

ARTICLES

- SMALL LIVES, HUMBLE DISTRESS: TAGORE,
BISHUTIBHUSHAN AND THE BENGALI SHORT STORY
● WILLIAM RADICE
THE SEGMENTAL PHONEMES OF BENGALI: AN OVERVIEW
● ABU CAUD HASAN
HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON SOUTH ASIA WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BENGAL UNTIL THE END
OF THE 19TH CENTURY
● S.A. AKANDA
THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN BANGLADESH:
PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES
● MOHAMMED MOHIBULLAH BODIQUEE
THE ORIGIN, GROWTH AND COMPOSITION OF MUSUM
POPULATION IN BENGAL: A REVIEW OF DIFFERENT
EXPLANATIONS
● MD. MAHBUB ULLAH
HUMANISM: ITS IMPACT ON THE BENGAL RENAISSANCE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAMMOHUN ROY'S
SOCIAL THINKING
● ABUL HYE TALUKDER
DELWAR HOSSAIN AHMED MEERZA AND HIS UTILITARIAN
REFORMS OF THE THEN MUSUM SOCIETY: A BRIEF SURVEY
● M. SHAFIUL ALAM
MUSUM STUDENT POLITICS IN PRE-PARTITION BENGAL
● MD. ABUL KASHEM
EMIGRATION, REMITTANCES AND SOCIAL CLASS IN A
BANGLADESH VILLAGE
● KAMAL AHMED CHOWDHURY
POWER IN INFORMAL CREDIT RELATIONS: A CASE
STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN BANGLADESH
● MD. ANWAR HUSSAIN
PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN BANGLADESH
● M. ZAKIA ABEEN
PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT THROUGH COTTAGE
INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH
● M. MAHBUBUR RAHMAN
LAND USE PATTERN IN PANCHAGARH: URBAN AREA IN
1962 AND 1991 - A COMPARATIVE STUDY
● ABU HANIF SHAIKH & JAFAR REZA KHAN
MORTALITY DIFFERENTIALS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
TWO THANAS OF BANGLADESH
● ABJAD HOSSAIN CHOWDHURY & NASREEN ISLAM KHAN
NOTES & QUERIES
MAGIC, CHARM AND MEDICINE IN BANGLADESH
● MOHAMMAD ABDUL AWWAL
BOOK REVIEW
ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE IN BANGLADESH
● MOBASSER MONEM
DISSERTATIONS

IBS. RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY



ISSN 0256-503X

Vol. XVIII
1995

JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES

MAHMUD SHAH QURESHI
Executive Editor



INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES
RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY

Published by :

Mofazzel Hossen

Secretary

Institute of Bangladesh Studies

Rajshahi University

Rajshahi 6205

Bangladesh

Phone : (0721) 4853

(0721) 3041-9/456

Fax : 0088-0721-2064

May 1995

Cover Design : Dr. Abu Taher Babu

Printed by :

UTTARAN OFFSET PRINTING PRESS

Greater Road, Rajshahi-6000

Phone : 0721-4149

Tk. 150.00

Editorial Board

SHAHANARA HOSAIN

Dept. of History, R. U.

S.A. AKANDA

Social History, IBS

A.N. SHAMSUL HAQUE

Dept. of Pol. Science, R. U.

SERAJUL ISLAM

Agri-Economics, IBS

KHANDKAR A. RAHIM

Dept. of Bengali, R. U.

PRITI K. MITRA

Historiography, IBS

TARIQ SAIFUL ISLAM

Dept. of Economics, R. U.

M. ZAINUL ABEDIN

Economics, IBS

A.H.M. ZEHADUL KARIM

Dept. of Sociology, R. U.

MAHMUD SHAH QURESHI

Cultural and Intellectual Hist., IBS

The Institute of Bangladesh Studies and the Editorial Board assume no responsibility for contributor's statements of fact or views.

Address for Correspondence :

The Executive Editor, J.I.B.S., Institute of Bangladesh Studies,
Rajshahi University, Rajshahi 6205, Bangladesh.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- 1-22 *SMALL LIVES, HUMBLE DISTRESS* : TAGORE,
BIBHUTIBHUSHAN AND THE BENGALI SHORT STORY
● WILLIAM RADICE
- 23-50 THE SEGMENTAL PHONEMES OF BENGALI : AN
OVERVIEW
● ABU DAUD HASAN
- 51-83 HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON SOUTH ASIA WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BENGAL UNTIL THE END
OF THE 19TH CENTURY
● S.A. AKANDA
- 85-97 THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN BANGLADESH :
PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES
● MOHAMMED MOHIBULLAH SIDDIQUEE
- 99-110 THE ORIGIN, GROWTH AND COMPOSITION OF MUSLIM
POPULATION IN BENGAL : A REVIEW OF DIFFERENT
EXPLANATIONS
● MD. MAHBUB ULLAH
- 111-129 HUMANISM : IT'S IMPACT ON THE BENGAL
RENAISSANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
RAMMOHUN ROY'S SOCIAL THINKING :
● ABDUL HYE TALUKDER
- 131-145 DELWAR HOSSAIN AHMED MEERZA AND HIS
UTILITARIAN REFORMS OF THE THEN MUSLIM SOCIETY:
A BRIEF SURVEY.
● M. SHAFIQUUL ALAM
- 147-173 MUSLIM STUDENT POLITICS IN PRE-PARTITION BENGAL
● MD. ABUL KASHEM

- 175-196 EMIGRATION, REMITTANCES AND SOCIAL CLASS IN A BANGLADESH VILLAGE

● KAMAL AHMED CHOWDHURY

- 197-213 POWER IN INFORMAL CREDIT RELATIONS : A CASE STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN BANGLADESH.

