatriya Mahopakarini Sabha*, the All-India *Kshatriya Sabha*, was obtained.

VIII

The acid test of this social upliftment movement could only be ascertained by the attitude of the general Hindu community to the Rajbanshis. Therefore, one has to search for the attitude of the general Hindu society among whom the Rajbanshi community sought to move up vertically in the scale of caste ranking and wanted to get elevated social position accepted by the higher caste people already established in the society. Such an elevated social position might be demanded from the census authority and obtained from the Hindu panchayat in exchange of consideration, but the caste Hindu opinion in general did not accept the uplifted social position of the community.

To begin with, in the beginning the caste Hindu zamindars and professionals protested strongly against the demand placed by the *Rungpur Vratya Kshatriya Jati Unnati Vidhayani Sabha* to the District Magistrate of Rungpur, Mr. F. A. Skyne.⁴⁶ They protested against permitting the Rajbanshis to write *Vratya Kshatriya* as caste. When the community en masse donned sacred thread on February 9, 1913 at Perolbari Mr. J. S. Milligan, the then District Magistrate of Rungpur, remained present with a posse of armed constables lest the caste Hindu group attempted to create disturbance and frustrate the ceremony. In some places, the Rajbanshis became *Jal-chal* or touchable as early as in 1890.⁴⁷ But such instances might be thought to be the case yielding to the exigency of circumstances. Apart from this instance, in no other situation the Rajbanshis were treated at par with the respectable caste

groups of Hindu society. Separate students hostel was necessary to board and lodge the Rajbanshi students. Government employees and professionals felt the humiliation of social discrimination from their caste Hindu colleagues through they were placed secularly in the same level. Even the donning of sacred thread, symbolic justification for *Kshatriya* caste group, did not help them getting the service of those brahmins who served the upper caste Hindus. On the one hand the social emulation increased their distance from the social groups with whom they were related or lived for centuries; on the other hand, their distance from the upper caste Hindus did not diminish to any significant extent.

Through the social upliftment movement was supposed to embrace the entire Rajbanshi community numbering about 1.8 million souls distributed in Bihar, northern Bengal and Goalpara district of Assam, the coverage of social emulation was limited to the relatively well-to-do sections of the community. In the first decade of the movement, i. e. 1910-20, about 1.8 lakhs souls had donned sacred thread as *Sudhi*.⁴⁹ Considering the ratio of men and women and *Sudhi* performed by all adult male members, the number was about one tenth of the male population. Quite a large number of the Rajbanshis later on discarded sacred thread. In this way they became *patit* or fallen from the *upabit*, and a social division was created between the two. Again, another social division was created on the ground of *upabit* and *gnupabit* (who did not done sacred thread). Thus the community was divided into three groups; *upabit* (those who donned sacred thread), and a further subdivision among *upabit* into *upabit* and *patit* who discarded sacred threads. There was neither social intercourse nor interdining among these different groups.

An important social factor responsible for the limited impact of the movement on the community in general was division of "pure" and 'imposter' Rajbanshis, and the "pure" Rajbanshis excluding "imposter" Rajbanshis from taking *sudhis* and donning sacred threads. The census enumerators were instructed to return only true Rajbanshis who had the same origin as that of the ruling house of Cooch Behar state. This instruction could not be carried out successfully because the Rajbanshi caste name was claimed by many other related ethnic groups and it was considered impossible to make a complete enumeration of 'true' Rajbanshis exclusive of the other autochthonous people.⁴⁹ The 'true'

Rajbanshis would not allow the imposter to claim *Kshatriya* status and put on sacred thread.

The waning of the initial enthusiasm had resulted in some places retrogression. The majority of the *Patit* group had fallen from the *upabit* group due to provocation of their traditional *Kamrupi* brahmin priests and superstition of tradition bound parents and grand parents. Most of the *Patits* were poor peasantry like sharecroppers and small *jotedars*. The social upliftment movement overnight deprived the *Kamrupi* brahmins their important *jajmani* means of livelihood because the RKS disapproved their service. The economic deprivation led them to provoke poor Rajbanshi *jajmans* against caste Hindu rituals. The orthodox view of the older generation also supported their opinion. Economically weak Rajbanshi undertenants and sharecroppers did not often join the caste movement lest they earned the displeasure and wrath of their caste Hindu overlords. Even sometimes the Rajbanshi *Jotedar* did not allow the Rajbanshi sharecroppers equal social rank with them.⁵⁰

Last but not the least, the economic factor was an important deterrent to social upliftment. The sacred thread, *asauch* ceremonies and other rituals or Ten Sacraments (*Dashakarma*) were expensive. Majority of the community were poor peasants living on sharecropping, fully or partly, who could hardly afford the cost of such rituals. The bombastic social emulation was finally reduced to donning sacred thread at a nominal fee and acceptance of a proper *guru* or preceptor by an once-for all tribute of a small sum.

The dilution of caste distinction in the 1920's also was partly responsible to close the social distance between the Rajbanshis and caste Hindus. With the beginning of the Non-co-operation movement the Bengali *bhadralok* class increasingly realised the limitation of caste distinction and division of political base on caste line. They openly advocated social upliftment of the lower castes, Underground political leaders, especially the members of the so-called terrorist groups, took shelter in the houses of low caste people. National Congress Volunteers practised liberalisation of caste rigidities and made the lower castes *jal-chal*. In 1920's the Hindu Sabhas, which latter on merged into Hindu Mahasabha, took the cause of equalising caste differences. All these factors also contributed to the social acceptability of the lower caste people by the educated liberal *bhadralok* nationalist Bengalees.

One positive aspect of the social upliftment movement organized by the RKS was the apparent caste solidarity among the Rajbanshis in general and social awareness among the educated and well-to-do section of the community. Though this solidarity, later on, foundered on economic ground, yet it has inculcated in them a sense of consciousness of nationality (*Jati*) and search for new identity separate from the general Hindu society. History was written by the community historians to establish link of the present with glorious past. Sanskrit scriptures were widely quoted, legends rinterpreted, folk songs and ballads discovered to build up the history and tradition. Among the Rajbanshi elite group a separatist tendency was developed which increased their distance from the rest of the Bengali caste society. They referred to *varna* Hindus as a separate caste (*Bhanna Jati*) and voice was raised to dissociate from them in every aspect of life. They hbood on the ancient religio mythical history of Kamrup. An extremist section of this elite group had even demanded separate government aided school with Rajbanshi teaching staff alone, separate literary and cultural society and separate residential accommodation for Rajbanshi students. This group started writing the history of the community in such a way as to meet the requirement of their separatist idea. All out efforts were made to collect historical documents, fake or authentic, oral or written, traditional folk tales and songs and similar other articles and folk materials in order to establish the continuous cultural trend of the community from historical past and separate from that of the Bangalees. The earliest attempt to write a history of the Rajbanshi community was made by Harakishore Adhikari. His book, *Rajbanshi Kula Pradip*, was written in Bengali and published from Calcutta in 1315 B. S. The book was written around 1305 B.S., but for want of money for publication it could not see the daylight for ten years. The financial help was granted by the Zamindar of Sidlee in Goalpara, Assam. His book was the model followed by many later historians of the community. He wanted to prove, with the help of scriptures, that the Rajbanshis were *Kshatriyas* as they were descendant of royal lineage. Upendra Nath Barman of Jalpaiguri also wrote a book, *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatr Itihas* in 1941 in the same line. Thakur Panchanan Barman was the first to suggest a history linking the present Rajbanshi community with Bhaskar Varman, king of Kamrup, of VII century. Following his suggestion. Umesh Chandra Barman wrote a history from that particular view point which remained to be published. In the

monthly journal of the Samity, *Kshatriya*, contributors insisted on severing all socio-cultural relations with the caste Hindu people. Rungpur branch of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad was set up in 1906. Panchanan Barman (at that time he used the surname Sarkar) was the editor of its journal. He was forced to sever his link with that institution. One Chandra Dev Roy Barma, teacher, Kesharbari Model School, Jamaladah, Cooch Behar State, wrote an open letter to Panchanan Barman in the *Kshatriya*.⁵¹ He alleged that folk literatures and folk songs of Rungpur including manuscripts were plagiarised by writers of separate social caste (*uttna Jatiya lok*) i. e. upper caste Hindu writers. He warned Panchanan not to gift manuscripts of folk literature to Bangiya Sahitya Parishad as that was not the national literary council of the Rajbanshis. The dividend of this separatist tendency of national pride was earned by the politically ambitious section of the leadership in later years.

The social upliftment movement of the Rajbanshi community had developed into interesting division within the society. A social distance was created inadvertently between the economically well-to-do and the relatively poorer sections of the community. The upper echelon of the Rajbanshi community was comprised of *jotedars* and intermediate tenancy holders. Numerically they were a small percentage of the total number of the community, and this rich peasantry was the base from which the elite group of the Rajbanshis came out and became a Rajbanshi *Bhadralok* class. Their economic condition permitted them to follow caste Hindu rituals, manners, customs and habits. The Rajbanshi *Bhadralok* class imitated the life style and customs of caste Hindu *Bhadraloks* because both lived in district or subdivisional towns and the caste Hindu *Bhadralok's* life style had a demonstration effect on their Rajbanshi counterparts. A special distance was developed, first between the *Bhadralok* Rajbanshis and the well-to-do Rajbanshis living in the rural areas, and next, between rich peasantry who emulated caste Hindu religious customs and rituals and poor peasantry who could not afford to do that.

At the same time, the social distance between the Rajbanshi upper section and caste Hindu did not close considerably. This upper section started earnestly practising rituals of caste Hindus by putting on sacred thread shortening the *asauch* period, requisitioning service

of the *srotriya* brahmins, lowering marriageable age of girls, prohibiting widow remarriage, changing customs and dresses especially those of women, food habits like prohibition of eating pork etc. etc. But these practices hardly closed the socio-cultural gap that existed before the movement. While the Rajbanshi community tried hard to follow rigidly orthodox socio-religious practices and manners, educated liberal section of the upper caste Hindu group wanted to eliminate the caste barrier and dilute the caste differences by ignoring those socio-religious rituals. The Rajbanshis practised hard to get the recognition from the upper caste what the latter wanted to discard from the view point of the social justice.

The RKS also failed to create a socially conscious liberal in progressive programmes for social progress. For example, the Samity repeatedly emphasised the lack of education as one of the causes of social backwardness of the community. In its annual general meeting addresses and in the pages of the monthly journal *Kshatriya*, the Samity urged the wealthy members of the community to donate generously for establishing schools in the rural areas. But the response was poor.⁵² In 1331 B. S. the president of the XIV Annual General Meeting deplored the apathy of the community members in the Samity's cause. An enumeration of person sincerely interested in Samity activities was made and total number of such members was found to be one hundred only. The establishment of the village units or Mandalls was also met with lackadaisical response. Out of 12617 inhabited mouzas or villages in Rungpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur district and Cooch Behar State covering 11694 square miles only 260 village units were opened upto 1924-25, i. e. after fifteen years of the existence of the Samity.⁵³ Even these village units, except very few established in relatively prosperous areas of the country, were nothing but *Harisabha* (a meeting place for chanting Harinama). The samity could not buy a plot of land and build its own house as the promised donations were not realised. The editors of the *Kshatriya*, Sri Jogendra Nath Roy B. A. and Sri Prasanna Kumar Barma, lamented saying that due to want of subscribers and writers the monthly journal would have to be stopped.⁵⁴ In fact, the journal stopped publishing after six years of its first publication. One contributor, Shashibhusan Singha Fouzdar of Batiamari village of Goalpara district, Assam made a self criticism commenting that the

economically well-to-do section of the community took no interest in the social activity of the Samity.⁵⁵

On the credit side of the RKS was the caste consciousness raised in the members of the community and aspiration for the higher caste status. The community members showed mobility and self confidence which was not observed before. One observer wrote that the Rajbanshis established matrimonial relations on inter-district basis which was unthinkable before the movement began. Annual conferences were held at different places of Rungpur, Dinajpur and Goalpara Districts, and these assemblages brought a horizontal solidarity among the community members spread over north-eastern India. The changing social environment also weakened the urge for sustained movement. The Rajbanshis who were born in the twentieth century did not meet with same discriminatory treatment and degraded social position as was witnessed by their previous generation. Partly, they realised that the attempt by their predecessors could not in reality achieve the social equality with the caste Hindus. Partly, they did not experience the humiliation from their upper caste social fellows because of accommodating attitude of the latter group. The social environment around them was more accommodating than what it was a generation ago. It was difficult to close sociocultural gap within one or two generations where lack of education, resistance from within and general disregard by the caste Hindus of higher social claim by the Rajbanshis acted as retrogressive force. The momentum of the movement in the first two decades of the present century was lost in the third decade, as was evident from the comments and complaints on apathy of the community members for the social cause in the *Kshatriya*.⁵⁶

As the desired recognition from the Hindu society gradually became illusive the Rajbanshis veered to the government as a compensation for the social loss they suffered from the caste Hindu groups. To begin with, they did not participate in the programme of the nationalist movement because it was principally the movement of the *bhadralok* caste group. They passed resolutions in the annual conferences each year expressing their allegiance to the imperial government. To support the imperial war they raised soliders in the First World and requested the government to raise a *Kshatriya* battalion so that they could serve the imperial cause better.⁵⁸ They condemned

all sorts of violence against the Britishers and expressed deep sorrow in the attempt on Lord Hardinge's life in 1917 by sending a telegram on behalf of the Samiti.⁵⁸

The Government also responded equally to win over them and induced them to be dissociated from the caste Hindu group in order to curb their political base. They openly shared the apprehension of the RKS that the increasing transfer of power to the Indians under the constitutional reform might be monopolised by the traditionally high caste group because of the qualification imposed on the franchise right. Hence it was decided that at local and regional level separate political representation for selected communities was to be arranged. The elite of the Rajbanshi community also realised that control over resource, power and wealth could be achieved through the legislative process provided the entry to legislature was guaranteed through reservation. The constitutional reform of 1919 provided that scope by ensuring communal representation. Psychological and organisational conditions of the RKS were, from now on, turned into a resource for power politics by their leaders.

The internal power struggle of the RKS was manifested through elections to the legislative council, and weakness of the base of the Samiti was also revealed in this affair. In the constitutional reform of 1919 the district of Rungpur was delimited to one single Non-Mohomedan constituency with two seats and each vote had the power to exercise two votes to elect two representatives.⁵⁹ The number of qualified voters in Rungpur in non-municipal area was 54190 of which the non-Mohomedans were 28467, majority of whom were the Rajbanshis.⁶⁰ That the Rajbanshi community became a vital numerical factor in the election was soon realised by the leaders of the RKS. There were only two Rajbanshi legal practitioners in Rungpur Bar at that time - Panchanan Burman and Kshetranath Singha. In the election of 1920 Kshetranath declined to contest election and it was decided in a meeting of the RKS that the Samiti would nominate Panchanan Burman as their own candidate and extend support to Jogesh Chandra Sarkar because he was nearer to the Rajbanshis than the other contestants - Rajbahadur Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Sri Ashutosh Lahiri.⁶¹ Both of them were returned. In the next election in 1923, the RKS nominated Panchanan Burman and Negendra Narain Roy. Kshetranath's prayer for nomination and Jogesh Chandra's appeal

for support were turned down. Both Kshetranath and Jogesh Chandra contested independently along with Bijoy Chandra Dasgupta of Swaraj Party. Panchanan and Nagendra Narain won the election.⁶² In the election of 1926 the signal Non-Mohomedan constituency was divided into two: Rungpur west comprising Rungpur Sadar and Nilphamari subdivisions, and Rungpur East with Gaibandha and Kurigram subdivisions.⁶³ The nomination of the RKS was as follows: Panchanan Burman for Rungpur East and Negendra Narain for Rungpur West. Rungpur west comprised the largest sector of the Rajbanshi heartland. Rungpur East was developed comparatively lately where non-Mohomedans other than the Rajbanshis were numerous. The contestant to Panchanan was Jatindra Nath Chakraborty, a pleader from Kurigram. Kshetranath gave his weight to the opponent of the RKS. Panchanan was defeated because the Rajbanshi vote base was divided on personal issues. The East Rungpur constituency was more influenced by the pressure of the zamindars than the west Rungpur. Religious sentiment was also used against Panchanan. Many of the Rajbanshis in Kurigram subdivision were the disciples of a *Goswami* of Kurigram who instructed his *Jajmans* to cast vote in favour of Jatindra Mohan. Many Rajbanshi *Jotedars* were clients of Jatindra Mohan and his elder brother Jitendra Mohan who was also a pleader and requested to vote for his pleader-brother. The entire voters of Baharband perganā of Kurigram sided with the Congress that year. Because of some insecurity in their tenancy rights they could not displease their Zamindar. All these factors brought out the inherent weakness of the base of the RKS and inner power struggle between Kshetranath and Panchanan.⁶⁴ In 1929, the constituencies were changed to pave the way for Panchanan's election. N. N. Ray was elected uncontested from Rungpur East because of the decision of the Congress to boycott the election. Kshetra Nath Singha, failed to get the nomination of the RKS in 1929, joined with the Congress but was defeated.⁶⁵ In 1937 Rungpur was given three general non-Mohomedan rural seats of which two were reserved for the Schedule Castes. The RKS could bag only one.⁶⁶

During the second half of the third decade of the twentieth century till the election of 1936, the RKS was reduced to a political vote bank of the urban leaders. They compromised with their earlier social objectives and voluntarily relegated them to socially depressed scheduled castes for economic concession in employment and

education. This anomalous position was not accepted by many leaders of the RKS but Panchanan Barman prevailed upon the dissidents pointing to the privilege of job reservation against competition with the upper caste Hindu job-aspirants. The Rajbanshis of Assam did not get this privilege because they were not enlisted as Scheduled Castes there. The sudden death of Panchanan Barman in 1935 had deprived the Samity of its champion for social cause because his successor, Nagendra Narayana Roy, was a political man. The RKS ceased to be a social organisation. Gone were the days of organisational work on social upliftment as the political leaders realised the importance of legislative power. The decline which started in the early 1920s gathered downward momentum with internal feud.

That the RKS failed to bag two reserved seats in the election of 1937 was no accident or the result of clandestine manipulation by the opponents. The community base of the RKS was further diminished in the post 1929-33 Depression. From the beginning the RKS remained a social organisation ignoring the economic structure of the Rajbanshi society and its weakness. The horizontal class solidarity kept the vertical inequality of income and wealth suppressed for a long time. The economic forces tore apart the apparent caste solidarity and divided the Rajbanshi community into sharp economic classes by the mid-1930 which reduced the numerical strength of the Samity already weakened by the internal feud for election nomination.

There were three distinct strata of the Rajbanshi society: The Rajbanshi *bhardralok* class who were based at urban centres and supplemented their income from land by profession and service, Rajbanshi *Jotedar* class who were resident *jotedars* and well-to-do peasants living in rural areas and the Rajbanshi small peasantry including share croppers and landless agricultural workers. This vertical class structure was hidden behind the horizontal caste order. Since the commercialisation of agriculture, improvement in transport and communication and expansion of market for primary products, the rich peasantry grew up into a money lending cum wholesale grain traders. Share cropping system was a riskless source of realising agricultural surplus for market. Since the First World War, the economic hiatus between rich and poor peasantry increased. Immiseration of small *jotedars* into share croppers took place. Substitution of jute for *aus* crop increased risk and the Great Depression pushed many petty *jotedars* into the share - cropper status due to indebtedness.

The small peasantry including share croppers and landless agricultural labours swelled in number over decades. Leadership to the RKS came from the upper *Bhadralok* section of the community supported by the affluent peasantry. Caste movement did not lead to economic equalisation. The dominant social group of the community tried their best to preserve the system with widening economic equality and exploitation. Their economic outlook did not compromise with any radical land reform measures which would weaken their economic strength based on share cropping. The upper wealthy minority group had an indifferent attitude toward their poor community members. One community writer, Chandra Dev Roy, wrote strongly against exploitation by the Rajbanshi jotedars of the Rajbanshi adhiars as early as in 1925.⁶⁷

Since the Great Depression of 1929-33, the lower echelon of the Rajbanshi peasantry increasingly became pauperised. Hardly the Depression year were over came the slump in jute market. This series of economic adversities affected the poor section whose precarious existence depended on bounties of nature and stable home and international market. This economically distressing period coincided with the initiative take by the Communist Party of India to organise this discontented poor peasantry under the banner of Bangiya Krishak Samity. The small peasantry, share croppers and landless agricultural labourers of the Rajbanshi community were virtually separated from the rich caste members on economic class basis.⁶⁸ The RKS failed to mobilise the support of the poorer section on subjective caste affinity.

The last nail on the coffin of the RKS was put by the partition of India in 1947. The Rajbanshi land was divided by an international border. Indian Rajbanshis of West Bengal continued to enjoy the constitutional protection as Scheduled Caste. Their Assam brethren started, of late, a movement for recognition as Scheduled Caste.⁶⁹ The Rajbanshis of Bangladesh adjusted themselves to the role of a minority community. The community members of these three geographical tracts faced different socio-economic and political problems of their own. The Rungpur Kshatriya Samity existed in name only whose jurisdiction was limited to Rungpur.

Notes and References

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Basu based his work on census reports and Dasgupta's work was an anthropological study.
2. The date of foundation of the Samiti was agreed upon by all writers in Bengali era- Baisakh 17. 1317 the date the convention was held. Corresponding English data was stated to be either May 9 or May 7, 1910 A. D. The day was Sunday.
3. For a description of the Rajbanshi community see Sayal, Charu Chandra, *The Rajbanshis of North Bengal*, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal 1965.
4. *Report of the Census of India*, 1921
Vol V Part I Bengal - Report, p357.
5. *Report of the Census of India*, 1931
Vol V Part I. Bengal and Sikkim p. 474
6. Quite a few educated Rajbanshis wrote community history from their view point. Barman, Upendra Nath, *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas* (Bengali) 3rd. edition, Jalpaiguri 1388 B.S.; Sarkar Dhamanarain Bh akti shastre, Uttar Banger
Gaurab Rajbangshya a Kshtriya Jatir Itihas (Bengali)
Gaurab Rajbangshya Kshatiya Jatir Itihas (Bengali)
(unpublished) and *Uttar Bangiya Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas*, Rangpur, 1390 B. S
7. *Parasurama* legend is stated in the *Kalika Purana* ed. by Acharya Panchanan Tarkaratna, Calcutta, Nababharat Publisher, 1384 B. S. Chapter 77, Sloka 30 - 31.
8. *Note* 5 p. 473
9. Dalton T. E. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* Calcutta, 1872.
10. Hunter W. W., *A Statiscal Account of Bengal Districts of Darjiling*, Jalpaiguri and Kutch Bihar, London, 1876 pp. 347 - 49.

11. Risley, H. H. *Tribes and Caste of Bengal*, Calcutta 1891, Vol. I. pp 491 - 500.
12. *Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872*. pp. 182 - 84; *Report on the Census of Bengal 1881* vol. I. p. 135; *Census of India 1891* vol. III *The Lower Province Bengal and their Feudatories*, pp. 259 - 260; *Census of India 1901* vol. I Part I. Report pp. 382 - 83, *Census of India 1911* vol. V. Part I. Report p. 445; *Census of India 1921* vol. V Part I. Report p. 347; *Census of India 1931*, vol. V. Part I. p. 474.
13. *Census of India 1931* vol. V. Part I. p. 473
14. Martin, Robert Montgomery. *History. Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India* vol. v. Rungpur and Assam. Indian Reprint. Delhi. Cosmo Publications. 1976 p. 545.
15. See Intiaz Ahmed, "Caste Mobility Movements in North India "in *Indian Social and Economic History Review* VIII (2), June, 1971 pp. 164 - 91.
16. Sinha Surajit, "State Formation and Rajput myth in Tribal Central India" *Man - in India* vol. 42 No. 1 1962 pp. 36 - 80
17. Neogi Puspa, *Brahmanic Settlements in Different subdivisions of Ancient Bengal*. Calcutta 1967 (Reprint from *Indian Studies : Past and Present*).
18. *Vide Calcutta Gazette*. 1868, January 1. Part I. Notification.
19. Chuklas Fatehpur, Kakina and Carjeehat were annexed to the Mughal Bengal. It was known as Sarkar Kochwara. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, *A History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali)* Part I. Cooch Behar 1936. p. 261.
20. *Madhyandin Satapatha Brahmana* Translated by Sri Bidhu sekhar Bhattacharjee in Bengali, Calcutta, *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, 1316 B. S. Prathama Khanda, Tritiya Prapathaka Tritiya Brahmana.
21. Hiuen Tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki - Buddhist Records of the Western World* Tr. by Samuel Beal London 1906 pp 195 - 199; Minhaj Ud-din, Abu Umar - I - Usman. *Tabakat - I - Nasiri*. Tr. by Major H. G. Raverty, New Delhi, Orient Book Reprint Corporation 1970.
22. W. W. Hunter gave the same description of hamlets of Jalpaiguri. See *note 10*. p. 384.
23. *Pradhan* was the head man of villagers. *Basuneah* was the person who kept the cultivators on the land by keeping vigilence on them. *Pramanick* was the person who had the knowledge of all customs, usages etc. These

designations were introduced in the early years of Northern Bengal's revenue history.

24. See Note 14 p. 545.
25. One *jotedar* in Baharbund Pergunna paid rent of Rs. 50000/- and tiny *jotedar* paid Rs. 5/- only. See *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer, Rangpur* edited by J. A. Vas, Allahabad, 1911 Chapter X.
26. Sarkar was the title used by these persons who knew the method of maintaining revenue accounts. They were perhaps the earliest literate persons, besides *Patwaris*, among the Rajbanshis.
27. Barman, Upendra Nath, *Thakur Panchanan Barman's Jiban Charit* (Bengali) Jalpaiguri 1379 B. S. pp. 16 - 17.
28. Western Duars population and area were given in Hunter W. W. in note 10.
29. Sanders D. H. E. *Survey and Settlement of Western Duars in the district of Jalpaiguri 1889 - 95*. Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1896.
30. For administrative change Cooch Behar since 1864 see: Ghowdhury H. N. *The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement*. Cooch Behar 1903. Chapter XIII pp. 300 - 410.
31. For details of obstruction created by the Cooch Behar State Administration see *Britta Bibarani* Third year 1319 pp. 36 - 37.
32. Tarkaratna Jadabeswara, "Rungpurer Jager gan" (Bengali) *Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika* vol. III No. 2 pp. 79 - 90.
33. See Note 25.
34. Haramohan Roy was the treasurer (*Khazanchi*) of Rangpur Collectorate. Maadhusudan Roy of Nilphamari was the first Rajbanshi pleader of Jalpaiguri Court. The Rajbanshis held posts of teachers, government pleaders etc.
35. *Rajgans* were the kinsmen of the princely family of Cooch Behar State. A separate boarding house was attached to the students hostel of Jankins School (1861), Cooch Behar to accommodate these students.
A separate Superintendent was appointed to look after them.
36. See Barman Upendra Nath in Note 6 p. 56.
37. Census of India 1921 reported that Rajbanshi, Kayasthas, Hadi, Kamar, Kahar, Pod, Malo, Pundari, Koch - all claimed *Kshatriya* status. The Rajbanshis claimed *Kshatriya*, *Vratya Kshatriya* and *Varna Kshatriya* status.
See Note 4 p. 347.

38. For details of *Milankshetra* see
Britta Bibarani 1319 Appendix.
39. *Kamrupi* brahmins are those brahmins who claimed their descent from the Kanauji immigrant brahmins of very early period. They settled in Kamrupa and later on spread out with the expansion of settlements. No caste Hindu will accept these brahmins as their priests.
40. *Kshatriya*, IV (1) Baisakh 1331 pp. 9 - 10.
41. *ibid*, IV (1) p. 21; IV (3) Ashara 1331 p. 45
42. *Brittabibarani* 1319 appendix.
43. Jogendra Nath Deb Varma was a *Pracharaka* in northern part of Mathabhanga. He wrote after his retirement, several books on illustrious Rajbanshi family such as History of Chapgarh Raj family, Shashi Patra's family (shashi Patra was chief minister of Khen King), family history of Birendra Narayana Dafadar and Jogindra Nath Mandal. These short family accounts were published in *Alochana*, a monthly journal published from Calcutta.
44. *Phota* or *Patni* was a two-yard long piece of cloth which covered the body from breast to knee. It was wrapped around the Rajbanshi women's body. The Rajbanshi women used the same type of handloom weaving technique popular in north eastern Indian tribal society and the length of cloth was short. In some places women used two or three such pieces and sewed each piece for the style - *Mekhala* in Assam. *Tintekia* among the Garos or Bodos. This was one of the heritages of autochthonous culture.
45. Sinha Kshetra Nath, *Rangpur Kshatriya Samitir Itihas*.
(Bengali) Gaibandha 1346 B. S. p. 19 - 21.
46. Barman, Upendra Nath *note* 6 p. 58.
47. *Report on the Census of District of Jalpaiguri* 1891 p. 21
48. *Brittabibarani* 1319 B. S. p. 4 - 7; 182154 Rajbanshi *Kshatriya* donned sacred thread in 192 Milan Kshetras. *Pryaschitta* money collected was Rs. 89512 net of expenses. *Upabita* purchased amounting to Rs. 2116. 87p.
49. Census of India 1931 *Note* 5 p. 474.
50. Burma Fouzdar Shashibhusan, *Basi Phool* (Bengali) Goalpara 1325 B. S. p. 61 - 63.
51. Chandra Dev Roy Barma, teacher, Kesharbari Model School, Jamaldah, Cooch Behar State, wrote an open letter to Panchanan Barman in the *Kshatriya*. He alleged that folk literatures of Rungpur were plagiarised by writers of different caste group (*vinna Jattiya Loka*). He warned Panchanan

not to gift manuscripts to Rungpur branch Bangiya Sahitya Parishad as that was not the national literary council of the Rajbanshis.

Kashatriya I(4), Srabana 1327, p. 47 - 48.

52. *Khatriya* V(2) Jaistha 1332 B. S.
53. For mouza, see *Census of India* 1931 vol. V. Part II Provincial Table No. 1. For *Mandalis* and their distribution see *Kshatriya* IV (1) Baisakh 1331 B. S. appendix p. 21.
54. *Kshatriya* V (2) Jaistha 1332 B. S. p. 46; IV (4) pp. 156 - 57, V (8) p. 174 VI (1) pp. 19 - 20.
55. *ibid* V (8), Agrahayana 1332 B. S. pp 174 - 179.
56. *Kshatriya* IV (3), Ashara 1331 B. S. pp 36 - 40.
57. Panchanan Barman was decorated with M. B. E. for his effort to mobilise Kshatriyas for the cause of First World War.
58. The Samiti sent a telegram to the Viceroy praying All-mighty for his safety, Barman Umesh Chandra, op. cit. p. 41.
59. The *Indian Franchise Committee 1918 - 19*. Report vol. 1 Statement II p. 167.
60. *idid*
61. Barman Upendra Nath. *Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charita* (Bengali) Jalpaiguri. 1379. p. 66.
62. *ibid* pp. 69 - 70
63. *ibid* pp. 70 - 71
64. *ibid* pp. 71 - 74
65. *ibid* p. 76.
66. *Return showing the results of Elections in India 1937*, New Delhi 1937 pp. 40 - 46.
67. Roy Chandra dev. *Tomarthe Asin* (come to you). (Bengali) Jalpaiguri 1925.
68. Mukhopadhyaya Sudhir and Nripen Ghose *Rungpur Zillar Krishak Andolaner Itihas O Party*, Communist Party of In (Marxist), Hooghly, 1985.
69. Datta P. S. "Koch Rajbanshi Movement for Scheduled state in *Ethnic Movements in Poly - Cultural Assam*, P. S. Data New Delhi 1990.

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- Kashtriya (4), *Shobana* 1327, p. 47-48.
52. Kashtriya V (2), *Janaka* 1322 B. 2.
53. For mouza, see Census of India 1931 vol. V, Part II Provincial Table No. 1. For Mandalis and their distribution see Kashtriya IV (1) *Balaka* 1331 B. 2, appendix p. 21.
54. Kashtriya V (2), *Janaka* 1332 B. 2, p. 48; IV (4) pp. 156-57, V (8) p. 174 VI (1) pp. 19-20.
55. *Ibid* V (8), *Agarwal* 1332 B. 2, pp. 174-176.
56. Kashtriya IV (3), *Ashra* 1331 B. 2, pp. 38-40.
57. Panchanan Barman was decorated with M. B. E. for his effort to mobilise Kshatriyas for the cause of First World War.
58. The Samiti sent a telegram to the Viceroy paying All-mighty for the safety. Barman Utsav-Chandra, op. cit. p. 41.
59. The Indian Franchise Committee, 1918-19, Report vol. I, Statement II, p. 167.
60. *Ibid*.
61. Barman Utsav-Chandra, *Thakur Panchanan Barman Utsav-Chandra (Bengali)* Jalpaiguri 1379, p. 86.
62. *Ibid* pp. 69-70.
63. *Ibid* pp. 70-71.
64. *Ibid* pp. 71-74.
65. *Ibid* p. 76.
66. Return showing the results of Elections in India 1937, New Delhi 1937, pp. 40-46.
67. Roy Chandra dev, *Tomburthe Aam (course to you)*, (Bengali) Jalpaiguri 1925.
68. Mukhopadhyay Sudhin and Nityan Ghose *Rangpur Kshatriya Andolan*, *Kshatriya O Party Communist Party of In (Mookati)*, Hooghly, 1985.
69. Datta P. S. *Koch Rajbanshi Movement for Scheduled state in Ethnic Movements in Popl - Cultural Assam*, P. S. Datta New Delhi 1990.

INDEPENDENT MUSLIM PARTY

- Golam Kibria Bhuiyan *

Since 1905, Politics of Bengal was moulded by the English educated Middle classes of Hindu and Muslim communities. During the time 1905-1912, Bengal witnessed communal politics for and against the partition of Bengal. Foundation of All India Muslim League and the annulment of the partition of Bengal has given the opportunity to the Muslims for separate political forum and issue, until 1920, Muslims of Bengal was represented by the Muslim League. The non-cooperation movement initiated by the Congress put the Muslim League in complete disarray in Bengal as else where.¹ Confusion over took the league to such an extent that during the entire period of the operation of the 'Dyarchy' between 1921 and 1937 the league failed to participate in the council under its own level. For the purpose of contesting the elections several Muslim splinter groups proliferated, namely the Bengal Muslim Party, the Bengal Moslem Council Party, the Independent Muslim Party.² In this paper we intended to analyse the manifesto of the Independent Muslim Party as a political forum along with party's composition. Before analysing the manifesto we could see briefly, the politics of Bengal between 1921-26. Bengal politics was confused and led to the crystallisation of position between the Hindu and Muslim community. Muslim participation in the administration in Bengal against the decision of the Congress once again reopened the breach between the Hindus and the Muslims. C. R. Das³ formed the Swaraj Party within the congress with the aim to center the council and for the concession of full responsible government by making every other form of government impossible.⁴

From the twenties of this century two leaders of the Muslim Community became the principal character of the Bengal politics. They are A. K. Fazlul Hoque⁵ and H. S. Suhrawardy⁶. Fazlul Hoque has an East

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Bengal parantage and have more support from Eastern Bengal. On the other hand in West Bengal the manipulation of the electoral regulations by influential Calcutta families with the well educated and experienced Suhrawardy's. In the elections for the Calcutta Corporation Swaraj Party captured nearly three quarters of the seats⁶. As a gesture toward the Muslims the Deputy Mayor was chosen from the Suhrawardy's. He was 31 year old Husayn Shaheed.⁷ Since then he was to have a keen association with the city's affairs throughout the following quarter century.

However, keeping November 1926 election in front Muslim leaders of Bengal founded political parties. Among these parties Independent Muslim Party was organised by Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy. The Englishmen writes 'shortly' Suhrawardy, Mujibur Rahman⁸ and others defected from Huq's, announcing the formation of a new body named the Independent Muslim Party to safeguard Muslim rights and interests and to participate in all efforts to secure further political advancement and the attainment of full responsible government.⁹ In fact this was a split organisation from the Bengal Muslim Party. Some ideological basis of the cleavage between the Independent Muslim Party and Abdur Rahim's Bengal Muslim Party was discernible: while the former was communally vocal but with an anti-British tone, the latter was essentially an anti-Hindu & Pro-British communal body.¹⁰ But Sir Abdur Rahim held the view that the Independent Muslim Party was formed on "more personal ground".¹¹ However, as a newly formed political party Independent Muslim party published its manifesto¹² in a Muslim weekly on 24th September 1926. As a secretary of the party H. S. Suhrawardy signed the manifesto. If we examine the manifesto we could find a party's plea and objects.

Manifesto runs _ _

"Recent political events¹³ have made it abundantly clear that it is necessary for the Mussalmans to strengthen their position in the country, our helpless and disorganised condition is such that we can make no sustained effort in securing our just rights and we frequently find that our rights and claims are ignored,¹⁴ and our case does not receive that consideration which is due to the community.

The aims of the party were highlighted in the same declaration _ _

- (1) It is our (party) duty as a community to continue to make an adequate contribution to those great national efforts which mark an advance towards political and economic emancipation.
- (2) We (party) shall have hence to contend against all those forces which are now suppressing our social, religious and political activities.
- (3) We must be prepared to face the task with unflinching courage.
- (4) To strive for political power for the people and keep a jealous eye on any encroachment on their rights.
- (5) To secure the just rights of our community, to promote and safeguard the tenants and the agricultural and the labouring classes.
- (6) To reorganise the villages and once more infuse into them life and vigour.
- (7) To work for the introduction of free primary education, adequate sanitary measure, medical relief, a useful irrigatin system etc¹⁵.

At the end of the manifesto, there was a plea to the countrymen like this "We, therefore, appeal to our countrymen to join us in their thousand as members of this party and strengthen our hands, and make it possible for us, with their help, to work for this great cause. We want members, we want workers, we want support, we want symphy and co-operation and we trust our appeal will not be in vain"¹⁶. Membership fee was charged Rs. 3 per year. Twenty men excutive committee was formed. Abdur Rauf Danapuri, was the president of the party and H. S. Suhrawardy was the secretary. The executive committee of the party was formed by the following members:

Akram khan, Abullahil Baqi (Dinajpuri); Mujibur Rahman (The Mussalmen); Dr. A. almamon Suhrawardy; Yacoob C. A riff; "Haji a Rashid Khan (Noakhali); Abdullahil Kafi (Satyagrahi); S. A. Osmani (Asr-1-Jadid), K. A. Khan (Muhammadi); Abdul Karim (Retd. inspector of school); Shamsuddin Ahmad (Nuddea); Unsoddowlah (Garden Reach); Tamizuddin Ahmad (Faridpur); Golam Quddus Chowdhury (Dacca), Ashraf A. Chowdhury (Comilla); Mohsin Khan (Calcutta); Md. Yaseen (Burdawan); Abdul Hakeem (Hanafi).

At the same time, several communications have been received from the educated Muslims all over Bengal intimating their desire to become members of the Independent Muslim Party. Candidates have been selected for a number of the Muslim Constituencies have been visited by representatives of the party, who will shortly proceed on a tour of the Mofussil. Forty two noted Muslims were elected as the members of the party.¹⁶ Muslim professionals of different trade were attracted by the newly formed party. Muslims of Journalist world like Moulvi Fazlul Huq Salbarsi (Muhammadi), Moulvi Rafiqur Rahman (The Khadem), Moulvi Mujibur Rahman (The Mussalmen) Khairul Anam Khan (Muhammadi) were the members of the party. Molvi Abdul Karim, Molvi Ashrafuddin Chowdhuri, Khan Bahadur Azizul Huq, Nurul Huq, Maulvi Abul Mansur Ahmed, A. F. M. Abdur Rahman were the members of legal profession, and retired officials of government servies. Besides, few Zamindars, Members of the lagislative council, members of the local board also included in the party as members. Party members represented almost all the districts of Bengal.

Independent Muslim Party was formed before 1926 lagislative council election. The objective of the party is discernible from the party's pledge. A member of the party must abide by the pledge: The pledge runs as "I being a member of the Independent Muslim Party, do hereby offer myself as a candidate on behalf of the said party for election If my candidature is not approved, I undertake not to contest the election. I further agree that, if I am elected, I shall faithfully carry out the policy mentioned If the Independent Muslim Party should, by reason of my departure from this pledge, call upon me to resign my seat, I shall be under a moral obligation to do so pledge of the party continues with more conditions to the members.

These are:

- In all matters which concerns Mussalmans, I shall always support Muslim interests, and the decision as to what are Muslim interest shall remain with the party.*
- I shall support all measures conductive to the attainment of full responsible government.*
- I shall promote and safeguard the interests of the tenants and the agricultural and labouring classes.*

□ I Shall not make any advances towards the formation of Ministry and I shall abide by the decstion of the General Committee.

□ The council party shall follow the general policy laid down by the Independent Muslim Party. In matters of emergency shall be determined by the general commtttee of the Party.¹⁷ This newly formed Independent Muslim party was a short lived polttical forum. The period of 1926-27 was thus a hot-bed of Muslim politics. The only outcome of this polttical venture was the peasant movement which later provided a backing for Fazlul Huq's Krishak Praja Party in the lagislative council election.

References:

1. Between 1919 and 1924 the League indentified itself with the Congress and did not meet as a separate body. See, I. H. Qureshi, *The struggle for Pakistan* (Karachi, 1965) p. 15 and E. Rahim, *Political autonomy in Bengal* (Rajshahi, 1981) p. 7. and A. S. Alam, 'Muslim and Bengal politics', (1924) unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (JNU, 1985).
2. E. Rahim, *op. cit.*
3. Chitta Ranjan Das (1870 -1925) was a champion of cmmunal harmony. As a Swaraj leader he entered into a pact with the Muslims of Bengal by which he promised separate electorate to the Muslims and representation in the council and local bodies according to their numerical strength. See. P. C. Roy, *Life and Times of C. R. Das* (London, 1927).
4. *Indian Annual Register*, 1923, vol. II pp. 219-20 and E. Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
5. Born of a family of Barisal lawyer, he followed the well-worn track of Calcutta for education, finishing on the benches of the elite Presidency College. The Nawab of Dacca used him as a runner in his negotiations with Muslim leaders in other parts of Northern India prior to the formation of Muslim League. His education and experience in teaching, law, administration and political organisation set him apart from the old leadership. For details Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*, (Barkely, 1968, pp-64-65) and Sanaullah.
6. P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
7. Broomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 250 and for Biographical sketch of H. S. Suhrawary, See, *who's who in India, Burma and Ceylon* (Poona, 1938)
8. Mujibur Rahman was the Editor of *The Mussalman*, and a reputed political worker.
9. *The Englishmen*, 9th, Sep., 1926.
10. Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, (Dacca, 1987), p. 29.
11. *Ibid.*
12. See, *The Muslim chronicle*, Sep. 24, 1926, p. 251.
13. These are Swaraj Vs. Government and Pro and anti-government Muslim Politics of Bengal.*
14. Separate electrate and employment according to the numerical strength of the Muslim community were not implemented.
15. *The Muslim chronicle*, *op. cit.* p. 151.
16. For the names of the committee members. see, *Ibid*, p. 251-52.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

RECENT TRENDS OF PROFITABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF COMMERCIAL BANKS OF BANGLADESH

- M. Zainul Abedin *

1. Introduction

Injection of required bank credit in a country is considered as the circulation of blood in the body of the economy with a view to keep it healthy and capable for moving forward the wheels of production, trade and consumption. The banks being such important forces in the development process of the economy, essentially require to remain in good health for giving better services to others. Now what does indicate the condition of a bank's health. Of many indicators, the most important one is no doubt the bank's profitability and productivity. In many recent discussions and news items many scholars and reporters argue that the profitability and productivity of commercial banks is declining. But it is not clear to what extent it is really declining, what major factors are responsible for it, what actions are required to reverse the trend. A modest attempt is made in this study to find out the answers of the above questions. The major objectives of the study are stated below :

Obejectives:

1. To measure the extent and level of profitability and productivity of commercial banks of Bangladesh.
2. To show the recent trends of profitability and productivity of commercial banks.