● MD. ANWAR HUSSAIN

- 215-232 PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN BANGLADESH

● M. ZAINUL ABEDIN

- 233-252 PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT THROUGH COTTAGE INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH

● M. MAHBUBUR RAHMAN

- 253-268 LAND USE PATTERN IN PANCHAGARH URBAN AREA IN 1962 AND 1991 - A COMPARATIVE STUDY.

● ABU HANIF SHAIKH

&

JAFAR REZA KHAN

- 269-293 MORTALITY DIFFERENTIALS : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO THANAS OF BANGLADESH

● ABJAD HOSSAIN CHOWDHURY

&

NASREEN ISLAM KHAN

NOTES & QUERRIES

- 295-304 MAGIC, CHARM AND MEDICINE IN BANGLADESH

● MOHAMMAD ABDUL AWWAL

BOOK REVIEW

- 305-312 *ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE IN BANGLADESH*

● MOBASSER MONEM

DISSERTATIONS

IBS PUBLICATIONS

SMALL LIVES, HUMBLE DISTRESS : TAGORE, BIBHUTIBHUSHAN AND THE BENGALI SHORT STORY

William Radice*

As an appendix to my Penguin volume, *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Short Stories* (1991, rev. 1994), I translated a poem in which Tagore very explicitly set out a programme for his short stories. The poem is called *barsā-yāpan* ('Passing Time in the Rain'), and its loose, rambling rhythm evokes exactly that : a not unpleasant *ennui* as the poet sits in a hut at one end of a roof in Calcutta, watching the rain fall, passing a day and most of a night reading some of his favourite rain literature - Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* and Medieval Bengali *padāvalī* about Radha and Krishna trysting during the monsoon - and composing a monsoon song himself. By the next day he needs something else to read or do. He tries reading some English poems, but finds them lacking in the 'deep, indolent yearning' that the rains evoke. Then he has a new idea :

Why should I not, if I want,
 Following my own bent,
 Write story after story -
 Small lives, humble distress,
 Tales of humdrum grief and pain,
 Simple, clear straightforwardness;
 Of the thousands of tears streaming daily
 A few saved from oblivion;
 No elaborate description,
 Plain steady narration,
 No theory or philosophy,
 No story quite resolved,
 Not ending at the end,
 But leaving the heart uneasy.
 All the world's unnumbered
 Stories never completed :
 Buds untwistedly torn -
 Bust of fame unsung,
 The love, the terror, the wrong
 Of thousands of lives unknown.

*Dr. Radice teaches Bengali at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Recently he was a guest at IBS and delivered a seminar - lecture on the topic.

These lines are justly famous, and the first line of the section I have italicised - *choto prān, choto byātha, choto choto duhkha-katha* (lit., 'small lives, small pains, small stories of unhappiness') - is frequently quoted by Bengali critics as a key to Tagore's short stories of the 1890s. The subsequent lines, too, seem to me to display an impressive clarity of purpose. Here, as on other occasions when he speaks about his work, we can trust what he says. Notice that he does not say that the stories will be about rural people. Because many of the stories are, and because his story-writing stemmed from the years he spent managing estates owned by the Tagore family in the Padma river region of East Bengal, it is sometimes assumed that the 'small lives' will always be those of villagers. This is not so : a variety of rural and urban backgrounds and social classes are treated in his stories. But nearly all his characters are 'small' in the sense that they are not powerful or famous. Characters that are unpleasant or insensitive often exert power, but within an ordinary domestic or local context. Characters that are good or sensitive (in most of the stories insensitive characters are set against sensitive ones) sometimes have no secure place even within the family or local society. Their predicaments are described with a haunting directness and simplicity, though the stylistic conventions of the nineteenth century *sādhū bhāṣā* - the literary form of Bengali that Tagore used and perfected at that time - are often by no means simple. In translating the stories into English, this was my biggest challenge : how to capture a simplicity of feeling and tone, while at the same time accurately rendering Tagore's rich and sophisticated prose style.

Whether I have succeeded or not can only be measured by the effect of the stories on the non-Bengali reader : by whether he or she is moved by them as Tagore certainly intended his readers to be moved. By giving such emphasis to heartache, sorrow, suffering and distress - by creating so many situations in which tears flow - Tagore took, of course, a big risk. If the reader is unconvinced, what is intended to be poignant will seem sentimental or even laughable (as the death of Little Nell was to Oscar Wilde, who said one would need a heart of stone not to laugh at it). The translator has to share that risk. All I can say is

that now that my translations have reached, I hope, in the recently published revised edition, a fully accurate and definitive form, I myself find the stories intensely moving. Poignancy is not their only mood : wit, irony, satire, merriment can be found in them too. But their prevailing after-effect is poignant, and the reader of my selection may carry away as strong an impression of tears as of the monsoon rains of Bengali : may make, indeed, the same association between tears and the rains that Tagore often makes himself.

The prevalence of tears is discussed in my Introduction (p.25). Many instances from the stories could be given. Sometimes the tears are all the more moving for being implied, not actually mentioned. This is so at the end of 'The Postmaster', when the Postmaster says goodbye to Ratan, the orphaned village-girl whose help and friendship he has appreciated during his lonely posting there, but now discards :

"Ratan," he said, "I'll tell the man who replaces me that he should look after you as I have; you mustn't worry just because I'm going." No doubt this remark was inspired by kind and generous feelings, but who can fathom the feelings of a woman? Ratan had meekly suffered many scoldings from her master, but these kindly words were more than she could bear. The passion in her heart exploded, and she cried, "No, no, you mustn't say anything to anyone - I don't want to stay here." The postmaster was taken aback : he had never seen Ratan behave like that before.

A new postmaster came. After handing over his charge to him, the resigning postmaster got ready to leave. Before going, he called Ratan and said, "Ratan, I've never been able to pay you anything. Today before I go I want to give you something, to last you for a few days." Except for the little that he needed for the journey, he took out all the salary that was in his pocket. But Ratan sank to the ground and clung to his feet, saying, "I beg you, *Dādābābu*, I beg you - don't give me any money. Please, no one need bother about me." Then she fled, running.

Another story in which affection in a vulnerable character is encouraged and then discarded is 'Unwanted (*Āpad*)'. Kiran, convalescing at Chandernagore, befriends Nilkanta a runaway Brahmin boy, after the boat carrying the *yātrā*troupe he was

working for sinks in a storm. When her brother-in-law Satish comes to stay, Nilkanta starts to feel jealous. Out of hatred for him, he steals a 'fancy inkstand' that Satish has brought from Calcutta. Kiran defends the boy, convinced of his innocence, but when she goes to Nilkanta's room to leave some presents for him before leaving for Calcutta, she finds the inkstand in his box :

Amazed and flushed, Kiran sat pondering for a long time with the inkstand in her hand. When Nilkanta came into the room from behind her, she never even noticed. He saw everything : realized that Kiran had herself come like a thief to confirm his thieving, and that he had been caught. But how could he explain that he had not stolen like a common thief out of greed, that he'd done it in retaliation, that he'd meant to throw the thing into the river, and only in a moment of weakness had he not thrown it away but had buried it in his box? he was *not* a thief, he was *not* a thief ! But what was he? How could he say what he was? He had stolen something but he was not a thief ! The fact that Kiran had suspected him—it was the cruel injustice of this that he would never be able to explain, never be able to bear.

Over several years of steadily deepening acquaintance with these beautiful stories, I have become more and more aware of their originality. Because the short story as a literary *genre*, written for periodicals before being collected into volumes, was a Western import into nineteenth century India, it is tempting to assume that it was imitative of Western models. Some Bengali critics, trained in English and European literature, have been eager to connect Tagore's stories to Maupassant, Chekhov or even (in the case of his supernatural stories) Edgar Allen Poe. Later in this paper, I shall try to demonstrate that this connection is invalid. Tagore's stories are really quite different from any Western stories that I have read. But first, I should like to suggest that this claim of originality need not be limited to Tagore. Other Bengali writers, not imitators of Tagore but fine, distinctive writers themselves, have written stories markedly different from Western stories. So much so, that one can argue that the Bengali short story has developed a unique sensibility and tradition : different from anything that can be found in India before the age of Western influence, yet different from the modern Western short story.

In the stories of Bibhutibhushan Banerjee (1899-1950), for example, I find more to connect with Tagore than to separate from him. Bibhutibhushan is best known for his novels, particularly the famous *Pather Pāñcālī* and *Aparājita* that were the sources for Satyajit Ray's 'Apu Trilogy' of films. There is curiously little discussion of his short stories in the standard histories of Bengali literature, though Sukumar Sen says that some of his early stories 'show him at his best'.¹ This may reflect a tendency among Bengalis to take their short stories for granted : because they seem so natural to them, they do not realize how original they are. Let me describe three of his stories. I do not know if these three are well-known, or regarded by Bengalis as being of exceptionally high quality (the foreign reader is sometimes advantaged by not knowing what is famous); but I was moved by them. The first is called *Thelāgarī* ('The Pushcart'). It is about a village boy, Naru, who is obsessed with a push-cart he has made. All he wants to do is push other boys around in it or be pushed himself. Most of the other village-boys despise him : he is weedy, frail, perhaps a bit backward. The narrator, Tuni, tolerates him, though his older relatives find Naru a confounded nuisance, and shoo him away whenever he appears. One day, however, a group of boys agrees to be pushed in the cart one by one. When Naru asks them to push *him* in return, they round on him : one of the boys hurls bricks at the cart and smashes it. There is great pathos in the description of Naru's reaction :

He looked round at us with a kind of bewilderment - and quickly went to examine the extent of the damage. He looked at us again, with puzzlement. Then he stared at me, with such pain and surprise and incomprehension in his gaze that it pieced my heart like an arrow. It was as if he was thinking, 'And are you, Tunida, one of them ?'

Bibhutibhushan knew his Shakespeare, and I cannot help thinking that *Et tu Brute ?* was in his mind here.

¹ *History of Bengali Literature* (Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1960). This book is a greatly abridged version of Sen's four volume Bengali history.

Naru repairs the cart. Time passes. We are suddenly told that he has died of whooping-cough. Tuni goes round to see Naru's mother. There is pathos too in the kindly way in which she receives him, even though she must know that he was among the boys who treated her son cruelly. Tuni notices the push-cart lying nearby, untouched.

Bāsi ('The Flute') is about a young widow called Sulekha. Her mother-in-law cannot understand why she cares so much about an old brass flute that Sulekha's husband left behind. There are daily fights between Sulekha and the little son of an elder daughter-in-law over it. He wants it, even though Sulekha has given him a new flute of his own. One day she loses her temper, and cuffs the boy, infuriating her sister-in-law (his mother). Sulekha goes up to the roof of the house to get away from all this domestic unpleasantness, and the rest of the story consists of memories of her husband, Binoj. She was jealous of the flute when he was alive, and positively annoyed when on his deathbed he asked her to take care of his flute. But now -

Every night someone seemed to come and play the flute to her. When she fell asleep the melody of a flute in someone's living hand would begin. When he awoke, it would stop. But asleep, she heard the sound of that flute every night. It was her only consolation, in her widowhood. It had kept her going.

That is all the story is about, yet it is about so much.