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3. To see profitability and productivity situations of different groups of banks.
4. To identify the causes of the changes in the trends of profitability and productivity of the banks.
5. To suggest some remedial measures for increasing the profitability and productivity of the banks.

Some earlier studies show productivity trends of some post Liberation Years (Abedin and others: 1990, covered a period from 1973 to 1988). But those are not very recent and those did not include the profitability aspects. Causes and remedial measures were also discussed in a very limited way. Moreover, after the introduction of financial sector reforms in 1990, no such study was conducted so far to see its impacts on the profitability and productivity of the banks. So, it becomes necessary to undertake a study on this vital issue with latest available data and information.

2. Methodology and sources of data

Standard statistical techniques including indexing, ratios, percentages and tabular forms are used in this study for analysing the data and drawing conclusions from those. Indexing technique is used to see the trends of profitability and productivity of the banks. The ratios include net profit total asset ratio, net profit capital ratio (capital includes paid up capital and reserves), ratios of net profit/total employees as well as total branches. The growth rates of and the components of income and expenditure of the banks are expressed in terms of percentages.

The sources of data are secondary. But, since those had to be collected and compiled from the annual reports of different years of different banks, they may equally be called primary sources. Besides, the data of foreign banks were not easily available. Bangladesh Bank's *Bulletin, Economic Trends and Scheduled Banks Statistics* were also used as source materials.

The commercial banks of Bangladesh are classified here into three broad categories, such as, Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs), Private Commercial Banks (PCBs) and Foreign Commercial Banks (FCBs). NCBs include Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani bank and

Rupali Bank Limited. Randomly selected seven private banks (excluding Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited and Al-Baraka Bank Bangladesh Limited which run on the principles of Islami shariah) namely, Pubali Bank Limited, Uttara Bank Limited, National Bank Limited, The City Bank Limited, Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited, International Finance Investment and Commerce Bank Limited (IFIC) and United Commercial Bank Limited constitute the group of PCBs. Again, randomly selected foreign banks including American Express I. B. C., ANZ Grindlays Bank PLC, Standard Chartered Bank Limited and recently closed (in 1991) Bank of Credit and Commerce International (Overseas) Limited constitute the group of FCBs. The data of 1990 of the last mentioned bank was estimated since those were not made available for the study.

The time frame for the study is eight years starting from 1983 to 1990. The year 1983 is remarkable in the post liberation banking history of Bangladesh since most of the private banks began to operate from that year and thereby their data are available from that year.

It is important to note that the measurement of productivity of service industry like the banks is very difficult because of the peculiarities of their products. Different scholars expressed different views on this issue (Kandrik, 1991; Sinkey, 1983; Angadi, 1987, etc. are of worth mentioning). To cut short a mention of the views, which this study uses, is made here. Some scholars consider the banks' loans and investments as their outputs and financial liabilities, land, labour and capital as their inputs. Practically loans and investments constitute the major earning assets of the banks while the costs of financial liabilities and capital, wages for labour and rent for land and buildings comprise the main expenditure of the banks. Using banks, income as the closest proxy for their outputs and banks' expenditure as the nearest proxy for their inputs some scholars defined banks' productivity as the ratio of their income and expenditure. More specifically, the bank's productivity is defined as a ratio of the incremental income and incremental expenditure. A different explanation of the same is the productivity of the banks is the output responsiveness as measured by

proportionate change in income in relation to proportionate change in expenditure. Symbolically it stands as:

$$Q = \left(\frac{\Delta I}{I} / \frac{\Delta E}{E} \right)$$

where Q = productivity or output responsiveness to change in inputs,
 I = Income,
 E = Expenditure,
 Δ (delta) = change.

Here the main proposition is that the productivity of a bank is inversely related to cost responsiveness, i.e., higher cost responsiveness leads to lower productivity and vice-versa. When the proportionate change in expenditure (E) leads to a less than the proportionate change in income (I), the cost is higher and the productivity Q is less than 1. On the other hand, when proportionate change in 'E' leads to a more than proportionate change in 'I', the cost is lower and productivity Q is greater than 1 and it is a sign of good health of the banks. The present study uses this method of productivity measurement for the commercial banks of Bangladesh.

3. Trend of profitability of commercial banks

Profit has been calculated here by deducting total bank expenditure and tax provisions from the total bank income. Thus the total net profit of all banks stood at Tk. 534 million in 1983. The index shows an increasing trend upto 1987 with a fall in 1986. Then the index depicts a declining trend from 1988 to 1990 (Table 1). In 1987 the total net profit of all banks was Tk. 812 million which was the highest amount for any single year under study. But this increase in absolute amount does not speak much about the profitability of the banks. The profits in relation to the number of branches, employees, assets and capital were significant in the year 1984 when the amount was the second in order of the sizes of the volumes of different years. In that year total profits stood at Tk. 807 million, profits per employee and per branch were Tk. 10 thousand and Tk. 162 thousand respectively. Net profit capital ratio was 0.26 while net profit asset ratio stood at 0.004. In fact, a look over Table-1 reveals that from the year 1984 all the above profitability measurement ratios show a declining trend and the banks failed to check it.

Table-1

Recent Trends of Profitability of Commercial Banks of Bangladesh
(1983-90)

Year	Total Net profit (in m. Tk)	Index	Net profit per employee (Tk. in '000)	Net profit per Branch (Tk. in '000)	Net profit Asset Ratio	Net profit capital Ratio
All banks						
1983	534	100	7	112	0.004	0.24
1984	807	151	10	162	0.004	0.26
1985	774	145	9	152	0.003	0.24
1986	686	128	8	131	0.002	0.18
1987	812	152	9	152	0.002	0.18
1988	751	141	8	138	0.002	0.14
1989	458	86	5	82	0.001	0.07
1990	379	71	4	67	0.001	0.06
NCBs						
1983	306	100	5	80	0.002	0.68
1984	435	142	8	130	0.003	0.84
1985	359	117	6	106	0.002	0.72
1986	277	91	5	81	0.001	0.49

1987	194	63	3	56	0.001	0.27
1988	75	25	1	21	0.0003	0.09
1989	5	2	0	1	0.00002	0.004
1990	(-) 10	(-) 3	0	(-) 3	0.00005	(-) 0.008
<u>PCBs</u>						
1984	84	100	7	134	0.004	0.11
1985	139	165	12	213	0.003	0.16
1986	159	189	13	229	0.003	0.13
1987	219	261	16	306	0.003	0.15
1988	250	294	17	324	0.003	0.14
1989	111	169	9	172	0.002	0.08
1990	113	135	7	131	0.001	0.06
<u>FCBs</u>						
1983	119	100	112	5950	0.008	0.69
1984	150	126	144	7500	0.010	1.92
1985	179	150	170	8950	0.009	2.16
1986	143	120	134	6500	0.006	1.99
1987	222	187	199	10091	0.008	1.56
1988	210	176	187	9545	0.006	1.16
1989	65	55	58	2955	0.002	0.27
1990	177	149	156	8045	0.004	0.74

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table-1

Among the three categories of the banks the profit performance of the NCBs becomes very poor in the year 1989 and alarmingly negative in 1990. The loss stood at Tk. 10 million mainly because of the loss incurred by a bank, namely, Rupali bank Limited. But the profit performance of other three NCBs is also poor. Because of the poor paid up capital and reserves of NCBs, net profit capital ratios were relatively higher during 1983-86. But their net profit asset ratio remained always low in the study period. Profits per employee as well as per branch also indicate very insignificant performance of the banks.

In the initial years (1984-88) the PCBs showed relatively better performance in terms of profit earnings. The increasing trend of the index rose from 100 in 1984 to 294 in 1988. Then it fell to 169 in 1989 and only 135 in 1990. Net profits per employee as well as per branch also show declining trend. Net profit asset ratio fell from 0.004 in 1984 to 0.001 in 1990. Net profit capital ratio declined from 0.11 in 1984 to 0.06 in 1990. This alarming situation if not be checked in time, may invite serious mishappenings in near future

The profitability index of the FCBs shows increasing trend during 1983-87. It began to decline from 1988 and went down to only 55 in the year 1989. But it rose to 149 in 1990. Profits per employee as well as per branch is not very poor. Their net profit asset ratios maintain significantly high levels in comparison with other banks. However, because of the low levels of their capital, their net profit capital ratios remain unusually high. Profitability of the commercial banks largely depends on their productivity levels. The higher the productivity, the larger is the volume of banks' profits. Again, both profitability and productivity of the banks are dependent on some internal as well as external factors. Those are stated in the following sections.

4. Recent Trends of Productivity of Commercial Banks (1983-90)

In the industries productivity is usually expressed as a ratio of output over input used in a particular unit. In a service industry, like the banks, outputs are not homogeneous rather the services offered by them are of many kinds requiring different skills for handling them. Similar are the cases of inputs also. For this reason, with a view to giving them homogeneous character, the outputs are expressed in terms of income while the inputs are shown in terms of expenditure. As it has been stated earlier the banks' productivity is measured here

as a ratio of the proportionate (or %) change in income in relation to proportionate (or %) change in expenditure. In other words, productivity is the responsiveness of output measured by the incremental income in relation to the incremental expenditure.

Table-2 exhibits recent trends of productivities of different categories of commercial banks of Bangladesh. During the study period (1983-90) all banks' productivity was greater than 1 only in the year 1984. It means that productivity was favourable in that year. In the next year (1985) the productivity was though unfavourable yet it was near to 1. Then the declining trend strongly began and the level of productivity went down to only 0.82 in 1988. It again rose to 0.83 in 1989 and slightly fell to 0.78 in 1990. The declining trend of productivity is well depicted by the productivity indices of different years (during 1984-90). In the year 1984 productivity index of all banks was 100 and later it declined to only 50 in 1988. It however, rose to 53 in 1990. The overall productivity situation of all banks is of great concern to all conscious citizens.

The productivity of nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) was greater than 1 only in the year 1984. In that year the productivity was favourable. In all other years under study the productivity of NCBs was unfavourable. The worst years were 1987 and 1990 when productivity levels went down to 0.52 and 0.73 respectively. The productivity indices of the study years show a clear declining trend. Among the nationalised banks, the condition of Rupali Bank Limited is the worst. This bank carried a loss of over Tk.79 million to the Balance Sheet in the year 1990. In the previous year (1989), the amount of loss carried to the Balance Sheet was as high as about Tk.104 million. The very poor performance of this bank influences the overall profitability and productivity of the NCBs to some extent. However, the productivity of the three NCBs excluding Rupali Bank Limited has been estimated to 0.70 for the year 1990. This does not differ with the productivity of the four NCBs for the same year. It further confirms the poor performance of other three NCBs also.

Table-2

Recent Trends of productivity of commercial Banks of Bangladesh
(1983-90)

(Tk. in million)

Year	Total Income	Total Expenditure	Productivity $\frac{\Delta I}{I} / \frac{\Delta E}{E}$	Index
<u>All Banks</u>				
1983	7923	7112	-	-
1984	9392	7956	1.56	100
1985	12738	10863	0.97	62
1986	14265	12441	0.83	53
1987	16488	14691	0.86	55
1988	18439	16910	0.78	50
1989	21078	19831	0.83	53
1990	24416	23674	0.82	53
<u>NCBs</u>				
1983	6518	5560	-	-
1984	6731	5735	1.04	100
1985	9152	7874	0.96	92
1986	10345	9189	0.78	75
1987	11033	10374	0.52	50
1988	12305	11670	0.92	88
1989	14061	13407	0.96	92
1990	16202	16212	0.73	70

PCBs

1983	782	1152	-	-
1984	1886	1692	3.01	274
1985	2700	2357	1.10	100
1986	2906	2498	1.35	123
1987	4131	3342	1.22	111
1988	4602	4089	0.51	46
1989	5219	5111	0.52	47
1990	6089	5963	1.00	91

FCBs

1983	623	401	-	-
1984	775	529	0.76	72
1985	886	633	0.73	70
1986	1015	755	0.76	72
1987	1324	974	1.05	100
1988	1532	1121	1.04	99
1989	1797	1313	1.02	97
1990	2125	1498	1.30	124

Source : Annual Reports of all commercial Banks.

The productivity of the private commercial Banks (PCBs) were greater than 1 or favourable during 1984-87. But in 1988 it suddenly fell to as low as 0.51. From the year 1989, it however, began to rise again. In the year 1990 the productivity of PCBs reached one (1) which might be called favourable in the sense that they overcome the previous unfavourable situations. The year 1985 is selected as the base year for productivity index because that was a favourable year and that year's productivity was near to the average productivity of other years taking together. The PCBs experienced very high level of productivity (3.01) in the second year of their operation. But it declined in the third year when the index fell from 274 in 1984 to 100 in 1985. The productivity index rose to 123 in 1986 and then it began to decline until 1988 when it was only 46. From the year 1989 it again, began to rise and it reached 91 in 1990. The performance was favourable for five years and unfavourable for two years.

The productivity of Foreign Commercial Banks (FCBs) was less than 1 or unfavourable during 1984-86. Their productivity became greater than 1 or favourable during 1987-90. The first favourable year was 1987 with productivity level of 1.05 which was selected as the base year for the index. The productivity index shows declining trend during 1988-89. However, it recorded rising trend in the year 1990 when the index stood at 124.

Table-3 exhibits interbank comparison of productivity trends. Figures in the parentheses of this table show the relative productivity indices of different categories of commercial banks of Bangladesh. This comparative picture demonstrates that the private commercial banks' productivity was higher than all banks during 1984-87. However, the productivity of nationalised commercial banks was higher than all banks during 1988-89. The private banks' productivity index for the year 1990 was also above the index of all banks of that year. For other years the productivity of different types of banks remain below the national average level of productivity of all banks. The overall performance of all banks gives a very gloomy picture. The next sections deal with causes and remedies.

Table-3

Productivity Indices of Different Categories of Commercial Banks
(1984-90)

Year/ Bank	Productivity			
	NCBs	PCBs	FCBs	All Banks
1	2	3	4	5
1984	1.04 (67)	3.01 (193)	0.76 (49)	1.56 (100)
1985	0.96 (99)	1.10 (113)	0.73 (75)	0.97 (100)
1986	0.78 (94)	1.35 (163)	0.76 (92)	0.83 (100)
1987	0.52 (60)	1.22 (142)	1.05 (122)	0.86 (100)
1988	0.92 (118)	0.51 (65)	1.04 (133)	0.78 (100)
1989	0.96 (116)	0.52 (63)	1.02 (123)	0.83 (100)
1990	0.73 (89)	1.00 (120)	1.30 (159)	0.82 (100)

Source : Table-2.

5. Factors Influencing Banks' productivity

The commercial banks' overall productivity is influenced by some external factors as well as by some internal factors. Among the external factors the policy parameters of the Government and the Central Bank, price stability, socio-economic and political stability, movement of the organised labour forces, etc. are very important factors that influence the productivity of the banks. High officials' directives for giving loans to a person or a group of persons or company or even to a losing sector corporation may lead to the losses of the NCBs. The imposition of rates of interest by the central bank on deposits and advances also keeps impacts on the productivity of the banks. High rate of inflation, sociopolitical unstability and labour unrest are also very crucial factors that influence the productivity of the banks. During the study period (1983-90) all those external forces under the autocratic rule of the military regime were not favourable to maintain a high level of productivity in the banks.

The financial sector reforms, under which the commercial banks are allowed to determine their rates of interests on deposits and advances as well as are compelled to make provisions for bad and doubtful advances, were introduced in 1990. This making of provisions against bad and doubtful advances, though very essential for the survival of the banks, put immediate stress on the income flows of the banks and let their productivity level to go down in 1990.

Coming back to the internal factors, the most important or determining one is growth trends of income and expenditure flows of the banks which crucially influence their productivity. A look over Table-4 reveals that the growth rate of income of all banks was 19 percent in 1984 and the same of expenditure was 12 per cent in the same year. Since the growth rate of income was higher than the growth rate of expenditure in 1984, productivity level of all banks was greater than 1 or favourable in that year. In all other years (1985-90) the growth rates of income were lower than the growth rates of expenditure and for that reason the productivity of all banks remained below 1 or unfavourable (Table-3) during the same period.

The FCBs, growth rates of income flows were higher than those of expenditure flows during 1987-90. So, their productivity was greater than 1 or favourable during the same period. In case of private banks it

Table- 4

Growth Trends of Income and Expenditure of Commercial Banks During 1984-1990 (in %)

Income & /Year Expenditure	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
<u>All Banks</u>							
1. Income	19	36	12	16	12	14	16
2. Expenditure	12	37	15	18	15	17	19
<u>NCBs</u>							
1. Income	3	36	13	7	12	14	15
2. Expenditure	3	37	17	13	13	15	21
<u>PCBs</u>							
1. Income	14	43	8	42	11	13	17
2. Expenditure	47	43	45	19	15	25	17
<u>FCBs</u>							
1. Income	24	14	14	30	16	17	18
2. Expenditure	28	(-) 11	17	6	14	17	14

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table-2.

is also observed that higher productivity is related with higher growth rates of income which remain above or equal to the growth rates of expenditure. The NCBs recorded higher growth rates of expenditure than the growth rates of income during 1985-90 and thereby their productivity remains unfavourable in the same period. However, they earned favourable productivity record in 1984 when growth rate of income was equal to the growth rate of expenditure.

Turning to another important internal factor that influence the banks productivity we may have a look over Table-5 which explains the changing structure of the components of the banks' income and expenditure. It is clear from the table that the banks' major income flows from the interest on loans and advances and their major expenditure incurs for the interest paid on deposits. The next important income item is commission while the second expenditure item is expenses on labour including salaries, allowances, law fees, auditors, fees, etc. Other income flows from the banks, earnings on investments, from rents and from unspecified items. Other expenditure includes expenses for business development and stationaries, medical allowances, clothes for lower class staffs, training expenses and unclassified expenses, etc.

There are little changes in the income and expenditure patterns of the banks over the years. The banks mainly depend on the traditional source of income, i. e., interest income. There are scopes for diversification of the banks' activities and thereby they can expand the source of their income. This however, requires innovations of earning assets which again, needs constant research and experiments.

On the other side, the banks can reasonably reduce their expenditure on labour and other items. Mobilisation of low cost deposits can enable the banks to reduce their interest costs. However, the next section deals with other suggestions.

6. Recommendations and Conclusions

In the previous section the factors influencing the banks' productivity are identified. It is also clear that the overall productivity levels of the banks are not only low but also constantly declining. The continuations of this trend may lead to some sort of banking crisis in near future. So, serious efforts should be made to increase the

d. Labour	17	17	18	20	21	21	21	14	17
e. Interest	74	74	74	73	75	74	74	79	77
f. Others	9	9	8	7	4	5	7	7	6
PCBs									
1. Total Income	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
a. Interest	86	90	89	88	82	88	87	87	88
b. Commission	13	9	9	10	16	9	10	10	10
c. Others	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	2
2. Total Expenditure	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
d. Labour	12	12	12	18	15	14	14	14	13
e. Interest	74	73	73	69	72	73	75	75	76
f. Others	14	15	15	13	13	13	11	11	11
FCBs									
1. Income	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
a. Interest	75	76	77	78	79	80	82	82	83
b. Commission	22	20	19	17	15	15	14	14	13
c. Others	3	4	4	5	6	5	4	4	4
2. Expenditure	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
d. Labour	11	11	8	8	6	6	6	6	7
e. Interest	59	63	61	61	67	72	72	72	69
f. Others	30	26	31	31	27	22	22	22	24

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table-2.

profitability and productivity of the banks. With this end in view the following recommendations are offered to the respective authorities for their possible considerations.

1. Under the programmes of financial sector reforms, the banks are allowed to determine the rates of interests (except a few priority sectors) on deposits and advances. If the banks can rationally utilise this opportunity, they may be able to increase their profitability and productivity.
2. Before every financial year begins, each bank should prepare its performance budget including its income and expenditure. Strict cost control measures are to be applied so that actual expenditure keeps pace with planned expenditure. In no way, the growth rate of expenditure should be allowed to exceed the growth rate of income. The banks which are making losses, must drastically curtail their expenditure heads on the one hand, and make best use of their manpower and resources for earning and raising incomes on other hand.
3. In courses of discussions with different bank executives it could be confirmed that the growth rates of bank expenditure might be brought down by effective cost control measures. Non-interest costs of the banks may reasonably be reduced by proper planning and rational programing of the activities. For instance, the number of statements, which a bank branch is required to send to its head office, may reasonably be reduced from nearly 200 to less than 100 only. Such planning and programming of activities will certainly reduce the banks stationary and postage costs and release man-hours for other earning opportunities. Similarly, payments of overtime bills, costs of the movements of vehicles and their maintenance, expenses for fixtures and fittings, law fees, auditor's fees, etc. may be rationalised and reduced for improving the productivity and profitability conditions of the banks.
4. The Productivity of the banks may be raised by better funds management and portfolio management, improving recycling of funds and developing other income earning business activities of the banks.