The third story, *Bhandulmāmār bāri* ('Uncle Bhandul's House'), seems to me a true masterpiece. It is written as a story within a story (a technique also used quite often by Tagore). The narrator, a school inspector, visits a remote village, lodging with the village schoolmaster, Abinash, for the night. (Bibhutibhushan has perhaps put something of his own predicament during his years as a rural schoolmaster into Abinash's pensive isolation.²) As a child, Abinash used to stay with relatives in a village in Hooghly district. One day he goes for a walk in the *jāgal* and comes across a half-built house.

2 See Nirad C. Chaudhuri's massive autobiography, *My Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921-1952* (London, 1987), especially Book II Chapter 2, for a vivid portrait of Bibhutibhushan and Nirad's friendship with him.

He asks his relatives whose it is. They tell him that it is being built by an uncle of theirs - Bhandulmāmā - who works in Calcutta, but is building the house so that he can fulfil his dream of returning to his ancestral village when he retires. Each time Abinash visits his relatives he goes and looks at the house; observes its infinitely slow progress. Later, by which time he is a college student in Calcutta, he meets Bhandulmāmā in the village, and then visits him at his home in Calcutta. He finds that Bhandul's wife and children have no wish to live in the house, and they resent the money that has been spent on it. Eventually Bhandul does retire to the house, but at the cost of losing all contact with his wife and children. He lives out his days in pathetic isolation : all the more pathetic because the village is dying - Abinash's own relatives have left and moved to Calcutta, and Bhandul is the only educated inhabitant left. The last time that Abinash meets Bhandulmāmā is at an *annaprāśan* at his relatives' house in Calcutta (the 'first rice-eating ceremony' for a young child). His departure is described with almost unbearable poignancy :

He left the house. I watched him walking along the road to the station, thin, bent forward by the weight of the rice and dal [that my relatives had given him], his sandals slapping. Suddenly I felt a resurgence of the mysterious affection and sympathy I had felt for him as a child. I called out, 'Wait a minute, Māmā, I'll help you.' I took over the carrying of his bundle, bought him a rail-ticket and seated him in the train. As he climbed into the train he smiled and said, 'Come one day, come and see my house. It's fine now - just the garden wall to build. But what can I do ? I've no money myself, and my sons don't have enough for their own places. But I've done it all for them. Let's see, next year perhaps, I'll try...'

That is the last time Abinash sees Bhandulmāmā. But he meets his eldest son in the street one day, and hears again how bitterly the family resent Bhandul's obsession with the house. 'Four or five thousand rupees' have been spent on it, but the village is uninhabitable - 'no doctor there' - and the house could not even be sold for its bricks and timber. Soon after, Abinash hears that Bhandul has died. Since then, he has not been able to bring himself to visit the village, to see what has happened to the house.

The power of this story lies in the mythic quality that Bhandulmama and his unfinished house acquires in Abinash's mind over the years before he actually meets him, and the way in which Bhandul's dream of return resonates with the feelings that every Bengali has who has left his rural roots, to move to the city or away from Bengal altogether. The fact that Bhandul's sons cannot share this dream - resent and despise it in fact - strikes an even stronger chord.³

All these stories, by Tagore and Bibhutibhushan (and other writers contemporary with them too), derive from *feeling*. This makes them (according to my understanding of what poetry is) essentially poetic in impulse. When Bengali critics refer to poetic qualities in the prose of Tagore, of Bibhutibhushan, they seem to be thinking mainly of their fine passages of natural description, that set the stories so vividly in Bengal's unique landscape and riverscape; or of mellifluous felicities in their prose style. But a more profound quality of poetry is found in the human feelings they contain, their dedication to 'the holiness of the heart's affections', the way in which sensitive vulnerability is frequently pitted against obtuse insensitivity. In the Introduction to my *Selected Short Stories* of Tagore I considered the charge that was (and sometimes still is) levelled against Tagore, that his stories were 'over-poetic', 'romantic', 'idealized'. Such criticisms always stung Tagore sorely especially when combined with the imputation that, as an aristocrat, he was incapable of understanding the lives of villagers. The documentary realism of his stories is actually very strong, but more important than that (and the reason why Tagore felt that even his ghost stories were 'realistic') is what I have called their 'realism of feeling'. That is what we find in, say, *Romeo and Juliet* or *Antony and Cleopatra*. We do not go to those masterpieces for an accurate historical reconstruction of life in Verona or Alexandria. Neither do we go to Tagore or Bibhutibhushan *primarily* for a social portrait of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengal, though in many of their stories we do find that as well.

³ English translations of these stories can be read in Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, *A Strange Attachment and Other Stories*, translated by Phyllis Granoff (Mosaic Press, Ontario [Unesco Indian Series], 1984). The extracts above, however, are in my own translation.

To help us perceive the originality of these stories, it is interesting to compare them with certain stories from Western literature. There is not much point in comparing them with stories that are *totally* different in aim and tone : with the dark cynicism of Kipling's *Plane Tales from the Hills*, the amiable foolery of P.G. Wodehouse, the sobbish archness of 'Saki', the slangy insouciance of Damon Runyun, the deadpan loucheness of Raymond Chandler, or whatever, though it is striking to note, from this haphazard list, that the ear for social and verbal inflexions, the ironic flippancy of such authors is not only worlds apart from the great Bengali short-story writers but is also much more untranslatable. Too much depends on an awareness of nuances in British and American speech, on a familiarity with complex class-codes. It will be more profitable to look at stories where feelings are to the fore, turning perhaps to non-English writers, for in the anglophone world the short-story tends to be associated with lighter forms of literary entertainment.

Guy de Maupassant's story *Regret* is certainly a story of feeling, ending, as a story by Tagore or Bibhutibhushan might end, with the lonely narrator weeping with bitter regret. Monsieur Savel, a sixty-two year old bachelor, broods in the story on his loveless life. Not that he has been without feelings of love, but those feelings have never been satisfied. He has always loved Madame Sandres, wife of an old friend of his. He recalls the walks and excursions he used to go with them, in particular a walk along the Seine, in beautiful spring weather. Sandres had stretched out for a nap after their picnic lunch, and Savel and Madame Sandres had gone on walking along the riverbank. She had tipsily taken his arm, and had made herself a crown of leaves and water-lilies. 'M'aimez-vous, comme ça ?' * she had said, and although his heart was beating wildly he could not think of an thing to say : at which 'elle s'était mise à rire, d'un rire mécontent, en lui jetant par la figure : "Gros bête, va ! On parle, au moins !" ** "When, a bit later, he suggested that they ought to go back, 'elle avait lancé un regard singulier.' Suddenly, as he recalls this episode, he wonders if she was in fact in love with him. Had he missed his great chance, failing at the time even to realize what she was feeling ? He rushes round to see

*"Do you like me like this ?"

**"She had burst into laughter, irritated laughter, along with the taunt ! "You great nincompoop ! Can't you talk, at least ?"

Madame Sandres, who is now fifty-eight and stout. She emerges from the kitchen when he arrives : her arms sticky with jam-making. He asks her straight out if she has known that he has always loved her. She laughs and says : 'Gros bête, va ! Je l'ai bien vu du premier jour !' * But what could she do? He had never declared his love. Then he asks, if he had been 'entrepreneur' (enterprising) on that day when they walked together along the river, what would she have done ? To which :

Elle se mit à sourire en femme heureuse qui ne regrette rien, et elle répondit franchement, d'une voix claire ou pointait une ironie : 'J'aurais cédé, mon ami'.⁴

Savel feels utterly crushed, utterly despairing as he leaves her. He goes straight to the river, walks (in the rain this time) to the place where they had lunched on that day, sits down under the leafless winter trees, and weeps.

This story can be compared with Tagore's *A Single Night*,⁵ in which a lonely village schoolmaster grieves at a missed opportunity for love : a girl whom he could have married had he not been so wrapped up in political activity at the time. But notice the profound differences. Savel's opportunity was a hopeless one : Madame Sandres was already married; her 'yielding' to him could only have lead (in the social context of the time) to an unhappy adulterous affair. The love that Savel lost was the rapture of 'falling in love', the ecstatic fulfilment of sexual desire : a precious experience no doubt, which no one wishes to forego, but not necessarily associated with goodness and morality. The schoolmaster in *A Single Night* missed his opportunity to marry a girl whom he was not 'in love with', but whom he could have grown to love, with whom he could have created a marriage happier and better than her actual marriage to a boring barrister.

* 'You great nincompoop! I knew it from the day I first met you!'

** 'She broke into the smile of a woman who has nothing to regret, and replied frankly in a clear voice pointed with irony : "I would have yielded, my friend"'

4 Guy de Maupassant, *Contes et Nouvelles* (Editions Albin Michel, Paris 1956), Vol. 1, pp. 903-909 [My translation].

5 Included in my *Selected Short Stories of Tagore* (Penguin, 1991, rev. 1994).

Chekhov's great story *The Lady with the Little Dog*, equally rich in feeling (and beautifully filmed by Y. Heifits in the 1960s), helps by a similar sort of contrast to show the identification of feeling with goodness in Bengali short stories. Dimitri Dimitrich Gomov is forty, married, 'with a daughter of twelve and two boys at school'. He is rather afraid of his wife, who has read more than him, thinks herself an intellectual, but whom he secretly regards as 'short-witted, narrow-minded, and ungracious'. He has indulged himself instead with a succession of mistresses : he has great charm, and finds it easy to draw women to him. On a solitary holiday in Yalta, he meets a young married woman with a Pomeranian dog, who is there to get away from her own unsatisfactory spouse. At first he thinks of her patronizingly : as a quarry no different from his previous conquests. But when they start meeting and an affair develops, he finds an unfamiliar quality of purity, of shyness in her. Unlike other women he has known she is racked with guilt at their relationship. Her feelings burst out in a restaurant :

'God forgive me !' she said, and her eyes filled with tears.
'It is horrible.'

'You seem to want to justify yourself.'

'How can I justify myself ? I am a wicked, low woman and I despise myself. I have no thought of justifying myself. It is not my husband I have deceived, but myself. And not only now but for a long time past. My husband may be a good, honest man, but he is a Tackey [.....] I told my husband that I was ill and came here.... And here I have been walking about dizzily, like a lunatic..... And now I have become a low, filthy woman whom everybody may despise.'

Gomov was already bored; her simple words irritated him with their unexpected and inappropriate repentance; but for the tears in her eyes he might have thought her to be joking or playing a part.⁶

His boredom and cynicism fades, however, after he pursues her to the dull provincial town where her husband is an official, and then starts to meet her regularly in Moscow. For the first time in his life, he is in love - permanently - not in a spirit of infatuation.

⁶ Translation by David Magarshack (Everyman's Library, 1937) pp. 316-330.

He and Anna 'loved one another, like dear kindred, like husband and wife', but their circumstances condemn them to constant concealment and deception. How can they 'find a way out'? Their belief at the end that 'the solution would be found and there would begin a lovely new life' comes across to the reader as hopeless.