5. Constant research and experiments are necessary for the banks for innovations of new financial instruments which may help the mobilisation of loanable funds and profitable deployments of those funds. This will also enable the banks to diversify their financing.
6. It is argued by the experts that certain degree of mechanisation and computerisation is necessary for the operation of head office activities like maintenance of inter-branch accounts of the banks. Such mechanisation will release large number of manpower who may profitably be employed in other income earning activities.
7. The system of strict discipline and accountability has to be established in all banks, specially in the NCBs. The activities of labour unions are to be rationalised and they should be motivated, trained and guided so that they may play positive role in increasing the banks' productivity.
8. Efforts have to be made for realising bad, doubtful and stuck-up loans through rescheduling of repayment procedures, the use of business tacts and motivation. In reliable cases new loans may be disbursed for helping the borrowers and thereby for realising old and new loans in instalments.
9. The commercial banks should be allowed to work independently as a commercial organisation without any political or outside intervention. From the past experiences it appears that this kind of intervention ruins the normal business norms of the banks and reduces their productivity.
10. Maintenance of price stability, congenial external environment, favourable policy parameters are some of the very crucial factors for improving the profitability and productivity of the banks. It is desired that the concerned authorities will take care of these factors and offer a good business atmosphere for the operation of the banks.

Appendix Table-1

Growth of Profits, Assets, Capital, Employees and Branches of Commercial Banks (1983-90)

Year	Net profit	Assets	Capital	(Tk. in million)	
				Employees	Branches
<u>All Banks</u>					
1983	534	131133	2199	74581	4768
1984	807	196729	3104	82138	4972
1985	774	273485	3253	85267	5094
1986	686	362012	3822	88520	5217
1987	812	428808	4631	89280	5323
1988	751	323932	5198	93954	5453
1989	458	378140	6218	96945	5552
1990	379	416475	6466	98702	5633
<u>NCBs</u>					
1983	306	453	453	57868	3834
1984	435	518	518	54233	3343
1985	359	499	499	56334	3393
1986	277	569	569	59035	3435
1987	194	711	711	58634	3482
1988	75	864	864	61601	3536
1989	5	1155	1155	63053	3560
1990	(-) 10	1197	1197	63829	3581

<u>PCBs</u>						
1983	18766	381	-	11562	628	-
1984	52017	763	84	11813	653	20
1985	63812	859	139	12218	693	20
1986	77679	1207	159	13550	715	22
1987	72084	1480	219	14810	771	22
1988	90717	1779	250	16107	824	22
1989	95139	1779	142	16921	865	22
1990	93306	1867	113			
<u>PCBs</u>						
1983	15261	173	119	1061	20	20
1984	14756	78	150	1042	20	20
1985	18479	83	179	1057	20	20
1986	22805	72	143	1064	22	22
1987	28866	142	222	1114	22	22
1988	32450	181	210	1124	22	22
1989	43294	241	65	1123	22	22
1990	46969	240	177	1132	22	22

Source : Bangladesh Bank, Bulletin, December, 1991 and Economic Trend, June, 1991.

Appendix Table-2
Income and Expenditure Pattern of Commercial Banks (1983-90)

Income and /Year Expenditure	(In million Taka)									
	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990		
All Banks										
1. Income	7923	9392	12738	14265	16488	18439	21078	24416		
a. Interest	6616	8055	10919	12457	14136	15994	18538	16863		
b. Commission	1086	1130	1397	1357	1763	1638	1969	2484		
c. Others	221	207	422	451	589	807	571	5069		
2. Expenditure	7112	7955	10864	12441	14691	16910	19831	23674		
d. Labour	1104	1235	1761	2323	2748	3113	2649	3604		
e. Interest	5228	5820	7930	8916	10824	12457	15367	18050		
f. Others	780	900	1173	1202	1119	1340	1815	2020		
NCBs										
1. Income	6518	6731	9152	10345	11033	12305	14061	16202		
a. Interest	5475	5769	7827	9101	9709	10705	12532	9752		
b. Commission	847	802	988	903	883	984	1196	1597		
c. Others	196	160	337	341	441	616	333	4853		
2. Expenditure	5560	5735	7874	9189	10375	11700	13408	16212		
d. Labour	926	975	1417	1838	2179	2457	1874	2729		
e. Interest	4134	4244	5827	6708	7781	8658	10593	12472		
f. Others	500	516	630	643	415	585	941	1011		

PBCs										
1. Income	782	1886	2700	2906	4131	4602	5219	6089		
a. Interest	674	1696	2408	2566	3378	4057	4540	5352		
b. Commission	102	170	242	280	677	426	522	615		
c. Others	6	20	50	60	76	119	157	122		
2. Expenditure	1152	1692	2357	2498	3342	4089	5111	5963		
d. Labour	135	205	294	427	508	586	693	775		
e. Interest	860	1243	1720	1713	2391	2991	3828	4537		
f. Others	157	244	343	358	443	512	590	651		
FBCs										
1. Income	623	775	886	1015	1324	1532	1797	2125		
a. Interest	467	590	684	790	1049	1232	1466	1759		
b. Commission	136	158	167	174	204	228	251	271		
c. Others	20	27	35	51	71	72	80	95		
2. Expenditure	401	529	663	755	974	1121	1313	1498		
d. Labour	44	56	49	58	61	70	82	99		
e. Interest	235	333	384	495	652	808	946	1040		
f. Others	122	140	200	202	261	243	285	359		

Source : Annual Reports of all banks.

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NATURE OF WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS : A STUDY OF CRIMINAL ASPECT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BANGLADESH

- Md. Muazzem Husain

The habeas corpus is now-a-days an important method of protecting and safeguarding the right to personal liberty of mankind. The writ of *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum* is an important part of English law wherefrom it comes to the domain of our legal system. In the opinion of A.S chaudhury that- "writs may be concisely defined as royal orders drawn in the concise terms and put into writing".¹ Blackstone defines it as- "A mandatory letter from the king in Parliament, sealed with his Great seal, and directed to the sheriff of the county wherein the injury is committed or supposed so to be, requiring him to the command the wrong- doer or the party accused, either to do justice to the complainant, or else to appear in Court, and answer the accusation against him".² Maitland says that "It was the king's order to his liege, written on parchment and sealed with the Royal Seal, and disobedience of the writ was a contempt of the royal authority and punishable as such".³ "The writ of *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum* is the most celebrated prerogative writ of the English law. It is addressed to him who detains another in custody and commands him to produce the body, with the day and cause of his caption and detention, and to do, submit to, and receive what the Court shall consider in that behalf. The writ is immemorial antiquity, an instance of its use occurring in the thirty- third year of the reign of Edward".⁴

Habeas corpus literally means to *have the body*. To be more clear and specific it may be said that an individual who has been detained and deprived of his personal liberty and movement by any executive act, may have the right to move the higher court for redress by

challenging the authority of his detention and the Court in which it is moved has the power to call upon the person who has detained another to produce the latter⁵ before it in order to let the court know on what ground or grounds he has been detained or confined and to set him free from imprisonment if there is no legal justification.⁶ It is essentially a procedural matter i.e. a writ⁷ (of Habeas Corpus) and its proceedings are summary⁸ in nature. The ancient prerogative writ of habeas corpus takes its name from the two mandatory words "*habeas*" and "*corpus*" which contained at the time when it, in common with all forms of legal processes, was framed in Latin. The general purpose of these writs, as their name indicates, was to obtain the production of the individual.⁹ The Habeas Corpus is always called the great writ of liberty in England. It is perhaps the most famous writ in English Law. This writ is not only the supreme right of the English people but also a much valued ancient right.¹⁰ "The provisions made by the law for the liberty of the subject have been found for ages effectual to an extent never known in any other country through the medium of the summary right to the writ of habeas corpus".¹¹

As regards its origin it may be stated that evidences are available that it was in use even before the days of Magna Carta (1215). Although the exact date of its use cannot be told in certainty, still there are some traces of its existence in the Year Book 48, Ed. 111.22 and is historically found that the judges used this writ during the reign of Henry VI. In England, the right to the writ of habeas corpus is a right which also very much exists in common law independently of any Act or Statute though the right has been confined and regulated by Acts and Statutes from time to time.¹² At common law in England, this jurisdiction was exercised by the Courts of King's Bench, Chancery and Common Pleas and in case of privilege by the Court of Exchequer. But now - a - days this jurisdiction is exercised by the King's Bench Division and the Judges of the High court of Justice¹³. Besides these, there are three other statutes which regulate this right to writ of habeas corpus, i.e. the Habeas corpus Acts of 1640, 1679 and 1816.

During the reign of the Anglo-Saxon kings it was primarily used to conveying some grants of land, although they made effort to employ them for judicial purpose.¹⁴ But during the Norman kings these writs began to be issued in judicial matters and for the purpose of their proper use they developed a set of formulas as judicial weapons. The

most important were the original writs which were in many instances served much the same purpose as summons of the modern days. They were issued to defendants asking them to make amends or else appear in person before the court.¹⁵ "In common law, a order issued by a court in the name of the sovereign authority requiring the performance of a specific act. The commonest modern writs are those, such as summons, used to initiate an action".¹⁶ Similar provisions of the writ of habeas corpus are also found in the Constitutions of Weimer in Germany.¹⁷ Ireland,¹⁸ China,¹⁹ now defunct Yugoslavia²⁰-etc.

To trace the history of the writ of habeas corpus in Bangladesh, it can be said without any hesitation that it has come to our country from the English system in some amended form. But how it comes to this land is a question. Before entering into the study of the Directions of the Nature of the writ of Habeas corpus (Sec. 491 Cr.P.C.) as is available in our country needs a brief history of its origin and development which will make it easier to understand the same. However, the law of writ of Habeas corpus in our country cannot be traced from any single system of jurisprudence. From the earliest period there had been influx of different nationalities and races from outside this sub-continent who used to bring with them their own system of laws. The Aryans, Huns, Greeks, Mughals, Dutch, Portuguese, French, English, etc. came and tried to establish their own system of laws and ultimately the English people succeeded in doing so.²¹ After their arrival the English people experimented many things here in this country, and of them the writ of habeas corpus is most important. The Habeas corpus Act (31 Car. 11, c. 2) had some bearing on our legal system as Mr. Hill opined in McLeod case.²² Many Charters, Acts and Statutes granted and passed from 1618 to 1883 which furnished the background for the passing of the Code of Criminal Procedure (1898) which contains Section 491 empowering the higher courts to entertain the application for writ of habeas corpus. Before the passing of this code, The High Courts Act, 1861 (Sec. 9) empowered only the Calcutta, Madras and Bombay High Courts to entertain such writ petitions. Thereafter the High Courts Act, 1911 and the Government of India Act, 1935 (Se. 223A) played a significant role in this regard. Beforehand, even Section 81 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (1872) had some provisions empowering the Court to issue such writs relating to English people only and the same provisions were retained in

Section 148 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1875 (Act x of 1875). But the above power of the Court was repealed by the passing of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882. But now in India, this power of issuing writs of habeas corpus is exercised by the Supreme Court and the High Courts under Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution of India, 1950. Because Section 491 Cr.P.C. (which was in the Code of Criminal Procedure passed in 1898) is no more available in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.²³ Now, in India, it is only the Constitutional Jurisdiction of the Court.

But in Bangladesh, still there are two springs of power regarding the law of writ of habeas corpus. One spring of such power of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court is Article 102 of the constitution of Bangladesh, 1972,²⁴ and under this Article the High Court Division of the Supreme Court can issue writ (of habeas corpus) to the person against whom it is necessary. There had been Article 170 under the constitution of Pakistan, 1956 and Article 98 of the Constitution of Pakistan of 1962 empowering the High Courts to issue such writs. Under Article 102 of the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) the High Court Division of the Supreme Court is empowered to issue writ of habeas corpus as the High Courts of Pakistan could do it under Article 98 of the Constitution has some similarity with that of Article 98 of the constitution of Pakistan (1962). Article 98 of the then Constitution of Pakistan (1962) and Article 102 of our Constitution practically resemble each other.

Besides these, the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has enormous power under Section 491 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (1898)²⁵ to issue the writ of habeas corpus when the situation arises.

But any proceeding under Section 491 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is certainly a criminal proceeding. Action under this section is available in remedial form which postulates a right, a right of personal freedom of a person. Although this right along with other fundamental rights is now guaranteed by the Constitution of the people's Republic of Bangladesh (1972) under Article 102, the right given to a person under section 491 Cr.p.c. still bears much importance in our legal system and this is the supremacy of this section.

As regards the scope and application of this Section (Sec. 491 Cr. p.c.) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (1898) it is firmly established that this section is meant for safeguarding the liberty of the people against any excesses of the executive or any sort of abuse or misuse of power by any authority and to enable the court to inquire into the matter. In this matter the court is also to see and determine the legality of his detention restraining him from his personal liberty or movement. Under this section (Sec. 491 Cr. p. c.) the court is to protect the people lawfully when he is brought before it. Not only this section is widely worded but also it enables the High Court to inquire into the question whether a person is illegally and improperly detained in public or private custody and if the said court is satisfied that he is illegally detained or confined, the court is very much competent to order to set him free or be set at liberty. The mere fact that a person has already been set free temporarily on bail does not in any way oust the jurisdiction of the High Court under section 491 Cr.P.C.²⁶ The language of section 491 Cr.P.C. does not put any limit in the class, person or persons who can move the High Court with relation to a person in custody and on hearing the petition if the Court thinks it fit to make an order to the effect that he be dealt with in accordance with the provision of law and such a petition at the instance of a complainant or by a stranger is therefore competent.²⁷ Under this section the jurisdiction of the court is also extended to the mofussil places.²⁸ So also, the Criminal Appellate Bench of the High Court has the power to dispose of any such application under section 491 Cr.P.C.²⁹ However, section 491 Cr.P.C. is a pre-constitutional legislation and in practice which has no conflict with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972).

Apparently there is some conflict of opinion regarding Article 102 of the Constitution (1972) and Section 491 Cr.P.C. as regards their scope and application. In 1976, it is held that- "the scope of Article 102 is much wider than that of Sec. 491".³⁰ "The contention that the scope of Sec. 491 is limited and narrower than what it is in Article 102 of the Constitution has no force".³¹ Again in the same case it is held that- "Section 491 Cr. P.C. is a pre-constitutional piece of legislation and it has nothing to do with fundamental right conferred by the Constitution of 1972. Its scope is much wider and at the same time restricted".³² In 1988, again it is held that "The scope of Section

491 Cr. P.C. is wider than the scope of Constitutional Provision (Article 102 of the Constitution)".³³ However, section 491 Cr.P.C. gives some discretion to the Court when it is held that- "It is only a discretionary jurisdiction conceived as a check on an arbitrary action",³⁴ and in the matter of the writ of habeas corpus it empowers the court to issue necessary directions (stating its nature) to be followed by the authority to whom it is issued. It is also a summary procedure for inquiry as to whether a person is illegally or improperly detained either in public or private custody and if he is so detained, the court is competent enough to direct the person or authority under whose custody the man is detained to release him.³⁵ Personal liberty of any citizen for free movement cannot be restricted by any authority save and except any recourse to law.³⁶ Section 491 Cr.P.C. also empowers the Court to see whether a person is detained illegally or not and if found illegally detained, then it becomes the duty of the Court to pass necessary order to set the detained person at liberty.³⁷ When any detention order is made by any authority, the legality of such detention order can be looked into by the court when the order is challenged before it.³⁸

After the passing of the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972), the Supreme Court is empowered to issue writ of any kind but it does not restrict the power of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court to issue directions of the nature of habeas corpus under Section 491³⁹ of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Section 491 of the code gives wide power to the High Court Division in issuing directions to the concerned authority to the effect that a person detained within the local limits of the High Court Division be brought before the Court, or that such a detained person be set at liberty or that he be brought before the Court to be examined as a witness in any matter pending in the Court, or a prisoner be brought before a Court-martial or a Commissioner for trial or such a prisoner within such limits be removed from one custody to another for trial. Under this section the Supreme Court has power to frame rules from time to time but it has nothing to do in the matter of preventive detention.

So far the object of the directions of the nature of the writ of habeas corpus under this section (Sec. 491 Cr.P.C.) is concerned it may be said that some limits should be placed upon the arbitrary exercise of absolute power by any authority in the matter connected with the

restraint of personal liberty of a man, and unless such powers are judiciously conferred either expressly or impliedly, they must be taken to be the subject to the right of a person detained to come before the High Court under section 491 of the Code, and complain of that detention or confinement and claim to be dealt with in accordance with the provision of law or be set at liberty.⁴⁰ The criminal law of the country is framed as to respect such right. In our country, as in England, the law gives equal protection to all men. None is above law and none can be punished without any offence. None can be punished or made to suffer in body or goods except for distinct breach of law. Not only in case of violation of this principle, section 491 Cr. P.C. is available in remedial form but also it postulates the existence of a substantive right. Save and except the provisions of Sec. 491 Cr.P.C. there is no other source of that right. The greatest importance of the writ of habeas corpus is this that it confers some right upon a person, even when he is in custody or detention, to get the legality of his detention order tested by the High Court.⁴¹ The object of the proceedings of the writ of habeas corpus is to expeditiously dispose of the matter. The proceedings are also summary in nature and a person under custody or detention is entitled to immediate release if there is nothing against him. In such a case, at the first instance the Court directs the authority to produce the detention order to the court. But if the authority fails to do it, then the Court is competent to ask for the production of the detenu before the Court and release him forthwith if there is any attempt on the part of the authority to prolong the detention by time-gaining devices.⁴² The main purpose of the writ of habeas corpus is not to punish the wrong-doer but to secure the release of the detenu without which he will not be able to pursue his legal remedies against the person who has done wrong against him. So, this writ is essentially a procedural one and its proceeding is summary in nature.⁴³ The object of issuing such writ is also to ascertain whether there is any legal justification for the detention of the person in custody.⁴⁴

A habeas corpus proceeding u/s 491 Cr. P.C. is in nature and essence a civil proceeding so far it concerns the right of a man i.e. the right of his personal liberty. In law, it is one kind of remedy which is available to a person for the enforcement of his civil right. But it does not say that an order for his release from detention or custody made on

a writ of habeas corpus will allow him to reach his home. It means that he cannot be taken into custody on a civil process on his way home after his release on a writ of habeas corpus filed on his behalf, as a proceeding under the said writ is in essence a civil proceeding.⁴⁵

Primarily, the onus of proof always lies on the custodian to establish that the restraint is under legal process. Under such circumstances, if the authority fails to make out a "prima facie" case against the person detained, the detenué must be released. The powers conferred by section 491 Cr. P. C. were not so wide as those under the Habeas Corpus Act. But one thing is common in both i. e. the right of any person detained within the limits of the High Court's appellate jurisdiction to apply to the High court and demand, either he be 'dealt with according to law' or that he be 'set at liberty'. Basically, both the provisions are the same. The object of both is to safeguard the liberty of the subject against the excesses of the executive, and against an abuse of power by the authority.⁴⁶ Under section 491 Cr.P.C. the High Court has no power to issue common law writ of habeas corpus. But the problem which falls for decision u/s 491 Cr.P.C., is the same. It is the settled matter of proposition that if a man exercises his power conferred on him, in bad faith, it is an abuse of power and fraud upon the statute, and under such circumstances the Court can interfere into the matter of an abuse of power; and that, when the issue is raised that any particular order has been made in bad faith or for any other bad purpose the court is competent enough to interfere and inquire into the facts.⁴⁷

Ordinarily an application u/s 491 Cr.P.C. is to be made to the High Court in its original Ordinary Criminal Jurisdiction⁴⁸- and the whole object to such proceedings for a writ of habeas corpus is to make them expeditious, and to keep them free from all technicalities as far as possible and at the same time to keep them as simple as possible.⁴⁹

But under the Bengal Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1930 it is said that when the court comes to a conclusion that the order passed under the Act was *mala fide* or made in bad faith, the court can interfere into the matter u/s 491 Cr. P.C. In case of abuse or misuse of power by any authority and if the court is satisfied that the order was *mala fide* in nature, the jurisdiction of the High Court would not be affected by section 4 of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment

(Supplementary) Act, 1932.⁵⁰ This bad faith is in legal terminology called *malice in law* as distinguished from *malice in fact*. It would be relevant here to cite Shearer V. Shields Case⁵¹ where Lord Haldane held that- "Between malice in fact and *malice in law* there is a broad distinction which is not peculiar to any system of jurisprudence. The person who inflicts a wrong or an injury upon a person in contravention of the law is not allowed to say that he did so with an innocent mind. He is taken to know law and can only act within the law. He may, therefore, be guilty of *malice in law*, although, so far as the state of his mind is concerned, he acted ignorantly, and in that sense innocently. *Malice in fact* is a different thing. It means an actual malicious intention on the part of the person who has done the wrongful act. In this connection Khandaker Mustaque Ahmed's Case⁵² may be cited that when the High Court Division of the Supreme Court opined that- "Validity of law does not depend on the mala fide or bona fide of a law - circumstances attending changes in different M.L. Regulations indicate mala fide yet in view of the fact that MLR by which amendments have been made to implicate the President is an offence immune from challenging in any court "and thereby the High Court Division upheld order of conviction passed by the Lower Court. But the same order of the High Court Division was vacated by the Appellate Division stating that- "Mala fide when established, conviction must be quashed"⁵³ and thereby ordered to set him free from custody. In such a case where the detention is mala fide, the court has wide power to interfere into it, if the mala fide is established.⁵⁴ It may also be said that mala fide exercise of power is no exercise of power and renders such act liable to be set aside by the court.⁵⁵

In case of detention and filing an application u/s 491 Cr.P.C. it would be necessary for the petitioner to state the grounds upon which it could be said that the order was mala fide.⁵⁶ But where the applicant was neither arrested nor detained within the Appellate Criminal Jurisdiction of the High Court, it has no jurisdiction to take any action u/s 491 Cr.P.C.⁵⁷ In order to entertain an application u/s 491 Cr.P.C., the High Court must see whether the applicant is detained within its jurisdiction or not, and for the purpose of entertaining such application the court must also see that it is within its appellate criminal

jurisdiction. The fact that some people were arrested and some of these were at first detained within the limits of the Appellate Criminal Jurisdiction is not enough to give the High Court jurisdiction to entertain their application if they are not detained or confined within such limits at the time of hearing of the application u/s 491 Cr.P.C.⁵⁸

In such a case, section. 491 Cr. P. C. authorizes the High Court to issue an order under this section only with reference to the persons who are detained or confined within its appellate criminal jurisdiction and whom the court regards as having been detained illegally⁵⁹ and without any lawful authority. The order already passed under section 491 Cr.P.C. is not open to review. In other words, successive applications cannot be made for a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of a detenu.⁶⁰ But before 1923, it was in practice that the powers conferred by section 491 Cr.P.C. to courts were only applicable to those persons who were detained within the limits of the Ordinary Original Criminal Jurisdiction of the High Court. Even when a Judge of the High Court would have tried any sessions case under its original criminal jurisdiction, he could not again sit in the said court in its Appellate Criminal Jurisdiction to take up hearing of the said case. The principle is this that it would not be justified for a Criminal Bench acting u/s 491 Cr.P.C. to retry for itself the question which has already been determined or decided by the said court in its Ordinary Criminal Jurisdiction or to pass any other order or orders overriding an order already made by the High Court⁶¹.

As regards the detention given to any person, the executive authority always states that there is reasonable grounds under which the law necessitates for his detention. Sometimes the executive authority arbitrarily exercises this power in the matter of such detention i.e. the power is misused instead of using it properly. Even when such an act is done by any executive with intention of misusing its power the High court has jurisdiction to look into the matter on application u/s 491 Cr.P.C. If the personal freedom is encroached upon by any authority the jurisdiction of the High Court u/s 491 Cr. P.C. is immediately attracted⁶² and put into operation. The law imposes some sort of obligation on the High Court to see whether the detention given

given to a man is under reasonable ground or not. At the time of giving such detention the executive says that he is satisfied to do it but the High Court must also see whether the satisfaction of the executive is based on reasonable grounds or not.⁶³

In conclusion, it may be said that in the past (after 1947) the country has seen that very often the Constitution was either abrogated or suspended when the armed forces seized the power of the Government and the people were deprived of their constitutional right to approach the higher courts against any illegal and unlawful detention or detentions. But during that period of abrogation or suspension of Constitution under martial Law too, the people could have approached the High Courts of Pakistan or the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh u/s 491 Cr.P.C. with petitions in the form of the writ of Habeas Corpus against any illegal detention or detentions. As such it is always in statutory book. It is neither abrogated nor suspended any time. It remains unchanged since inception. Hence, it is more effective and more pervasive in law.

Foot Note

1. Chaudhury, A. S.; *Law of writs*, 4th Edn. (1990), P. 22.
2. Blackstone's *commentaries* (iii) c. 18.
3. Maitland: *History of English Courts*, p. 25.
4. Nizami: *The Code of Criminal Procedure* (1966), 6th. Edn. , P. 421.
5. *State of Kerala v. Abdulla, A.* 1965 S. C 1585 (1589).
6. *Greene v. Home secretary* (1941) 3 All. E.R. 388 (399-400).
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *Encyclopaedia of the laws of England.*
10. *In re Rodolph Stallman*, 39 Cal. 164.
11. *R. B. Batchelor*, (1839) 1 Per & Daw, 516. 567. per Lord Denman, C.J.
12. *Ex Parte Besset*, (1844) 6 Q. B. 481.
13. See 4 & 18, *The Supreme court of Judicature (Consolidation) Act, 1926*; *Sec. 6. Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1938.*
14. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. x. p. 763
15. *ibid.*
16. *ibid.*, p 762.
17. Article 114, para 2.
18. Article 8.
19. Article 40 (4) Paras 2 & 3.
20. Article 5, paras 2 & 3.
21. Chaudhury, A. S: *Law of writs*, 4th. Ed., p. 23.
22. 3 Hill, 647.
23. Act 11 of 1973.
24. Article 102 of the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) states that- "(1) The High Court Division, on the application of any person aggrieved, may give such directions or orders to any person or authority, including any person performing any function in connection with the affairs of the Republic, as may be appropriate for the enforcement of any fundamental rights conferred by Part III of this constitution. (2) The High Court Division may,

if satisfied that no other equally efficacious remedy is provided by law- (a) on the application of any person aggrieved make an order- (i) directing a person performing any functions in connection with the affairs of the Republic or of a local authority, to refrain from doing that which he is not permitted by law to do or to do that which he is required by law to do; or (ii) declaring that any act done or proceeding taken by a person performing functions in connection with the affairs of the Republic or of a local authority has been done or taken without lawful authority, and is of no legal effect; or (b) on the application of any person, make an order- (i) directing that a person in custody be brought before it so that it may satisfy itself that he is not being held in custody without lawful authority or in an unlawful manner; or (ii) requiring a person holding or purporting to hold a public office to show under what authority he claims to hold that office. (3) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing clauses in the High Court Division shall have no power under this article to pass any order in relation to which article 47 applies. (4) where on an application made under Clause (1) or sub-class (a) of Clause (2), an interim order is prayed for and such interim order is likely to have the effect of- (a) prejudicing or interfering with any measure designed to implement any socialist programme, or any development work; or (b) being otherwise harmful to the public interest, the High Court Division shall not make an interim order unless the Attorney-General has been given reasonable notice of the application and he (or an advocate authorized by him in that behalf) has been given an opportunity of being heard, and the High Court Division is satisfied that the interim order would not have the effect referred to sub-clause (a) or sub-clause (b). (5) In this article, unless the context otherwise requires, person includes a statutory public authority and any court or tribunal, other than Court or Tribunal established under a law relating to the defence services of Bangladesh or a Tribunal to which Article 117 applies."

25. Act V of 1889.
26. *Sandal Singh v. District Magistrate*, 35 Cr.L.J. 1296 (1299).
27. *Alam Khan v. Emperor*, 48 Cr.L. J. 984 (993) F.B (Lah).
28. *Govinda Nair*, 45 Mad. 922 (F.B.).
29. *Subodh Chandra*, 52 Cal. 319
30. *Mukhesur Rahman v. State*, (1976) 28 DLR 172.
31. *Kripa Sindhu Hazra v. State*, (1978) 30 DLR 103.

32. *ibid.*
33. *Syeda Rezia Begum v. Govt. of Bangladesh*, (1988) 40 DLR 210.
34. *Kripa sindhu Hazra v. state*, (1978) 30 DLR 103
35. *Dabiruddin Ahmed V. Dr. Chittaranjan Debnath*, (1984), 36 DLR(AD.) 77.
36. *Bishal Deo Tewari V. State*, (1975) 27 DLR 622.
37. *Maimunnessa V. State*, (1974) 26 DLR 241.
38. *Ranadhīr Das V. Ministry of Home*, (1976) 28 DLR 48.
39. Section 491f Cr. P. C. states that "(1) The High Court Division may, whenever it thinks fit, direct-(a) that a person within the limits of its appellate criminal jurisdiction be brought up before that Court to be dealt with according to law; (b) that a person illegally or improperly detained in public or private custody within such limits be set at liberty; (c) that a prisoner detained in any jail situated within such limits be brought before the Court to be there examined as a witness in any matter pending or to be inquired into in such court; (d) that a prisoner detained as aforesaid be brought before a Court-martial or any Commissioners respectively; (e) that a prisoner within such limits be removed from one custody to another for the purpose of trial; and (2) The Supreme Court may, from time to time, frame rules to regulate the procedure in cases under this Section. (3) Nothing in this Section applies to persons detained under any law for the time being in force providing for preventive detention".
40. *Tare v. Emperor*, AIR 1943 Nag. 26 (28).
41. *Sitao Jholia . Emperor*, AIR 1943 Nag. 36 (42).
42. *Gokul Chand*, AIR 1945 Nag. 203.
43. Basu, D. *Comparative Administrative Law*, (1969), P. 391.
44. *King v. Greenhill*, (1836) 4 A. &E. 629.
45. *Niharendu v. Porder*, AIR, 1945 Cal. 107 (118) (F.B.).
46. *Tare v. Empiror*, AIR 1943 Bom. 26 (27). At that time there were several High Courts in British India. Appellate jurisdiction of High Courts here means to entertain appeal, revision and other petitions within their territorial jurisdiction from which they could hear appeal and revision from the subordinate Criminal courts.
47. *Vimlabai*, AIR, 1945 Nag. 8 (21,23).
48. *Ali Ahmad*, 51 CS.L.J. 306 (Bom).
49. *Ranjit Singh v. state*, AIR, 1959 S.C. 843.
50. *Bhupendra V. Chief Secretary*, 51 Cr. L. J. 169 F. B. (Cal.).

51. *Shearer V. Shields*, (1914) A. C. 808.
52. *Kh. Mustaque Ahmed V. Bangladesh*, 33 DLR (1981) 3448 (349).
53. *Kh. Mustaque Ahmed V. Bangladesh*, 34 DLR (AD) (1982) 22.
54. *A Narain Murty V. King*, AIR 1949 Cal. 633.
55. *Sushil Kumar V. Govt. of West Bengal*, 53 C. W. N. 545.
56. *Bhupendra V. Chief Secretary*, 51 Cr. L. J. 169 F. B. (Cal.).
57. *Tops V. Emperor*, 46 Cal. 52 (53).
58. *Vishambhar Dayal V. U. P. Govt.*, AIR 1945 Oudh. 117 (118).
59. *Bishila*, 51 Cr. L. J. 1002.
60. *Malhari Ramaji V. Emperor*, 49 Cr. L. J. 460 (461).
61. *Rameswar Khirorriwalla*, 32 C. W. N. 889.
62. *Bishal Deo Tewari V. State*, (1975) 27 DLR 622.
63. *Humayun Kabir V. State*, (1976) 28 DLR 259.

51. Sheena V. Shields, (1914) A. C. 808.
52. Kh. Mustaque Ahmed V. Bangladesh, 33 DLR (1981) 3448 (3450).
53. Kh. Mustaque Ahmed V. Bangladesh, 34 DLR (AD) (1982) 22.
54. A. Naimin Murty V. King, AIR 1949 Cal. 638.
55. Goshil Kumar V. Govt. of West Bengal, 53 C. W. N. 542.
56. Bipinendra V. Chief Secretary, 21 C. L. J. 1697, B. (Cal.).
57. Tops V. Emperor, 46 Cal. 52 (53).
58. Vashambhai Dhand V. U. P. Govt., AIR 1945 Oudh. 117 (118).
59. Bahadur 51 Cr. L. J. 1002.
60. Mahant Ramdul V. Emperor, 49 Cr. L. J. 460 (461).
61. Ramseon Khosrulkar, 32 C. W. N. 880.
62. Hishal Deo Tewari V. State, (1975) 27 DLR 622.
63. Humayun Kabir V. State, (1976) 28 DLR 550.

SWITCHING BETWEEN ENGLISH AND BENGALI AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

The article is an attempt to unravel the forms and functions of the switches between English and Bengali in the speech of the educated Bangladeshis at the University level. It has been demonstrated that nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs are the categories that are normally switched with certain peculiarities. But among them the nouns form the largest category. The functional analysis reveals that there are eight reasons which might motivate separately or in combination the Bangladeshis to switch to the English terms. The reasons include prestige language, linguistic reason, formality-informality contrast, habit of the educated Bangladeshis, least-effort principle, avoidance of unpleasant expression or taboos, emotional stress, and assertion of authority.

Code-switching is a very common spin-off from bilingualism. Alternation between two languages at phonological, morphological and syntactic levels is usually termed code-switching, though some scholars (e. g. Kachru, 1983, p. 193-95; McClure, 1977, p. 97-98) prefer to distinguish between code-switching and code-mixing. They refer to the phenomenon as code-mixing when alternation takes place at the lexical or clausal level, while code-switching which is labelled code-changing by McClure (op. cit.) occurs at the level of major constituents. But in the literature on code-switching both the types of language alternation are commonly known as code-switching.

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However, though code-switching is as old as bilingualism it is only in the recent years that it has attracted the attention of scholars. But all kinds of switching are not accepted by the people, and many pejorative terms have been used to refer to extreme instances of code-switching. Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1971, p. 314-316) cite examples from Lance (1969, p. 75-76) to show that the relationships between language and social phenomena are not always represented by switches between Spanish and English marked as the extreme cases of code-switching. In Texas such extreme switching is 'referred to by pejorative terms such as Tex-Mex' (Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez, p. 316). Mackey (1965), as referred to by Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (op. cit.), also admits that there are cases of code-switching in which it is futile to predict the occurrence of the languages. But, though switching between English and Bengali is sometimes humorously termed 'Bangreji' (Bangla + Ingreji Bangreji), it does not indicate the extreme case of code-switching, and hence allows the establishment of the relationship between linguistic forms and social structures. And Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1971, p. 316), taking all these pejorative associations with code-switching into account, draw the conclusion that the phenomenon yet 'does carry meaning'.

The study of code-switching reveals that it has two aspects the formal aspect and the functional aspect. The researches into code-switching carried on so far indicate that the scholars have adopted three approaches. They have studied either the formal aspect or the functional aspect. But the third group which realizes that the study of only the formal or only the structural aspect is not enough for the full analysis of the phenomenon comes forward to investigate both the formal and the functional aspects together. The group which shows their interest in only the functional aspect of the phenomenon includes both the early and recent attempts at the study of code-switching (e. g., Rubin, 1962, 1968; Ervin-Tripp, 1964; Gumperz, 1971; Blom and Gumperz, 1971 Bennet and Nall, 1977; Bhuvaneshwari, 1989; Pakir, 1989; Cheng and Butler, 1989 etc.). The second group which is interested in the structure of the code-switched materials includes among others Annamalal (1971); Kachru (1978), Bhatia (1989), Bokamba (1989), Clyne (1978), Diebold (1962), Huerta (1977), Nash (1977), Naval (1989) and Nishimura (1989). Both these aspects have been studied by the third group in which some of the most important

scholars are Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1971), Ferguson (1978), Annamalai (1978), Baker (1980), Ellul (1978) and Fernando (1977). The studies show that none of the scholars has ever attempted to discuss and analyze the switching between Bengali and English, and hence the paper is an attempt at the analysis of the English-Bengali switching at the university level in Bangladesh.

The educated Bangladeshis very often code-mix their daily conversations with English, though English alone is never used throughout the full conversation. Bengali always acts as the receiving, host or base language into which English is inserted. The normal tendency among them is to use nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives from English vocabulary. Prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns and interjections are never used. Full English sentences are very rarely used except under certain circumstances. Nouns are actually the largest of the categories switched (cf. Poplack, 1980, 1978; Gumperz, 1976; Wentz, 1977). The following examples show how English nouns are used in Bengali conversations:

- (i) $\bar{a}j$ ki *department*-e jaben $\bar{n}\bar{a}$? 'Will you not go to the department today?'
- (ii) tumi kon *class*-e pada? 'What class do you read in?'
- (iii) *Arts faculty*-te $\bar{a}j$ kāl $\bar{a}r$ keu *admission* nite $\bar{c}\bar{a}y$ $\bar{n}\bar{a}$, 'Now-a-days nobody wants to get admitted into the Arts faculty.'
- (iv) $\bar{a}p\bar{n}\bar{a}r\bar{a}$ ki *tutorial class* shuru korechen? 'Have you started taking tutorial classes?'
- (v) Kono *subject*-er *practical* parikkhāy *fail*-er $\bar{m}\bar{a}ne$ ai *subject*-e *fail*. 'Failure in the practical examination in any subject means failure in the subject.'
- (vi) byāpār $\bar{t}\bar{a}$ *dean* saheb bujhte caccen $\bar{n}\bar{a}$, 'The dean does not want to understand the matter.'

The Nouns 'department', 'class' and 'faculty' in examples (i), (ii) and (iii) show that the Bengali suffix (*vitbhakti*) '-e' has been added to them when they have been used in the code-mixed sentence. The examples also indicate that Bengali never accepts the English prepositions which are always replaced by either Bengali *vitbhaktis* or post-positions. Example (iii) shows that a full noun phrase (Arts faculty) can also be code-mixed with Bengali. But the Bengali sentence does not

accept a prepositional phrase (e. g. Department of English, or students of English Department), and in this case the preposition is replaced by the Bengali *vbhakti*, though the code-mixed sentence might allow the use of the nouns. For example, **āmi department of English-e giyechilām*, 'I went to the department of English' is impossible. The acceptable code-mixed sentence will be *āmi ingreji department-e/English department-e giyechilām*. It is to be noted here that in this case the English preposition 'of' has not been replaced by any Bengali *vbhakti*, but the code-mixed sentence has used the noun + noun structure (e. g. in example iii) which is common to both English and Bengali. Similarly **ei cākrir janne students of the department of English darkār*, 'students of the department of English are necessary for this job,' is unacceptable as a code-mixed sentence. The acceptable switch to the English words requires the replacement of the English preposition 'of' by the Bengali genitive marker (*vbhakti*)-'er'/'-r' to give the following sentence: *ei cākrir janne English department-er/ingreji department-er students dārkarār*. The examples in (iii) and (iv) make it clear that noun phrases (Arts faculty; tutorial class) are also switched. The switch to the English word 'fail' in example (v) is curious. Though we know that the word is a verb in English, it has been used as a noun in the code-mixed sentence. But the code-mixed sentence is acceptable since the educated Bangladeshis never use its noun form 'failure' in their code-mixed speech. Another important feature of the word is that though it can be used both as a transitive and an intransitive verb in English, it is used only as an intransitive verb in code-mixed sentences. The code-mixed sentence **she parikkhā fail koreche*, 'he has failed the exam' is unacceptable because the word has been used transitively. The peculiarity in the switch to the word 'dean' in example (vi) lies in the use of the word 'sāheb' after it as an honorific which is never used in English. In Bengali words like 'professor', 'doctor', 'master' etc. are always followed by the honorific 'saheb'. Another interesting feature in the noun switches is the dropping of the plural marker of the English noun in the code-switched sentences as in example (iv) where the noun 'class' is used in the plural in the English sentence, though the code-mixed sentence uses the singular form. Thus the sentences *āpnārā ki tutorial classes shuru korechen* never occurs. But in some cases the plural form is acceptable as in *āmāder ingreji department-er student/students darkār*, 'we need students from the department of English'. As in the case of prepositions the plural

marker is entirely dropped, or it is replaced by the Bengali plural marker '-ra/-gulo' as in *teacher-ra e sab ārthik subidhā pete pāren*, 'The teachers may enjoy these financial benefits.' A code-mixed sentence like **teachers e sab ārthik subidhā pete pāren*, is unacceptable. This is a subject-object constraint. If the noun is used as the object of the code-mixed sentence both the plural and singular forms of the English noun are permissible as in the sentence *āmāder Ingreji department-er student/students darkār*. But when the noun is used as the subject of the sentence only the singular form is permissible. The English articles are never switched. They are replaced by the Bengali suffixes '-ti'/'-khānā'/'-khāni' / '-gulā' / '-guli' as in *tumi novel-ti padecha?* 'Have you read the novel?'

The English verbs occur in the code-mixed sentence with the Bengali verb 'karā', 'to do'. The Bengali verb 'deoyā', 'to give' is also used with the English verb in the code-mixed sentence. However, the following examples illustrate the use of English verbs in the code-mixed sentence.

(i) *bishayti meeting-e consider karā habe*, 'The matter will be considered in the meeting.'

(ii) *tini class-e narrative technique-ti discuss korechen*, 'He has discussed the narrative technique in the class.'

(iii) *tumi ki application submit korecha?* 'Have you submitted the application?'

(iv) *orā mike-e ki announce korche?* 'What are they announcing through the mike?'

(v) *T. V.-tā on kāro*, 'Switch on the T.V.'

(vi) *bus-e start deoyā hoeche?* 'Has the bus been started?'

All the verbs in the example show that they take the Bengali stem 'karā', 'to do' after them to be used in a code-mixed sentence. Example (v) is interesting, exhibiting how the preposition 'on' of the group verb 'switch on' has been treated as verb in the sentence. Prepositional phrases or group verbs are normally cut short when they are code-mixed with Bengali. Sentences like *byāpārtā person to person very kare*, 'the matter varies from person to person', illustrate how prepositional phrases are shortened. The exact phrase that has been used in the sentence is 'from person to person' which has dropped the

preposition 'from' in the code-mixed sentence. Example (vi) is an exception to the others in the sense that the verb 'start' takes 'deoya', 'to give' instead of 'karā', 'to do' after it.

English adjectives and adverbs are not very often switched, though examples are there to show that they are code-mixed with Bengali. Let us consider the following code-mixed sentences:

(i) *emon dangerous situation tackle karā muskil*, 'Such a dangerous situation is difficult to tackle'.

(ii) *anti-social element-rā ekhan er shujog nebe*, 'Anti-social elements will take advantage of this situation'.

(iii) *High School-e ekhon ār ingreji padānor moto kono shikkhak nei*, 'There is now no teacher eligible to teach English in high school'.

(iv) *tār career-to very bright*, 'His career is very bright.'

(v) *āmrā strongly protest korechi*, 'we have strongly protested.'

(vi) *kindly kāj-tā ektu kare din*. 'Kindly do the work for me.'