Is love divorced from goodness in this story? There is a moral quality in Gomov and Anna's love: it has purified them; they have 'forgiven each other all the past of which they were ashamed; they forgave everything in the present, and they felt that their love had changed them.' Yet goodness is thwarted and threatened by the necessity for 'concealment and deception.' This situation, so understandable in a European writer, is inconceivable to writers such as Tagore and Bibhutibhusan, with their Indian commitment to the sacredness of marriage. It is not that they are incapable - through prudishness - of writing about adulterous feelings. Tagore does so in his novel *The Home and the World* and his novella *Nastanir* ('The Broken Nest', filmed as *Charulata* by Satyajit Ray) - drawing perhaps on the tragedy of his own youthful friendship with his brother Jyotirindranath's wife Kādambarī, whose suicide after Tagore's own (arranged) marriage at the age of twenty-two will never cease to encourage speculation. But the effect of those works is ultimately to support, not undermine the identification of love with marriage. In *The Home and the World*, Bimala's infatuation with the radical politician Sandip is a necessary learning experience for her - engineered, almost, by her husband, the gentle zamindar Nikhil. Through it she rediscovers where her real feelings and duties lie. In *Nastanir*, Charulata is attracted to her younger cousin Amal only because her husband Bhupati has neglected her in favour of the newspaper he edits. In the end he realizes his mistake. Reconciliation between them is uncertain - the nest may have been permanently broken - but the principle is sustained that goodness and happiness in man-woman relationships can *only* be achieved through marriage.⁷

7 Not an absurd proposition even today. If one understands 'marriage' to be a permanent, faithful commitment, rather than the legal or religious tie that may or may not co-exist with it.

The agonizing subtlety of *Nastanir* (written at the end of Tagore's first phase of story writing, when he was on the verge of expanding into the more confused and problematic psychological world of his novels) shows that the moral purity of the early Bengali short-story need not lead to simplification or sentimentality or piety in the handling of human feeling. (In lesser Bengali writers, maybe it does, but not in the best.) Nor does it in the best works of the European writer who for me offers the closest analogue to the 'norm' I have been trying to define. Because the wellspring of the Bengali story seems to me essentially poetic, it is not surprising that this analogue should occur not in a short-story writer but in a poet : in the lyric narratives of William Wordsworth, whose own, pioneering 'realism of feeling' has descended not so much through the English short-story as the novel (George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy).

The celebrated *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1800) contains many phrases and statements that resonate with Tagore - with the programme for his short stories, indeed, that I quoted at the beginning. Wordsworth writes : 'Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.' This leads him into a discussion of the sort of language he has used; to his moral purpose in writing the poems; and the way in which 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' that is the source of 'all good poetry' has been 'modified and directed' by thought. Thus, unlike conventional poetry, 'the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not

the action and situation to the feeling'. The combination of feeling and thought that gives rise to the poems is defined in another celebrated statement later in the Preface : that poetry 'takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity'.

Turning to the Lyrical Ballads themselves, one will of course find much to distinguish from Tagore and Bibhutibhusan's short stories. Indeed, so great is the geographical difference between the flat plain and huge rivers of Bengal and the hills and lakes of the Lake District, that the connection I am suggesting may seem farfetched. A further striking difference is that cruelty and insensitivity is hardly to be found among Wordsworth's impoverished hill-dwellers, being associated exclusively with 'the increasing accumulation of men in cities'. In the Bengali stories, sensitivity and insensitivity are found equally in both villages and the city. Yet the sensibility that allowed Wordsworth to enter so into Michael's grief at his son's 'ignominy and shame', with its unforgettable image of the old shepherd sitting by the sheepfold his son should have helped him to finish, unable to lift 'a single stone', does not seem to me to be so remote from Bhandulmama's unfinished house; and the unconsolable grief of Margaret in 'The Ruined Cottage' - the destruction of all her hopes - is not dissimilar to the 'heart-broken disillusionment' of the Nawab's daughter sitting on a rock amidst Himalayan mists in Tagore's great story 'False Hope'.⁸

The connections are such that I would like to propose that these Bengali stories of poetic feeling be called 'lyric stories', to distinguish them from those very many short stories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in English and other languages, that may be rich in irony, wisdom, observation, wit, comedy but are *not* poetic in their primary impulse.⁹

8 Rabindranath Tagore, *Selected Short Stories* (Penguin, iv. 1994), p. 217.

9 I am told by Dr. Sergei D. Serebriany of the Institute of World Literature, Moscow, that the term 'lyric story' (*liricheski rasskaz*) is used in Russian literary criticism.

It remains for me to raise three questions, too important to ignore, though full answers to them lie beyond the scope of this essay. First, how did this sensibility - so new in India, so different from the contemporary Western short story (though with some analogues in the Western romantic tradition) - arise? Second, was it unique to Bengal, or is it also to be found in other modern Indian literatures? Third, was it confined to the pioneering classic writers of the Bengali short story, or has it continued as a 'norm' for Bengali short story writers right up to the present day?

The first question is germane to what I believe to be the central project for anyone concerned with Bengali literature and culture: to communicate modern Bengali sensibility through criticism and translation, to define what that sensibility is, and to account for it terms of the colonial and post-colonial context.¹⁰ In ways that have yet to be described, the peculiar circumstances in which Bengalis found themselves living, their exposure to Western culture through English education, the development of new patterns of life through the growth of Calcutta, a growing nationalism and sense of the economic degradation that Bengal suffered as a result of colonialism, all combined to release new and unique waves of feeling, that were expressed through literature, music, and later, film. A story called 'The Human Mind' by 'Banaphul' (Balaichand Mukhopadhyaya) in a very well-translated new collection of Bengali short stories¹¹ neatly suggests how a new critical awareness of the nature and origins of this sensibility might be pursued. It tells of two bachelor brothers, one (Naresh) a rationalist Physics professor, the other (Pareesh) a pious Hindu professor of Sanskrit. Despite their differences of outlook, they get on well together and share both a house and responsibility for the upbringing of an orphaned nephew, Poltu. When the boy is sixteen, he falls ill.

10 The book that Professor Tapan Raychaudhuri is currently completing on Bengali *mentalite* (Mentality) will be a major contribution to this project.

11 *In the Same Boat: Golden Tales from Bengal*, selected, translated and edited by Gopa Majumdar (UBSPD, New Delhi, 1994).

The two brothers try both allopathic and Ayurvedic medicine, according to their separate lights, but nothing works. As the boy's condition deteriorates, the brothers get increasingly desperate, and resort to each other's nostrums - with Paresh telephoning the doctor to come back and give the boy more injections, and Naresh administering holy water. Both fail : at the boy's death 'science and religion both fell silent'. The tragedy of the death of a child is not in itself, of course, a consequence of the colonial context : but the peculiar quality of feeling in this story, the new anxieties that have arisen because of the choices between different medical systems that Western influence has brought about, can, perhaps be related to the historical background. As regards the feeling that Tagore and Bibhutibhushan and other writers had for the rural people, I think this can be related to a growing nationalism or patriotism, a desire to reach out to one's fellow-countrymen and feel for them, particularly when they suffer because of economic exploitation, or competition to indigenous industries from imports, or famine induced by the need to supply British troops fighting in Burma with food. Dinabandhu Mitra's indictment of the indigo-planters in his play *Nil-darpan* (1860) started a new flow of feeling in Bengali literature that Tagore and Bibhutibhushan were able to tap.

The second question can only be answered through consultation with students of other Indian literatures - maybe also with students of other colonial literatures. In South Asia a related question is whether poignancy in the writings of Prem Chand, say, stems from the same conditions that gave rise to Bengali fiction, or whether he was directly influenced by Bengali writers, who were acknowledged throughout the subcontinent as pioneers, and whose works were quickly translated into other South Asian languages.

The third question requires a more extensive knowledge of the post- Tagore and Bibhutibhushan short story than I at present have. (Clearly that knowledge would also produce many examples of stories that are quite different from the 'lyric story' norm, and closer perhaps to Western models - such as the

detective and science fiction stories of Salyajit Ray.) But I shall end with a writer who has been described by critics both in Bangladesh (where he lives and works as an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Rajshahi University) and in West Bengal as one of the finest living writers of Bengali short stories : Hasan Azizul Huq. The horrors of the Bangladesh Liberation war, the political turmoil and violence that have shaken Bangladesh since 1971, and the intractable poverty of rural life in Bangladesh today, have moulded Hasan's stories, and we find in them a vision much more brutal than Tagore's or Bibhutibhushan's. Take one of his most famous stories, 'A day in Bhushan's Life'. Here we have a portrait of a peasant so brutalized by poverty as to be almost subhuman, his relationship with his son characterized by rage and curses. Yet at the end of the story, when Pakistani troops arrive and start shooting at random in a rural market, and a young woman hurls away her baby after it has been shot and challenges the soldiers to shoot her milk-swollen breasts, we have this :

In the midst of all this, Bhushan could also see that Haridas [his son] was standing a little away from him. He was going to grab him and pull him back, when Haridas suddenly keeled to the ground. Bhushan turned and saw, right before him, within barely two feet, one of the men in khaki holding his stubby black gun. His huge fair-skinned face was dripping with sweat and red with anger. He was so close that Bhushan saw his eyes; he even smelled the sweat of his body. The man was shouting [...]

At this point, Bhushan was seeing nothing else. The muscles of his hands tensed up his flat paws, as he considered the throat of the man. He stood looking at the man's neck, and he seemed to be undecided, till his body finally made up his mind, and sprang to the side of Haridas in a single stride of concentrated energy.

By then, Haridas was lying on the ground, his body quite still, only a bit of his fading life lingering in his eyes, like a faint spark left in cooling embers. Bhushan crouched beside him, his face bent close to Haridas's face, and he talked to him with all the tenderness of a father for a son. 'Haridas, my son, my darling son.' With his rough peasant hands, Bhushan stroked the body of his dying son, and he kept singing to the boy, 'Haridas, my dear son, my darling boy!'

Then there was a single odd crack, with which Bhushan's stubby pillarlike body shook a few times and became very still, releasing him from feeling anything any more.¹²

In many respects this remains true to the Bengali 'lyric story' norm. It raises 'humble distress' in a 'small life' to the level of poetry : to the eloquent pathos of 'Absolom, my son, my son'. But Bhushan's grief is like a severed head : although it is still recognizable, it is cut off from the body of the tradition by the brutality of its contemporary context and the fact that it emanates from a state of existence that has, up to this point, been drained of all tender feeling. His outburst of feeling is a last, involuntary spasm, before he enters what is actually his natural condition : one in which he is released 'from feeling anything anymore'.

Similarly, another very fine story, *Janani* ('The Mother'), which I have recently translated,¹³ is linked to the tradition but also horrifyingly disjoined from it. A girl of fourteen or fifteen turns up at the narrator's flat in search of work. He and his wife have not had any domestic help for some time, so they take her on. The narrator is stunned by her beauty. They learn from a neighbour that the girl has a son. The narrator can hardly believe that this can be so :

I thought again of the way the girl had looked in the clear morning sunlight, with her soft honey-coloured skin, her amazing eyes, her lovely oval face. Motherhood had not in the least way spoiled her. I thought of Satyawati in the *Mahābhārata*, whose virginity was not destroyed even after she had lost it.

'Married , that's all,' I said as my wife looked straight into my face. 'The usual story : husband can't feed her, or he's kicked her out, or she's walked out herself.'

Still staring my wife said, 'She isn't married.'

'Not married? So what you're saying is-'

12 Translated by Kalpana Bardhan in *Of Women, Outcasts, Peasants and Rebels : A Selection of Bengali Short Stories* (University of California Press, 1990), p. 322.

13 For *Harvest*, an anthology of Bengali literature in English translation (Anustup, Calcutta, 1995).

'Who told you that you had to be married to have a child?'