(vii) *Please kalamta ektu din* 'Please give me the pen'.

(viii) *Really surprising, emanto kakhano shunini*, 'Really surprising, I have never heard such a thing'.

(ix) *Strange, ageto jāntam na*, 'Strange, I did not know it before.'

Examples from (i) to (iii) illustrate how adjectives are normally used in the noun phrases. Adjectives alone are rarely used. Examples (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) show the use of adjectives with adverbs. The use of adjectives and adverbs in (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) is actually intrasentential requiring the highest grammatical efficiency of the languages involved on the part of the switcher (cf. poplack, 1982; p. 14). But the use of the adverbs in (vi), (vii), (viii) and (ix) require the least skill of the switcher, since they can be placed either at the beginning or at the end of the code-mixed sentence without violating any grammatical rule of English or Bengali. Both English and Bengali permit the use of the politeness formula both at the initial and final positions of the sentence. The examples in (viii) and (ix) are tag-switches which have little or no relation to the verbs or the nouns used in the code-mixed sentences. Nor do they modify the sentence as a whole. But it is true that even the least skilled switcher might be able to switch intrasententially as in examples from (i) to (v) simply by

memorizing a few often used noun or adjective phrases, and this frequently happens because all educated Bangladeshis want to show their knowledge of English which is, as we have already mentioned, implicitly considered the prestige language. However, it is worth mentioning here that the equivalence constraint (Poplack, 1980; p. 586) applies to the switching between English and Bengali, though it violates the free morpheme constraint (Poplack op. cit. p. 586) by adding Bengali plural markers or the definite article markers ('-ti,' '-ta,' '-khānā,' '-khāni,' '-gulā,' '-guli,') to the English nouns.

The reasons why code-switching takes place have been investigated by the scholars who have talked about either purely functional aspect of code-switching or both functional and structural aspects of the phenomenon, and we have already referred to such scholars. The switching between English and Bengali usually occurs for both linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Linguistic reason like nonavailability of a particular term in the base language, which is Bengali in this case, has been acknowledged by many scholars (e. g. Elias-Olivares, 1976, pp. 183-186; Huerta, 1978, pp. 47, 101 who have been quoted by Baker, 1980; p. 13) as producing switches to the other language. Terms like 'senate', 'syndicate', 'academic committee', 'table', 'chair', 'bench', 'stadium', 'harmonium', 'club', 'lounge', 'bill' and 'form' are frequently switched to in Bengali conversation only because there are no Bengali words or phrases to express these concepts. The following examples illustrate the case of lexical gap that produces switching between English and Bengali.

(i) *senate* nirbācane Rābindrā group here geche, 'The Rabindra group has lost the election to the Senate'.

(ii) *Syndicate* holo bishshabiddālāyer sabce shaktishālī *body*, 'Syndicate is the most powerful body of the university'.

(iii) *Academic committee*-r shiddhāntā cudāntā bibecitā habe, 'The decision of the academic committee will be considered final'.

(iv) *Khelātā* bishshābiddālāy *stadium*-e habe, 'The game will be played at the university stadium'.

(v) *Cricket*-er ceye *football* ami beshī pachanda kari, 'I prefer football to cricket'.

But besides these untranslatable English words or phrases there are also some English lexical items which are used in Bengali conversation even though their Bengali equivalents are available. These words are normally switched to for socio-psychological reasons. The Bengali equivalents are used in formal situations like writing or making a formal speech, but these English words are chosen for use in conversations or lectures in the class where the teacher is more concerned with the students' grasping of the ideas he interprets than the kind of language he is using. The examples given below show the case of switching on account of formality-informality contrast.

(i) *Latif Hall-e ekhan ke provost āchen?* 'Who is now the provost of Latif Hall?'

(ii) *Arts Faculty-r dean resign korechen,* 'The dean of the Arts Faculty has resigned'.

(iii) *tini academic council-er member,* 'He is a member of the academic council'.

(iv) *āpnār file ki establishment section-e ache?* 'Is your file in the establishment section?'

(v) *'ekhan ingreji department-er chairman ke?* 'Who is now the chairman of the English department?'

In the above examples the English words in italics have appropriate Bengali equivalents. The English terms 'Hall', 'Arts Faculty', 'dean', 'resign', 'academic council', 'member', 'file', 'establishment section', 'department' and 'chairman' are translated into Bengali as 'chatrabash', 'kala anushad', 'anushad adhikarta', 'padatyag kara', 'shikkha parishad', 'sadassa', 'nathi', 'sangsthapan shaka', 'bibhag' and 'sabhapati', respectively. But these Bengali equivalents are used only in formal writing, for example, when the Registrar of the university writes a letter to the chairmen of the departments. But the educated Bangladeshis frequently use the English words and phrases in their daily conversations. Besides the full words, there are many English abbreviations which are also used. The following examples corroborate the switches to English abbreviations:

(i) *daksu-te (DUCSU) jitlo kārā? raksu-te (RUCSU) jitbe kārā?* 'Who have won the elections to the DUCSU?' 'who will win the elections to the RUCSU?'

(ii) V. C. panara tarikh theke chutite āchen. 'The V.C. has been on leave since the 15th.'

(iii) V. P. ar G. S. holo raksu-r (RUCSU) sabce guruttapurna post, 'The posts of V. P. and G.S are the most important in the RUCSU'.

(iv) apni ki T. A., D. A. peye gechen? 'Have you received the T.A and D.A.?'

(v) P.F. theke loan neoya ki shambhāb? 'Is it possible to take a loan from the P. F.?'

The abbreviations 'DUCSU', 'RUCSU', 'V.C.', 'V.P.', 'G.S.', 'T. A.', 'D. A.', and 'P.F' stand for the English expression 'Dacca University Central Students Union', 'Rajshāhi University Central Students Union', 'Vice-Chancellor', 'Vice-President', 'General Secretary', 'Travel Allowance', 'Daily Allowance' and 'Provident Fund'. But though the expressions have appropriate Bengali equivalents, are not used in normal conversations. The reason may be traced to formality-informality contrast. But the habit of the Bengali speakers is also responsible for the use of such abbreviations. They have been familiar with these English expressions since their entry to the university on account of the fact that these expressions have been far longer in use among the educated Bangladeshis than their Bengali equivalents. Actually since the very establishment of the University these English terms have been in use among them, while their Bengali equivalents were coined just after our independence in 1971. Moreover, another reason that might induce switches to such expression is the association of prestige with English, and finally the abbreviations doubtlessly facilitate pronunciation (vide Baker, 1980: p. 16) because they are shorter than the full Bengali equivalents. Thus a complex of socio-psychological reasons is responsible for switching to such English abbreviations in Bengali sentences.

Many switches to English words and phrases whose Bengali equivalents are available are clearly due to the derogatory associations of the Bengali equivalents. Thus these switches might be identified as euphemistic code-switching. If the Registrar of the university is addressed as the 'sherestadar' of the university in formal writing or informal conversation, there is reason enough for him to take it amiss and get angry, even though 'sherestadar' is the appropriate Bengali

equivalent for the English word 'registrar'. Similarly, a contractor will never like to be addressed or referred to as 'thikadar' which is the Bengali equivalent of the English word. The insurance agent will be offended if anybody uses the Bengali equivalent 'bimar dalal' for him. Nor does the medical representative like to be called 'oshudher dalal', though his work is in no way different from that of a dalal who is a person paid by someone to do business on his behalf. But he will not mind being called 'pratinidhi', since the word is devoid of the associations of pettiness that in the word 'dalal'. Moreover, the educated people will always refer in English to matters related to bodily functions, sex or scatology which are taboos for discussion in Bengali, even though their Bengali equivalents are available. Thus the speech of the educated Bangalis is will include phrases like 'stool examination' or 'loose motion' instead of paykhana parikkha' or 'patla paykhana' which are the equivalents of those English expressions. They will frequently say 'sex magazine' in preference to 'jauno patrika', though that is the exact Bengali expression. While talking about genital organs they will never use the Bengali terms, unless the speaker is a teacher delivering a lecture on Botany or Zoology in the lower classes where education is imparted in Bengali. In conversations they will invariably use the English terms. Even the venereal disease specialist will never be referred to as 'jauno rog bisheshagga', though the specialist himself writes down the Bengali expression on his name plate. If a woman has got cancer on her breast or breasts, no educated Bangladeshi will refer to the disease as 'stan cancer', though it is the exact Bengali equivalent for 'breast cancer', which they will use in their speech, only because the breast of a woman is also regarded as her sex organ. They will without fail prefer to say 'ami bathroom-e jabo', 'I shall go to the bathroom', rather than 'ami paykhana korbo', though both the sentences mean the same things in Bengali.

Emotional strain which has been identified as one of the major motivations for switching (e.g. Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez, 1971, p. 326) also influences language choice among the educated Bangladeshis. Normally if a Bangladeshi is angry with his equals or inferiors he usually switches to English. A woman employee of the University of Rajshahi once got angry with the driver of the teachers' bus who started the bus before she could take her seat causing her almost to fall down, and when she complained to the driver he smiled

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INFLUENCE OF NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH POPULAR FICTION ON BENGALI NOVEL

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(The present paper is the basic outline of a longer research project. Detailed influence of English popular fiction on Bengali novel will be studied in the project. Aspects of individual texts of popular English fiction will be discussed and their parallels in Bengali novels of the earliest period will be examined closely in the project.)

Bengali novel, as it is generally acknowledged, is not indigenous in its growth, rather it is the direct outcome of a contact with English novel. Historians of Bengali literature have very extensively commented upon this fact. But what remains still unexplored is what type of English fiction, the "classic" or the of Bengali novel. In English, there always existed two different trends in fiction from the earliest days of its history. Side by side with the great writers like Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollet, Jane Austene, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Anthony Trollope, and their like who, as said by canonical critics, wrote 'classics' or 'masterpieces' of English fiction, there also existed writers who wrote what is called 'popular fiction' which is often described as an 'undergrowth', as 'foliage', as 'trash' etc. by the literary critics, historians and the educated, sophisticated readers. Both these types had their influence on early Bengali novel. Influence of the major English novelists such as Dickens, Hardy, and Scott had often been mentioned and discussed in some detail, but that of the second had hardly received any attention so far, because, even in England, this kind of fiction had been neglected on the ground that they were ephemeral in character, they tried only to entertain the readers of the time, and they had little to do with the qualities that give to a work of

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fiction a perennial interest. But works of this type created sensation and sold in far greater number than the masterpieces. Their popularity extended to many other countries including Bengal where, as evidence shows, they were welcomed with great enthusiasm by the English educated middle class. It is this type of English fiction which, according to some historians like J. C. Ghosh, shaped and influenced Bengali fiction. But as yet there had been no detailed study of the relationship between the popular English fiction and the Bengali novel. A study of this relationship is important both for English and Bengali literature. In this paper, therefore, an attempt is made to show the relationship between English popular fiction and Bengali fiction.

Popular English fiction has been often defined as cheap and light entertaining narratives that aimed at providing amusement without much of intellectual engagement. This kind of fiction had its vogue, and a very wide readership in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is said to have offered an 'inattentive, almost unconscious' kind of reading, and dealt with "those discoveries which engage and possess the mind most effectually, and from which pleasure can be extracted with the least labour wherein the imagination has the greatest share, and where the subject is such as is obvious to our senses."¹ They, it has been said, often were full of tracy tales, horrid stories of murder, assassinations, rapes, seductions, and other gross and exciting matters. It aimed at providing 'excitement and excitement alone'.² Most popular novels abound in incidents and contains nothing else. Deep knowledge of human nature, graphic delineation of character, vivid representation of the aspects of nature or the workings of the soul-- all these higher features of creative art were considered hindrances to works of this type. "action, action, action" is the first thing needful, and the second and the third.³ The human actors in the pieces for the most part, are but so many lay figures on which to exhibit a drappery of incidents. "It does not appeal to the judgement by scenes of deep pathos, or awaken the fancy by tracing out with spirit and vivacity the higher traces of life and manners, or excite mirth by strong representations of the ludicrous or humorous."⁴ In other words, it attains its interest neither by the path of comedy nor of tragedy; and yet it has a deep, decided and powerful effect, gained by means of both-- by an appeal to fear excited either by natural fears or by suggestions of superstitions. This type of fiction produced terror which was, to a great

extent, a cause of its success. Regarding this type of fiction, the *Christian Remembrancer* declared that 'the one indispensable point in a sensational novel is that it should contain something that induces in the simple idea a kind of thrill'. Many sensational novels develop "stormy, impulsive, passionate heroines, and thereby make consistent appeal to the animal part of our nature." Bigamy, adultery and murder were some of the common themes in this type of novel.

As a whole, popular fiction is said to have dealt with love, romance, adventure, thrill, crime, horror, judgement, and the like. In most cases, the heroine is the most important character, her difficulties and triumphs being the predominant central theme. They are often delineated as very young beautiful, graceful and chaste. In fact, popular fiction presents a world of woman. Physical appearance of both hero and heroine is often described in some details. Relationship of men and women, of lovers, of parents and children are some other themes in popular fiction. Class, work, money, religion, and morality are commonly dealt with in this type of fiction.

Mrs. Henry Wood's *East Lynne*, and Roland Yorke, Maria Edgeworth's *Popular Tales*, and *Moral Tales*, G. W. M. Reynolds's *Mysteries of London*, *Mysteries of the Court of London*, and *Wagner: the Wehr Wolf*, Frederick Marryat's *Peter Simple*, *Snarleyyou*, *Masterman Ready*, and *Midshipman Easy*, Wilkie Collins's *Woman in White*, and *Moonstone* are some of the works of popular fiction that were most popular at that time. Like most popular novels, these works of popular fiction describe feminine beauty in considerable detail. The description of Nissida in *Wagner: the Wehr Wolf*, for example, is very sensuous as it is seen in the following passage.

She was attired in deep black; her luxuriant raven hair, no longer depending in shining curls, was gathered up in massy bands at the sides, and in a knot behind, whence hung a rich veil that meandered over her body's splendidly symmetrical length of limb in such a manner as to aid her attire in shaping rather than hiding the contours of that matchless form. The voluptuous development of her bust was shrouded, not concealed, by the stomacher of black velvet which she wore, and which set off in strong relief the dazzling whiteness of her neck.

Again, when Nissida goes to visit Wagner in male attire she is described in sensuous terms in the following lines.

Though tall, majestic and rich proportions for a woman, yet in the attire of the opposite sex she seemed slight, short, and graceful. The velvet cloak sat so jauntily on her sloping shoulder;— the doublet became her symmetry so well;— and the rich lace collar was so arranged as to disguise the prominence of the chest—that voluptuous fullness which could not be compressed.

Then, there is an elaborate description of the illicit love between Wagner and Nissida. Nissida's father too had an illicit love affair with his mistress.

Reynolds's *Mysteries of the Court of London*, which had the largest sale at that time is full of sensuous descriptions. Many scenes in the novel take place in the superior brothel disguised as the establishment of a fashionable milliner. Most of the work women here are prostitutes. George IV pursues many of his amours in these surroundings. Scenes of seduction and passion abound in the novel. Some of these are quite amusing as it is found in the following lines,

And as he glued his lips, hot and parched with the fever of burning lust, to her delicious mouth, her senses abandoned her— and she remained powerless and inanimate in his arms.

Many popular novels are marked by 'false sentiment' flashy melodrama, and high wooden characters. Plots often lack organic unity, are full of detachable episodes, and are highly improbable. Characters and scenes are mostly irrelevant to the stories and serve hardly any purpose in furthering the plot which, it seems, is crammed by physical violence on to a setting and character with which it has no organic connection so that the centre of interest in the novel lies in characters and scenes irrelevant to the story. Unity of action too, is absent in these novels. The emotion evoked is not inevitably inherent in these novels, the novelist often overstates; the readers often feel that their emotions are being exploited, their tears are made to flow by a cold machination on the part of the author. The scholarly readers are often nauseated, instead of being convinced that a direct attack be made on their tender feelings. The power of story telling is not very impressive for the educated, sophisticated readers. Moreover, the sophisticated readers consider popular novelists inferior to the great novelists in respect of craft, of the 'creative imagination', the magic power that

transmutes raw materials of the common experience into the stuff of which art is made.

This type of fiction was highly popular in England, and sold in far greater numbers than the works of great writers. Records of their popularity are seen in the reports of booksellers and publishers and also in the records of circulating libraries. According to the *Bookseller*, a trades journal, G. W. M. Reynolds wrote and sold more copies than Dickens, the most popular major novelist of the nineteenth century. Popular writers such as Mrs. Henry Wood, Maria Edgeworth, Bulwer Lytton, Frederick Marryat, and Wilkie Collins among many others had wide readership in England.

Popularity of these novelists increased everyday, and soon spread out of England into the colonies, and even to India where it was read at first by the English merchants, soldiers and administrators, but later also by the English educated Indians, who, too, were fascinated by writings of these novelists. Some of this Indian middle class afterwards started writing novels in English, and some others started practising this new form of literature in their mothertongue. It so happened because, as is often seen, popular literary genres and movements are generally transmitted from one national literature to another. Ancient Epic and drama, for example, having originated in Greece, gradually moved to English and other literatures of the world. Similarly, the Sonnet had its origin in Italy, but, later on, moved to English and other European literatures. Like genres, literary movements also first originate in one country, but afterwards move to other countries. The romantic movement, for example, first started in Germany, but soon spread to England and many other countries of the world, the symbolic movement too, having started in America, spread to France, England, and many other countries of the world. English novel also, when it became very popular in England, transmitted into many other literatures of the world, but specially into the literatures of the colonies where English novels were imported, and some English novels were introduced in the curricula by the English establishment as part of their colonizing programme.

To colonize the Bengaleese, the English administration in India first introduced "English" education, and, as part of it, English literature. English education had the formative influence on the growth of Bengali prose, and journalism, and the introduction of English

literature prompted many Indians to write literary works in English, it influenced Bengali literature and culture as a whole. The introduction of English novel, nineteenth century people novels, particularly, prompted many Bengalees of to write novels both in English and Bengali, and greatly influenced the popular culture of Bengal, and of India as a whole.

As historical evidence shows, the Bengali novel and Indo-Anglian novels had no existence before the nineteenth century; they came into being as a direct outcome of the contact with English education and especially with the English novel, a contact with which caused a great change in the people culture of Bengal, and of India. Even Bengali prose and journalism, the prologues to the Bengali novel, came into being as a direct of English education. At the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the christian missionries in India first started writing prose in Bengalli to facilitate the propagation of Christianity. The first two Bengali grammars, too, were written by Nathaniel Brassy Halhed, a government official, and william Carey, first a missionary, and afterwards, a professor of Bengali in the Fort William College.⁵ Both being Englishmen, their grammars and prose works were greatly influenced by English. Influence of English syntax, in particular, is evident everywhere in their writings.

The establishment of the Fort William College and, that of the Srirampur Baptist Mission Press in 1801 facilitated and hastened the growth of Bengali preose. William Carey and his associates at Fort William College, Ram Ram Basu, Mrtyunjay Bidyalker, and later on, Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar greatly contributed to the growth of Bengali prose, but even in their works the influence of English syntax is very clearly manifest.⁶

The rise of prose, the establishment of many presses in and around Calcutta and contact with English journalism promoted the growth of journalism in Bengal. John Marshman edited *Vengal Gazet*, and *Samachar Darpan*, first published respectively in April and May, 1818; these works launched journalism in Bengal. Following these, many journals such as Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyay's *Sambad Kaumudi* (1821), and *Samachar Chandrika* (1822), Nilratan Halder's *Vangadut*, (1829), and Iswar Gupta's *Samvad Prbhakar* (1831), among others, set Bengali journalism on a good footing. Soon, philosophical and literary magazines cropped up in Bengal. In the thirties of the

nineteenth century, the leading writers started writing in Iswar Gupta's *Sampad Probhakar* and *Prabhakar*, both of which served as the training ground for young and promising writers of the time. Rangalal Vandyapadhyay, Manomahan Vasu, and Hemachdra Vandyopadhaya started their literary career in the *Prabhakar* under the guidance of Iswar Gupta. Most of the early contributors to the Bengali periodicals had English education and the influence of English is obvious in their journalistic writings.

Writing for the periodicals prompted the writing of novel. Early prose fiction in Bengali appeared first in newspaper. The publication of Pramathnath Sharma's *Babur Upakhyan* in *Samachar Darpan* on 24th February, 1821 may be regarded as the beginning of modern novel in Bengali, and was the precursor of Tekchand Thakur's *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (1857), Kali Prasanna Sinha's *Hutum Penchar Naksa* (1862), and Bankim Chandra Chatapadhyay's *Muchtram Gurer Jiban Charit* (1862). Bhabanj Charan Badyopadhya's social sketches *Kalkata Kamalalaya*, *Nabababubilas*, and *Nababibibilas*, all of which are periodical publications, are forerunners of the Bengali novel. However, no novel was written in Bengali before 1857, the year when *Alaler Gharer Dulal* was published.

The dominating influence on the rise of Bengali novel had been the contact with English novels. Many English novels were introduced in the curricula and many others were imported for commercial purposes and were available in local markets. Thus the Bengalees first came into contact with the English novel which soon became so popular in Bengal that some of the Bengalees who had been exposed to it, and through it to popular English cultural life, started writing novels in Bengali, and some others in English imitating the model they were exposed to in an effort to bring about fundamental changes in the age-old social traditions and mode of life in Bengal.

The early Bengali novels were the works of writers in whom the East and the West had met. Early Bengali novelists were equally well versed in Bengali and English. Tek Chand Thakur, as a student of Hindu College, Kali Prasanna Sinha, as a student of William Clerk Patrick, Bankim as a student Medinipur English school. Hoogly College, and Culcutta University, Ramesh Chandra Datta, educated partly in England, had become familiar with English fiction. These early Bengali novelists enriched Bengali novel with the ideas they had acquired from

English, and other European literature in English translation.⁷ A noteworthy feature about it is that the Bengalees were influenced by a variety of English fiction in the nineteenth century. They found, and read novels of writers belonging to different ranks. According to T.W. Clark, Daniel Defoe, Walter Scott, Bulwer Lytton, G. W. M. Reynolds, Todd, and Maria Edgeworth's popular novels were widely read in the Indian subcontinent.⁸ J. C. Ghosh mentions the names of Marie Corelli and Gilbert Frankau as the widely read English novelists of the subcontinent.⁹ According to P. R. Sen, Maria Edgeworth's *Popular Tales*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Lillo's *Fatal Curiosity*, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, De Quency's *Confession of an English Optum Eater*, and also some novels of George Eliot, Bulwer Lytton, Charles Dickens, Frederick Marryat, Mrs. Henry Wood, and G. W. M. Reynolds were read by the newly educated middle class readers who formed the only group of reading public of English novel in the sub-continent.¹⁰ Obviously, among these novelists, Dickens, Scott, and Goldsmith combined sensational elements with aesthetic elements; they wrote for the average as well as the educated readers.

Thus, it is seen that some of the English novelists like Goldsmith, Defoe, Hardy and Eliot were read because they used sensational elements in their works, but the majority of novels and novelists read in the sub-continent were popular or "lower class" novels or novelists. So, the fact is both types were read and both had influences in shaping the newly rising genre of Bengali literature, the Bengali fiction. The Bengalees, for instance, and many other Indians took as readily to Walter Scott as they did G. W. M. Reynolds who is almost unknown till today, and whose works never were and never will be found in the accepted canon of English literature. Like Defoe, Fielding, Dickens, Eliot, Goldsmith, and many other great writers, popular novelists Reynolds, Wilkie Collins, Maria Edgeworth, Marie Corelli, Bulwer Lytton, and Mrs. Henry Wood among other popular, "low class" writers were a strong influence of the early Bengali novelists. The novels like Reynolds' *Mysteries of London*, and *Mysteries of the Court of London*, Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, Bulwer Lytton's *Pelham*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, *Waverly* and a few other novels among many other nineteenth century popular English novels provided models and suggested themes and subjects for the early Bengali novelists. The

deep that it would not be an exaggeration to say that without the introduction of English education, and of English literature, it would have taken a longer time for the novel to become a definite and in the modern times perhaps the most prolific genre in Bengali literature.

Direct influence of the English novel is noticed in many early Bengali novels. P. R. Sen rightly says that Praṭap Chandra Ghosh's *Vangadtpaparjay*, specially chapter iv of the novel, resembles the tournament scene in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*; chapter xvii of Ghosh's novel runs parallel to the episode of storming the castle in *Ivanhoe*.¹¹ Ghosh imitates Scott's manner of explaining words in footnotes. Bankim Chandra's *Durgeshnandini*, too, is said to have been influenced considerably by *Ivanhoe*. Bankim uses the form used in *Ivanhoe*. Wilkie Collins's technique of narrating a part of the story by the hero or heroine in his *Women in White* is imitated by Bankim in his *Rajani*. It seems Bankim has used some scenes from Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* in *Sitaram*. Bankim's *Kamala Kanter Daptar*, similarly, owes much to De Quency's *Confession of an English Opium Eater*. Bankim's *Daptar* is modelled after Scott's *Tales of My Landlord*. The illustrated paper, *Prkabhanti* stated rendering in Bengali Reynolds's *Mysteries of the Court of London*. Keshab Chandra Sen's *Samya* was, to a certain extent, based on John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women*. The spoiled son of the rich zamindar in Tek Chand Thakur's *Alaler Gharer Dulal* has been portrayed after Tom in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Historical novels in Bengali, like Bankim's *Durgeshnandini*, was inspired by Todd's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

The part that English education and English fiction played in the formation of the hitherto unknown genre of Bengali literature has been extensively commented upon.¹² The effect of what may be called the canonical works of English fiction on the Bengali novel has often been the subject of critical enquiry. The influence, however, of the cheap popular tradition of English fiction that also left its mark on Bengali novel has not been adequately explored; the extent to which this whole class of English novel either deliberately by authors or critical study. J. C. Ghosh has, however, commented, or complained of its pernicious shadow on the early as well as modern Bengali novel. According to Ghosh, the best element in Bengali fiction had its origin in English or European fiction. But the best things of European literature, in his opinion, did not arrive in Bengal, or even if they arrived, their influence

has not been very deep on Bengali literature. He holds that the Bengali novelists did not seek from English and European fiction intellectuality and scientific reason, the things Bengali literature or Bengali novel needed most, rather the Bengali novelists sought from the West the sentimentalism, escapism, and mysticism which become the mainstay of Bengali fiction. 'The emasculated, demode, and decadent elements of western fiction have found a congenial soil in the Indian sub-continent than the living and the virile elements'. Ghosh asserts:

..... westernized Bengali literature has suffered from fact that the class of western literature that has exerted that most vital and widespread influence on it is the journalistic and pseudo-literary class that is to be found in the railway bookstalls and suburban libraries of Europe This is as much due to the inability of the majority of the Indians to comprehend the best elements of European literature as it to the same inability on the part of the majority of European, belonging chiefly to the military classess who go to India The taste these Europeans diffuse for the Marie Corellis, Ethel M. Dells, Gilbert Frankau, and similar writers is freely acquired by the majority of educated Indians who know English. The regrettable result is not so much that this class of literature enjoys the greatest popularity in India -- it does that in Europe too -- as that it is regarded as exemplifying European modernity and intellectuality, and as the best Europe could give to India. The Indian Universities try to improve taste, but they cater for only about one out of every three thousand Indians, and -- their influence hardly touches the fringe of the living cretive literature The greater European novelists are by no means unread or unknown but their popularity and influence are negligible compared with the popularity and influence of their inferion class of writers mentioned above , it is the mass produced British goods that found the best market in India.¹³

According to Ghosh (*op. cit*), the majority of the Bengalees who learnt English, learnt it for vocational purposes, and had not acquired a proper understanding of English literature, In fact, language is a socio-cultural phenomena. It is difficult, almost impossible, for second or foreign language learners to unerstand the subtleties, the sophistication of the meaning potential, the socio-cultural meaning embedded in a language as linguistic and cultural outsiders. This was

early Bengali novelists also. Many Bengali novelists borrowed elements ready made from the third rate European novels.

Influence of the popular tradition of English fiction is seen quantitatively in the mass of fiction produced by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and his contemporaries. In artistic value their novels show the defects of popular English fiction. *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (1857) of Pyari Chand Mitra, the first Bengali novel, is a loosely constructed novel; the incidents are irrelevant, and the characters shadowy. It would be fair to call *Alaler Gharer Dulal* a series of sketches rather than a novel. Mr. Mitra is the pioneer of the novel than a good novelist. *Durgeshnandini* (1865), the first novel of Bankim, and the first Bengal novel in modern European style, is marked by many shortcomings of English popular fiction.

Bankim, considered the greatest master of Bengali fiction, is as J. C. Ghosh puts it, a very mediocre novelist. He was the pioneer of a new form of art rather than being a good novelist. Ghosh rightly comments that Bankim's historical novels show his unintelligent and unimaginative attitude to history. A novel is not only a historical record, rather elements of history have to be transmuted into the stuff of a novel by creative imagination, which is found lacking in Bankim's novels. He records historical events in a manner of a 'schoolboy jotting down history notes'. Ghosh describes Bankim, and though a controversial point there is some truth in it, as a 'typical bourgeois, smug, sentimental, didactic, and conservative', and his fictional world as 'narrow and false'.¹⁴ All his male characters except Govindlal are pasteboard, and his women are unreal. His characters are often sentimental, and integrity of his characters are often sacrificed to propagandist purposes. His novels are marked by sentimentality which endears him to the readers. He falsifies his characters and situations by overdramatizing (as in *Durgeshnandini* where Ayesa declares her love for Jagat Simha), and he writes many dusty pages for the sake of moralizing. His tender and moving scenes (such as the reunion of Nagendra and Suryamukhi in *Visvritksa*, and the encounters between Praphulla and Vrajeswar in *Devī Chowdhurantī*) are full of sentimentality, and he has a fondness for the cheap showmanship (e. g. beautiful women flourishing daggers, and bold men performing impossible facts of heroism), and crude melodrama.

The ending of *Kapal Kundala* is highly melodramatic. The kapalik's revenge and Navakumaar's suspicion of Kepal Kundala's chastity spoils the novel. The last chapter describing kapalkundala being taken to the cremation ground to be killed by the Kapalik and Navakumr is full of exaggeration. Moreover, many of Bankim's plots violates the elementary laws of probability and naturalness. Bankim created a popular taste and popular demand for Bengali novel. Many novelists appeared in answer to that demand. Pratap Chandra Chosh, Chandicharan Sen, Rames Chandra Datta, and Sanjib Chandra Chattopadhyay among other contemporaries of Bankim made valuable contribution to Bengali novel. But generally speaking, the novels of these authors, too, like Bankim's, were swamped by conventional feeling and were unadventurous in technique. The average level of novel was that of potboiler, and it was obviously derivative owing most to the same class of English fiction.

Thus popular English fiction was a strong influence on Bengali novel. But the paucity of comment on the influence of Nineteenth century popular English fiction on the Bengali novel is not surprising, for, as said earlier it is not a class of writing that is often made the subject of literary criticism or literary history and, even in England, is more the concern of the study of popular culture than of literature. English popular fiction, however, especially that of the Victorian times with its interesting aspects, greatly influenced the Bengali novel.

Notes

1. Huet's *of the Origin of Romances* which prefaced Samuel Croxall's *Collections of Novels and Histories* (1720), quoted in Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*. 1967. London: Chatto and Windus. p. 49.
2. *Quarterly's Review*, 1863.
3. *Idem*
4. Walter Scott. At the end of *Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe*.
5. Nathaniel Brassy Halhead's *A Grammar of Bengali Language*, published in 1778, in Hoogly.
6. In February, 1801 appeared his translation of the New Testament, and by 1809, his translation of the whole Bible. Carey's *Dialogue* (1801), *Itihasmala* (1812), Ram Ram Basu's *Pratapaditya Charitra* (1801), Mrtyunjay Bidyalanker's *Batris Simhasan* (1802), *Rajabali* (1801), were the important prose works by the Fort William group of writers.
7. Shamsujjaman Khan and Selina Hossain (ed). *Charitavidhan*. Dhaka: Bangla Academy.
8. T. W. Clark. (ed). *The Novel in India*. 1970. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. pp. 11, 32,50.
9. J. C. Ghosh. *Bengali Literature*. 1948. London: O. U. P. p. 167.
10. P. R. Sen. *Western Influence in Bengali Literature*. 1960. Calcutta: Academic Publisher.
11. List in Q. D. Leavis. Op. cit. Appendix 1: list of popular novels. Dalziel quotes the *Bookseller*, a trades journal which in an obituary letter after the death of G. W. M. Reynolds describe him as "the most popular writer" of the time. Dalziel. Op. cit. p. 36.
12. T. W. Clark. Op. cit.; J. C. Ghosh. Op. cit.; Sunil Kumar De. *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. 1919. Calcutta: Calcutta University.
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Z. Dusan Bavitel. *History of Indian Literature*. 1976. Wiesbaden. Otto, Harrassowitz.
13. J. C. Ghosh. Op. cit. pp. 166-67.
14. *Ibid*

Notes

1. History of the English Language, which includes English Dialects, Collected by George and Elizabeth Hill, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926.
2. *English Language*, 1928.
3. *English Language*, 1928.
4. *English Language*, 1928.
5. *English Language*, 1928.
6. In *English Language*, 1928.
7. *English Language*, 1928.
8. *English Language*, 1928.
9. *English Language*, 1928.
10. *English Language*, 1928.
11. *English Language*, 1928.
12. *English Language*, 1928.
13. *English Language*, 1928.
14. *English Language*, 1928.

URBAN HOUSING AND NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY OF BANGLADESH

- By Hafiza Khatun *

Abstract

The urban housing sector in Bangladesh is characterised by acute shortage as well as poor state of housing services. More than three quarter of the total ortal urban houses are structurally of poor quality construction. The average floor space per capita is approximately 5 sq. m. This falls down much lower for the slum dwellers of Dhaka. Population growth is very rapid as compared to the expansion of urban utility services. Over 90 percent of the total urban housing is supplied by private informal sector. High demand of land for housing and shortage of land above flood level enhanced the land price, consequently land speculation in all urban areas, specially, in the principal cities. Like most other countries, the government recognises housing as a basic human need and the provision of housing as one of its fundamental responsibilities. However, the Fourth Five Year Plan shows that this was more of a theoretical or political slogan than a practical consideration. Now a days the government is showing interest and concern about the housing sector and is in the process of formulating a national hosing policy. To ensure the increasing supply of housing both in terms of quality and quantity some aspects should be addressed properly in the propesd housing policy. The key aspects are: availability & ownership of land, finance, effective legislation, availability of building materials and institutional coordination.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is one of the basic human needs like food and clothing. It provides shelter, safety and sense of belonging to a person. It also contributes to the employment generation and over all productivity

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improvement. But in Bangladesh the housing situation is unsatisfactory in both rural and urban areas in respect of number as well as conditions. In the urban areas housing situation is more degrading as it is characterised by higher degree of inequality.

The urban housing sector in Bangladesh is facing acute shortage and poor state of services. Fast population growth, shortage of land supply, lack of planning, together with social and environmental problems in the urban sector make it more unbearable for the urban low to middle income groups. As a result, only a very small proportion of better-off people can afford and are enjoying fairly comfortable to luxury housing, while the vast majority of the lower income group and the poor are faced with the problem of living in substandard housing.

The 1991 census records the urban population to be about 22 million spread over in nearly 500 urban centres of Bangladesh. This urban population represents almost 20 percent of the total population of the country. It should be mentioned here that through the decentralization measures in the 1980s, government tried to reduce the pressure on major cities by providing growth incentive among 540 thana (upazilas) urban centres. But still the urban population growth is mainly occurring in some large metropolitan cities which include Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. These four metropolitan areas account for approximately 35 percent of all urban population.

In absolute terms, the patterns of new urban population growth is focusing on Dhaka and to a lesser extent on Chittagong. An obvious impact of this increase in urban population has been the pressure that this has put on as a whole and has resulted in increased demand for land, housing and urban services in all urban areas specially in Dhaka and Chittagong. The situation has become worse with the existing class or social structure i.e. the small elite class controls the ownership of the urban land, the most important component of housing. For example in Dhaka less than 20 percent households own more than 80 percent of the land while about the majority (80 percent) poor have access to less than 20 percent of the land (Islam, 1993).

Now a days, the housing condition has deteriorated further. The situation regarding access to urban services such as water, sanitation and refuse collection, health and education facilities are equally gloomy.

The main reason for these bad conditions can be explained by the fact that there is no comprehensive agency responsible either for housing or urban services as a whole. All are considered as comprising a variety of components, each under a different authority. Similarly, there is no explicit policy, plan or programme to guide or direct either housing or urban services. So in order to overcome the present crisis and have a better urban life a detailed housing policy with all the components of urban services is needed.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this paper is to assess the situation of urban housing sector of Bangladesh, and review the existing government policy, and programmes on different aspects of this sector. The review is intended to propose a refinement or formulation of policies and strategies to the government which would facilitate accelerated development of the housing sector of Bangladesh.

The data for the present study have been collected from various secondary sources. These include publications of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), government documents as well as different published and unpublished research papers in this field.

HOUSING STRUCTURAL FEATURE

According to the Household expenditure Survey (HES) data of BBS (1991), more than three quarter (76 percent) of the total urban houses are structurally of poor quality construction, built with temporary or semi-permanent materials. About 29.2 percent of them have CI sheet or poor quality roofing and temporary walling. About one quarter of the urban houses of Bangladesh are built completely with thatch, bamboo or mud and about 23 percent shelters of the poorest are so vulnerable as to need total replacement every year. More over there may be a significant percentage of population who would like to move from their present unsatisfactory housing condition to a more satisfactory situation, the proportion of which is not known.

The cost of building materials, specially for pucca structure is too high to be afforded by the majority of the urban dwellers. The cost of

these materials is also higher in Bangladesh in comparison to the neighbouring countries (Halcrow Fox & BCL, 1993).

Table 1

Urban Housing Structural Feature

Housing Material		Percentage
Wall= Brick/Cement	Roof= Cement	23.3
Wall= Cl Sheet/Brick/Cement	Roof= Cl Sheet/Wood	22.6
Wall= Mud/Mud Brick	Roof= Cl Sheet/Tile/Wood	6.6
Wall= Thatch/Straw/Bamboo	Roof= Thatch/Straw/Bamboo	24.7
Wall= Else (lowest categories)	Roof= (lowest Categories)	22.8
		100.0

Source: BBS, 1992

DENSITY & FLOOR AREA

The housing situation in Bangladesh in respect to density and floor space per person is far from being satisfactory. According to BBS (1993), the average floor area for living structure in urban area is about 30 sq m, the average floor space per capita is approximately 5 sq m in these urban areas. These conditions are worse in large metropolitan cities. Here the average falls to just about 1.00-1.4 sq m/person in the more densely populated slum areas of Dhaka (CUS, 1989). However many of the formal public sector subdivision schemes executed by Housing and Settlement Directorate (HSD), and the Development Authorities of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi have large plots and low densities. Table-2 shows the densities in different areas of Dhaka and other cities and also the level of variation in densities between the low income residential areas and areas developed by city development authorities.

The majority of the houses of the high class residential area with low density are pucca and the building plans are approved by the

respective city authorities. However, the building standard for the respective authorities is too high and is not affordable to majority of the city dwellers. This include the set back rules, the layout and space provision and the structural prescription which effectively rule out approval of application for small plots or incremental housing. Even these regulations are not properly followed and implemented in all over the city in the same manner. The regulations are often found to be irrelevant to development control norms and objectives and as such serve no purpose than to be abused by authorities.

Table 2- Average Urban Densities in Various Urban Settlements (SMAs), 1993

	Average gross density persons/ha
Dhaka	
1. Development authority sites (as planned) Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani, Uttara, Narayanganj)	85
2. HSD (Govt) Refugee Rehabilitation Colonies	2200
3. HSD (Govt) Infrastructure Improvement Project, Mirpur	675
4. Private Sector formal	988
5. Private sector informal low income settlements inner city, intermediate and some fringe zones (70 percent of households)	3437
Chittagong	
1. Development Authority Site (planned Chandgaon Residential Area)	495
2. Water Development Board Scheme (HSD)	318
Rajshahi	
1. Development Authority (Lower-middle-low) Parijat, Padma, Chayanr	120-304

Source: Halcrow Fox & BCL, 1993.

INFRASTRUCTURAL AND UTILITY SERVICES

The urban area is expanding very rapidly as compared to growth of infrastructure to provide utility services in that area/Population. As a result, large sections of these urban population have no access to municipality/corporation provided services. Percentage of urban households by infrastructural amenities are presented in Table-3. Only 26 percent have access to piped water supplies and only Dhaka and Chittagong have an extensive piped water distribution net work. Similarly only about 30 percent of the urban population have access to hygienic sanitations. Dhaka is the only city with a water borne sewerage system though only 15 percent of the population are connected to it, even in Dhaka 30 percent of the population have no recognised system of sanitation (UNDP-UNCFS, 1993). Most of the low income households lack fresh water, sanitation, cooking facilities, fuel and electricity.

There are more than a dozen of agencies concerned with housing and urban development including infrastructural and services. Most of these are under the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. Presumably these are providing, at the very least policy supervision and programme control. There are also overlapping functions but lack of coordination amongst these agencies.

<p>195</p> <p>318</p>	<p>Chittagong</p> <p>Development Authority Site (planned Chittagong Residential Area)</p> <p>Water Development Board Scheme (HSD)</p>
<p>120-204</p>	<p>Rajshahi</p> <p>Development Authority (Lower-middle-low)</p> <p>Rajshahi Urban Region</p>

Source: Lal, Fox & BCL, 1993.

~ Table 3

Percentage of Urban Households of Bangladesh having Infrastructural Amenities/ utility Services

Amenities	Percentage of Households
Drinking Water	
Tap	26.2
Tubewell	54.1
Pond/Shallow	17.4
Other	2.3
Toilet Facilities	
Flash Toilet (Municipal sewerage)	3.64
Flash Toilet (Septic tank)	7.66
Municipal Sewerage Latrine	8.11
Sanitary Latrine	21.05
Other Arrangement	46.34
None (open field/Bush)	13.2
Have Kitchen	17.7
Lighting	
Electricity	44.34
Kerosine	55.32
Others	0.34
Fuel	
Wood	50.43
Kerosine	13.79
Gas	11.71
Electricity	1.62
Others	21.45

Source: Population Census Sample Survey, 1982, BBS, 1992.

HOUSING SUB-SECTOR

In the urban housing sector, three principal housing supply subsectors can be identified. These are:

- i. Private informal and commercial sector (free hold)
- ii. Public Housing (Rental)
- iii. Government's site and services schemes (Leasehold Tenure)

In addition, there are squatter housing or illegal housing by squatters on government owned land in all major cities.

Private Informal and Commercial Sector

Over 90 percent of the urban housing is supplied by the private informal sector which can be grouped into following sub-sections (Halcrow Fox & BCL, 1993).

- a. **Detached Housing:** Owner-occupier households supplying detached housing for themselves with low density and good environmental condition.
- b. **Multi unit Housing:** Supply by private households for themselves and renters with high density and moderate facilities.
- c. **Slums:** Slum owners supply or allow construction of very high density housing for renters, with very low structural quality, minimum sanitary facilities and extreme environmental conditions. They address the housing demand of a large segment of low income to low medium income group households. These can be family units of one or more rooms or single or mess type accommodations for single member households, in which several persons share each room (CUS, 1989).
- d. **Commercial Flats:** Private commercial builders or Real Estate companies cater only to high medium to High Income Groups. In the overall context their contribution to housing stock as yet negligible, and their presence is limited to two major cities, Dhaka and Chittagong. The housing companies are growing fast, and hold great potential for large scale housing within limited land if they can address the low cost housing market.

2. Public Housing

Public Housing started with the aim of providing housing solely to the employees of government and semi-government institutions. These institutions presently own some 26,000 dwellings (flats, houses and bungalows). This stock of dwelling units has been able to meet only the needs of households of this category. The government's housing programme was implemented by the Public Works Department (PWD) and was characterised by the provision of good quality and generous sized accommodation for a rental of 7.5 percent of the basic salary. Now public employees receive 40-55 percent of their basic salary as house rent allowance and are encouraged to find their own housing in the private market.

In large cities the pressure for public housing is very high because the house rents in open market are often in excess of the 50 percent of basic salary allowances. But in small towns, house rent are low people prefer to rent private housing rather than have the 47-62 percent reduction from their salary.

However, the government houses are (of a) more spacious and allows for subletting, which is an attractive source of additional income for the lower income groups. In some cases a family earns more than the cost of house rent through subletting.

3. Government Housing As Well As Sites and Services Schemes (Leasehold Tenure)

Housing and settlement Directorate(HSD) and the Development Authorities in four SMAs are supplying Housing as well as serviced plots among the city wellers. These are accessible mostly to the upper income groups.

The HSD is the largest supplier of housing in the public sector. Its input extends to all the major and secondary cities and towns in Bangladesh and its activities encompass sites and service schimes, upgrading, infrastructure and utilities, the supply of nuclear houses and flats. The target groups include squatters, refugees, resettlement population and genral population from low to high middle income group. Mirpur squatter resettlement project and low cost housing project of Keiballoodham of Chittagong are important projects for the low income group with smaller plot size. Development Authorities of

Dhaka (RAJUK), Chittagong (CDA), khulna (KDA) and Rajshahi (RDA) have developed land with some infrastructure and eventually sold to selected beneficiaries. The size and cost of the plots restrict these schemes to be of benefit to high income groups.

HOUSING TENURE CHARACTERISTICS

Based on the BBS data it can be calculated that 60 percent of all urban dwellings are owner occupied and 40 percent are rented. However, in Dhaka the tenure pattern is substantially different. Various studies and surveys show that the percentage of renters vary between 65-75 percent of total stock. So on average it can be said that 70 percent of total housing stock in Dhaka is rented. Less than 10 percent of these comes from public sector (Hossain,1991) However, in Bangladesh at present there is no security of tenure. No legislation exists to define the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and owners.

LAND FOR HOUSING

Urban land is the most important component for providing housing, but it is very difficult to get land above flood level and naturally it enhances prices, specially in the principal cities. It is highest in Dhaka. As mentioned earlier 80 percent of the people of Dhaka own only 20 percent of the land.

The serviced land provided by the government agencies are mostly for the upper income group. However, now a days these agencies are providing serviced lands to lower and lower middle income group of the people.

The vast majority of land development for housing at present is undertaken through the informal private sector. To each of these individual developers the acquisition, filling and development of land is a slow, expensive and difficult exercise. It is observed that 10 years is a normal development period for the individual informal developer in the fringe areas of the cities (Halcrow Fox & BCL,1993). This delay is inefficient; it seriously effects the most limited resource in Bangladesh, namely land specially urban land.

Ministry of Law is responsible for land registration but land record is maintained by the Ministry of Land. As a result it takes long time in acquiring and obtaining the ownership right of the land due to

lengthy interministerial administrative procedure. Taxation burden in connection with the transfer and acquisition of land is considerably very high. The total administrative costs to the purchaser (excluding the cost of any professional advisor) covering non-judicial stamps, gain tax registration fees can reach 25 percent of the agreed cost of the land where land cost is more than Tk 100,000. It is very high and is not found in any other comparable country which discourages medium income households in purchasing land (Halcrow Fox & BCL, 1993).

The speed of development or construction of housing on the serviced land is also slow. It is considerably slower in other cities as compared to Dhaka. In 1993 at RDA site it is observed that only 10 out of 565 plots have been started construction of housing although the development of land has been started since 1978. This delay of development is not desirable. It is expected that the land use pattern of this area would have been changed through the services and have better economic use. But in practice this land as well services are remaining unused with high capital investment for longer period of time.

FINANCE FOR HOUSING

The Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC) and the nationalised commercial banks only provide credit for house construction, and in some cases, extension and improvement. However, none of the loan giving agencies/organizations finance for purchasing land or its development though land is an indispensable component of housing process. As a result only a few fortunate individuals are able to purchase land directly through cash transactions where funds originate from savings, inheritance, remittances, selling of properties (sometimes jewelries) and informal borrowing.

So the burden of financing the land (both buying and its development) almost totally remains in the private sector (Shafi, Murshed and Nazem, 1992). On the other hand, the loan giving agencies usually provide loan only for construction/extension of pucca houses which are costly and constitute less than 25 percent of the total urban stock (BBS, 1992).

Housing finance policy facilitates concentration of the supply to higher income segments. Subsidies have been wrongly directed to those who can afford to pay the full cost of services. Interest rate on the credit is also same for all the urban centres of Bangladesh. However, it is observed that the houseowners of the small town even of Rajshahi SMA are not interested for house building finance credit. According to them the interest rate for this credit does not match with the return from the investment i.e, house rent. So it becomes a burden on the owner and better to accumulate the savings and borrow money from the informal sector than the financial institutions.

THE HOUSING PROGRAMME FOR THE URBAN POOR

There are more than one thousand Non Government Organisations (NGOs) working in Bangladesh and almost all of them are involved with the grass roots level of the society in rural areas. Only a few of them have rural housing programme as one of the component of their total activities. None of the NGOs have their own urban housing programme. The government has recently undertaken the following two housing programmes for urban squatter and slum dwellers with the assistance of NGOs.

1. Squatter Relocation Project in Mirpur under the Housing and Settlement Directorate with the help of CONCERN.
2. National slum upgrading project under the Local Government Engineering Directorate (LGED). started in 1985 has so far extended its services to 25 towns of the country.

PRESENT SITUATION OF NATIONAL POLICY ON HOUSING

The global strategy for shelter by the year 2000 adopted by the United Nations in November 1988 calls upon different governments to take steps for the formulation of a National Housing Policy in the light of "the enabling approach" to achieve the goals of the strategy. Like most other countries, the Government of Bangladesh recognizes housing as a basic human need and the provision of housing as one of its fundamental responsibilities. This is more of a theoretical or political slogan than a practical consideration. Therefore, in the Fourth Five Year plan (1990 - 95) "Housing" is put together under "physical planning water supply and housing" rather than as a separate development sector like health and education.

There is no proper agency responsible for a national housing policy or for co-ordinating housing programmes throughout the country. Similarly there is no housing authority as such, there are different agencies responsible for regulation and control over the design and construction and others for location and the services and facilities that are essential to housing.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and development (UNCED) held in RIO De Janerio in June 1992 again urged upon the governments to formulate national settlement strategies to implement the recommendations of the UNCED in the field of sustainable human settlements development. Fortunately, now a days it seems that the government is showing more interest and concern about the housing sector and is in the process of formulating a national housing policy. It is expected that by the end of 1993 the government will formulate a draft National Housing Policy in collaboration with the experts in this field including planners, geographers, architects, sociologists and others

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the increasing supply of housing, both in terms of quality and quantity some aspects should be addressed properly in the formulation of Housing Policy. The key inputs are land, finance, effective legislation, building material, and institutional coordination. Master plan of any urban area is a prime necessity to have a better housing or better (habitable) conditions of the urban dwellers.

Following are a few recommendations towards a good housing policy:

Land

- 0 Encourage small size plot.
- 0 Land ceiling system in urban area can be introduced.
- 0 There should be clear land-use planning.
- 0 Taxation burden can be reduced for transferring the land.
- 0 Government can establish land bank (all vacant khash land).
- 0 Avoid horizontal spread and encourage vertical rise.
- 0 Imposition of tax on vacant serviced land.
- 0 Improvement of legal measures.
- 0 Credit can be provided to purchase land.

Finance

- 0 Credit can be channelized to the private developers.
- 0 Redirect subsidies to those who are in need.
- 0 Housing credit can be provided to the poor through the non government (NGO) and community based organisations(CBs).
- 0 Housing should not be considered only as industry but also as social welfare service.
- 0 Interest rate on the credit for housing should be based on the local market value i.e. rent.
- 0 Credit can be provided for the low cost/semi-pucca housing on instalment basis.

Legislation

- 0 The defects on the titling regarding ownership of the land should be corrected.
- 0 Building and planning regulation should be improved and implemented properly.
- 0 The regulation should be supportive of housing aspirations and opportunities.
- 0 Apartment ownership act may be modified.
- 0 Tenants/land lard rights should be evaluated.

Building materials

- 0 Incentive can be provided to production, marketing and supplying of building material through financing and fiscal measures.
- 0 Entrepreneurship in building industry can be supported through financing as well as simplification of licensing of industrial an commercial enterprises.

- 0 Development of alternate building materials should be encouraged and promoted.
- 0 Support should be extended to dying small industries of house building materials like burned clay tiles, pipes etc.

Institutional Co-ordination

Proper co-ordination should be maintained among the public agencies concerned with Housing, Urban Development, Infrastructural and Utility Services.

Government Future Housing Sector Policy Options

There principal policy options can be suggested

1. Strong formal private sector involvement in housing provision
2. The NGO's/CBO's/Cooperatives involvement in Housing provision
3. Strong government involvement in housing provisions

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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF BANGLAESH STUDIES — AS I SEE IT

- Siddiqur Rahman*

This is easy to talk about the shooting stars and draw up a passionate picture of wishful thinking. But this is not so in respect of the things related to the points down to earth and explain the course of history of a human race. The name of the journal suggests in clear terms as to its guided principles and well-defined areas of study. The task is big and demands nothing less than scholastic approaches towards underlining things, courses and aspects of social, political, economic and moral questions. *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*. Volume 16, 1993 is a case in point and our endeavours to appreciate it would be based on the stream of consciousness that the journal promises to keep up through the articles included in the anthology.

Mahmud Shah Qureshi has thrown spotlights on certain aspects of Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, so far unknown, through his collection entitled, "An unpublished letter of Dinesh Chandra Sen to Sylvain Levi and Levi's testimonial for Muhammad Shahidullah." The letter of Sylvain Levi reads among other things: "..... Prof. M. Shahidullah is fully qualified for a chair of Bengali Language and Literature in the University of Calcutta, he is a man who enjoys working, searching, discovery." Not Scholarship alone did mark a unique position for Shahidullah but a sort of self-making force guided him to overcome the pitiless barriers of his time when religious identity overruled some other more palpable considerations.

A. B. M. Shahjahan's revealing article under the heading "Muslim response to Western Education in Colonial Bengal : A case study of

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Bogra district, 1850/1947" breathes the flavour of historic insight into the causes relating to the lack of muslim interest in the western education under colonial rule. He observes - 'To champion this (subjugation) the British followed the policy of 'divide and rule' from the very beginning, They adopted policies favourable to the well-being and development of the Hindu community from the very inception of their rule. The Muslims were deprived of all sorts of facilities. Consequently, the Muslim society had fallen to the lowest depth of decadence and backwardness in the later past of 19th century while the Hindus had welcomed English rule with enthusiasm, the Muslims regarded it as a calamity'

The proposition borne out of the enunciation of political climate prevailing that time does not, in fact, widen the perspective of our historic awakening or otherwise. On points of investigations into the turn and tryst, if not twist of the course of history one has to rise above the levels of ordinary polemics. As independent observers of the events running the aspect of quibbles at the moments of the critical turn of history, we have reasons to believe that the aforeside proposition does not conform to the real nature of the crisis. The muslims are said to have regarded the English rule as "a calamity" while the Hindus had welcomed. The question mark remains, nevertheless, as to why, despite the muslim's defying attitude, their contributions to the fighting elements against the British did not figure out in a thick line. A further display of enthusiastic spirit is necessary for the diversification of the actual state of affairs. Mohibullah Siddiquee's painstaking approach in the article "Origin and Development of District Studies in Bangladesh" is more of a matter of research than of a topical discussion. He had the scope and ability to shed a bit more details relating to socio-cultural patterns and impact of historic crises in the rural Bengal as looked into from the viewpoints of district studies. One point of observations chosen from a lot of others might speak of his studied insight into the subject and this is, as runs hereafter: "(HEADING) WORKS OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS: BRITISH - " They were not trained for the task of writing history or collecting materials. In fact, they were the real ministers and officers of the powerful sovereign. Lord Wellesly, the Governor General of India, established a college at Fort William at Calcutta in 1800 for the education and training of the young civil servants and to change their mentality, manners, habits of life etc. But it was not so fruitful. After the great Sepoy Revolution (or Mutiny?) in 1857, the young British Civil Servants were more and more interested

in acquainting themselves with the language, literature, religion, culture and traditions of the local people and the binding slogan was "to study the structure of Indian society." In such a way, the mentality, views and the attitude of the civil servants were changed and they were sincerely engaged in the study of the districts of Bengal.

But the allusions to W. W. Hunter although based on certain authorities with the words "unblushing manners in monetary matters" sound uncharitable and probably deserve further appraisal of his performances. A researcher might find a fertile soil for undertaking historic interpretations of the interplay of events surrounding W. W. Hunter. Mahammad Mizanuddin has undertaken a very happy study of the living conditions of Bastees dwellers in his article named "The nature of Political Organisation and class, position of the Bastees dwellers of Dhaka city." The author used the term "Bastee-dwellers" although, in effect, they go by the name of "Bastuhara"- or the uprooted or the rootless class of the wretched human being living in the city areas. The slum dwellers, the other aspect of their identity, failed to bring the attention of any Government before or after Liberation into play and doing the least possible service to them. Muhammad Mizanuddin, we repeat, has done a wonderful job in reviewing, researching and recollecting the sub-human or non-human conditions of Bastees people. But it was quite a desirable part of our interest that a sort of spotlight was necessary on the aspects of things which had virtually made them to look for shelter in the town and city areas. Soil erosions, deplorable state of economic problems, unstable social security, landlessness, the fast growing of a new class of feudalism and the rapid turn of decaying middle class and some other factors combined into a well of misfortunes which drove them towards the capital, especially because of its comparatively good condition. Of late, mysterious fire, bulldozers and hired agents have been on very much hot lines to put an end to the breathing places of slum-dwellers. A sort of new social crisis has been coming into play - in silence at present surely - but how long and how far it will proceed for volcanic eruptions, no one possibly could foresee with certainty.

At the moment their living together may not be enough to form a class consciousness of their own owing to their lack of facilities for education. One needs a foothold to stand upon before raising one's head above the stream of injustices, miseries and tortures. A peasant may

have been starving and landless. But he has a privilege, an advantage and a situation over the slum-dwellers in the cycle of living in the city areas and that is, almost in all cases, a house of his own. He does not require to live in places which may be blown off at any moment. But a slum-dweller's past is gone negotiating the least possibility for turn-out. His future is dark and darker than darkness. Yet fights are not only for his own existence. But the question of social struggles around touches him all the more. He has little options as regards his participation in the activities of different political parties. He has to echo for his bread. He has to echo for a cover above his head. He has to echo for the echo of his own consciousness !

Muhammad Mizanuddin despite certain limitations did a job - a wonderful job in the portrayal of the life of the 'bastee' - dwellers.

Some of the brilliant articles have taken into focus. But that does not necessarily mean that the individual tune and significance of each article as revealed through their erudite study of different aspects of national heritage and social-cultural-political economy has been in any way less measured. The articles that deserve to be included in the refrain are as follows:

- * Nature of mortgages in three villages of Bengal, 1920 - 1947

- By Md. Wazed Ali

- * Regional disparities in distribution of Bank branches in Bangladesh : An analysis of possible causes and remedies

- By M. Zainul Abedin

- * Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome : an emerging crisis to human health.

- By M. Mizan Miah, A.F.M. Choudhury

- * Village - Aid : Its assessment as a community development programme

- A S M Nurul Islam

- * Marriage customs and ceremonies among muslims in Chittagong

- By Ali Ahmed

The Journal of IBS appears to have been wedded to the concept of taking the task of portraying Bangladesh in its total form. The promise is, by no means, a blank fire. It has to traverse a long and arduous way. The IBS has already covered a great deal of the uphill task and the flow seems to proceed uninterrupted. Mahmud Shah Qureshi, a scholar of international repute happens to be the Director of the Institute and editor of the illustrious Journal. We have reasons to believe and at the same time to expect it desperately, that the Institute will remain engaged in its laborious form of study of the different spheres of national evaluation process and depict them through the Journal for the rehabilitation of our consciousness.

No nation, even at this hour of global village concept, could foresee any progress on any sector, if their conviction, faith and discipline are not deep rooted in the flush of heritage. That's a point, a point of unblushing magnitude, has to echo and re-echo everywhere. The IBS journal seems to contain the spirit, no matter, how far its voice reaches.

The Journal of the ICS is a quarterly publication of the International Council of Scientific Journalists. It is a journal of the ICS, and its purpose is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among scientists and journalists. The Journal is published by the ICS, and its content is determined by the ICS. The Journal is a journal of the ICS, and its purpose is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among scientists and journalists. The Journal is published by the ICS, and its content is determined by the ICS.

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BOOK REVIEW**COMMERCIAL BANKING IN BANGLADESH :
A STUDY OF DISPARITIES OF REGIONAL
AND SECTORAL GROWTH TRENDS
(1846 - 1986) ***

- M. K. Roy**

The main theme of this book is to investigate, in the context of Banglaesh economy, whether commercial banks under private ownership increase divisional, regional and sectoral disparities in the distribution of their facilities and those under public ownership mitigate the same. The book briefly narrates the growth trends of banking facilities in Bangladesh regions (old districts) during the last one and a half centuries (1846 - 1986).

At the outset the author narrated about different environments in which our commercial banks operated during British period, Pakistan period and Bangladesh period. Though the banking system of Bangladesh began to operate since 1946, its growth was rather slow in the whole of the second half of the 19th century. It was only in the first half of the 20th century that it received growth stimulus due mainly to starting of Shawdeshi Movement in 1906 and increased expenditure during the two great World Wars of this period. Partition of India in 1947 created a Vacuum in the banking fields of these regions because of migration of non-Muslims and transfer of bank resources to India. The Pakistani banks gradually filled into this gap during 1947- 70. Until 1970 the commercial banks operated under private ownership, adhered to demand follwing finance, relied upon the real bills doctrine

* *M. Zainul Abedin: COMMERCIAL BANKING IN BANGLADESH : A STUDY OF DISPARITIES OF REGIONAL AND SECTORAL GROWTH TRENDS (1846 - 1986) ; DHAKA. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (NILG), 1990, 355 PP, TK. 300.00.*

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and created divisional, regional and sectoral imbalances in the distribution of their facilities. With a view to gradually removing those disparities all the banks (except the foreign ones) were nationalized by the Government of Bangladesh in 1972 immediately after the liberation of the country from Pakistani occupation.

According to the author divisional and regional disparities in the distribution of bank branches, deposits, credits and credit-deposit ratios were wide until 1970 when the banks were under private ownership. Glaring sectoral disparities in the distribution of bank advances also existed at that time. Under private ownership of the banks most of the banking facilities were concentrated in urban and industrial areas as well as in the hands of a few industrial groups and families. In the post-nationalization period divisional and regional disparities in the distribution of bank branches, credits, deposits and credit deposit ratios showed a declining trend. Sectoral imbalances in the distribution of bank advances gradually decreased after nationalization of the banks. Banking facilities also spread over the rural areas and among the rural masses. These improvements were possible because several corrective measures including branch expansion programme, special agricultural credit programme, lead bank scheme, Grameen Bank and other projects etc. were implemented in the post-nationalization years (1971 - 86). As a result, a supply leading finance has been operating at least in rural Bangladesh since the nationalization of the banks.

But the author argued that the declines in the rates of disparities were not upto the expectation. This was due to historical growth of banks in the developed regions and reliance upon a demand following expansionary process. The regional disparities in economic development and the political economy of monetary and banking policies also were responsible for the creation of banking imbalances.

The author suggests that enforcement of supply leading financing approach and progressive fiscal measures may help mitigate divisional, regional and sectoral banking and economic disparities. For achieving this, structural change in banking organization is a necessary condition. Branch expansion programme, increased share of the priority sectors in total bank advances, high credit-deposit ratios in poor regions,

adjustment of rates of interest with the rate of inflation, inculcation of rural oriented organizational culture, strengthening of training, research, inspection and loan recovery actions, continuation of public ownership of the existing nationalized banks, playing of proper role by news media and measures for educating bank customers will help mitigating divisional, regional and sectoral imbalances in the distribution of banking facilities.

In this Book the author employed modest efforts to explain the growth trends of Commercial Banks of Bangladesh. It is expected that the book will be useful to the students of economics, finance, commerce, researchers, planners, policy makers, bankers, and to general readers.

IBS PUBLICATION

INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES

Rajshahi University
Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh

The IBS, established in 1974, is an advanced interdisciplinary centre for graduate study and research on the history and culture of Bangladesh and such other subjects as are significantly related to the life and society of Bangladesh leading to M. Phil and Ph. D degrees.

The IBS has a number of publications: An Annual Journal, Seminar Volumes. Books and Monographs to its credit.

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