'Very well.' I felt a huge sort of rage inside. It was so incongruous, so vile! Like a rhinoceros eating a fresh young rose.

His wife wants to throw her out, but he persuades her not to be afraid of 'talk' and to let the girl stay. A couple of months later his wife points out that the girl is pregnant again. He has a violent quarrel with her about whether to keep the girl any more :

I was raging now. 'So you want us to run away from the problem? Wash our hands of it? We won't do what is right, because of *talk* ? Please, whatever people might think let her stay. For at least this once in your life, stand firm. Don't let's behave like *worms*.'

'Are you out of your mind? Don't you care about your own wife and children ?'

'The girl is like our own daughter -' I couldn't beat down the heaving in my chest. I had to break off in mid-sentence.

'She is *what* ? Like our *own* daughter ? Have you gone mad? A girl from the street, no morals, going with men from the day she was born -'

His wife gives in, and the girl stays; but later during her pregnancy, the narrator weakens before convention, and the girl is dismissed.

He sees her from time to time thereafter, wandering the streets. She becomes for him an icon of pure, mindless, universal, semi-divine motherhood :

...I sometimes saw her walking slowly along the edge of the road, or sitting in the shade of a tree calmly wiping her sweat with the end of her dirty sari. She was going to give an inestimable gift to the world; her breast was full of the pride of it; she looked down on the mundane world with indifference. It was as if she was saying : 'Somehow - how I don't know - I have made an impenetrable, indecipherable alphabet that only I can read. Did this alphabet originate on some worn, grimy stone tablet from the distant past, or have I made it myself ?'

The two walked side by side : a hard, harsh, visionless, soulless, meaningless, tiring reality, and close beside it, a mother - ablaze with creative fire, with the promise of the birth of all people in the world. How mean my own existence seemed in comparison !

He sees her again after she has had the baby, and is appalled to learn that she has disposed of the child somehow - like Ganga in the *Mahabharata*, who disposed of child after child in order to free the gods of a curse that they should be born as men. Then he hears that she is pregnant yet again. I quote the remainder of the story :

When I heard one day later that she was pregnant for the third time, I returned home, took my university-student daughter on to my lap and wept. 'What nonsense is this ?' said my wife.

'We never give her any love,' I said, wiping my eyes. 'When she was tiny she used to sleep on my chest with her little fists clenched tight. When I sang to her she used to rest her head on my shoulder as if she was in the safest place in the world.'

My wife started to snivel too. Then she said impatiently to our daughter, 'Off you go now.' She scuttled away, confused.

I watched Ayesha declining. Her body was crumbling : I imagined it scattered, in the end, in tiny pieces. If one tried to gather up the pieces, one would see perhaps a dog gnawing a foot or neck bone. Yet she had not gone away. She was still wandering slowly round a circle of roads, carrying the impossible weight of her belly. There was the same listless indifference in her gaze.

I said nothing to my wife about her this time. Once when I woke up suddenly I noticed her staring fixedly. When I looked at her, she gave a long sigh and turned away.

When Ayesha was near the end of her term I saw her one day lying motionless under her usual *jam-tree*. Her stomach was like a mosquito-net blown up by the wind. It was covered by an earth-coloured, starched, torn sari, but not completely covered. As soon as her stomach had been relieved of this burden, her womb would receive another egg. Her belly seemed too huge that day for one single child : perhaps there were a hundred children there, enough to fill a hundred water-pots. At birth they

would leave their mother and spread through the earth. The earth would take over all those fatherless, illegitimate infants.

I saw Ayscha only one more time. Never again after that. She was sitting on a broken brick wall. Her thin, copper-coloured skin wrapped her all round. But the skin had become too big for her. It hung from her elbows like strips of dirty rag; there were folds round her neck; there were two, slightly darker, shrivelled, sharp pleats attached to her breast; the rest hung down from her buttocks. Puckered, folded, sharply pleated like a map of Bangladesh. I couldn't see her eyes at all. There were two dark hollows under her forehead - so dark that nothing inside them could be seen. She lifted up her thin arms and clawed at the sky; then let them fall again, to scratch her head, attacking it fiercely with cruel, steely fingers.

Darkness was descending, closing up the sky. Before Ayesha sank into it completely, I ran over to her and asked, 'Ma, what happened this time ?'

O pure mother! The door to her empty womb was still wide open.

The story has all the depth of feeling that one expects from a writer steeped in the Bengali lyric story tradition. Yet the beauty and poetry of pregnancy has, shockingly, become divorced from the moral certainties and faith in the value of human existence that Tagore or Bibhutibhushan would have brought to it. Although in their stories goodness, truth and beauty often do not find a secure and comfortable place in the world as it actually is, they never cease to believe in the possibility of a world in which they *would* find a place. Their stories have something to teach us. Many of them have characters who learn, who become wiser and more sensitive than they were before : the implication is that the reader can become wiser too, and society can consequently improve. In Hasan's story there is no such hope. The narrator learns nothing and teaches nothing : the emotions that Ayesha releases in him are impotent and fruitless - they are crushed, in the end, by conventions of behaviour that cannot accommodate them. The stories of Tagore and Bibhutibhushan are full of *brave* characters. The narrator in 'The Mother' tries to be brave, but

fails;' and Ayesha, like Bhushan in the other story, has sunk to a level of existence so subhuman that bravery has no meaning.

This brings us, perhaps, to a rather pessimistic conclusion. But we should, I think, be impressed that the lyric story norm *has* survived in the work of Hasan Azizul Huq and other contemporary writers such as Selina Hossain, despite all that they have lived through. If better times come to Bengal - and they are many political and economic indications, on both sides of the border, that they will¹⁴ - then there is a fair chance, perhaps through the new electronic media as well as through literature itself, that the head can be restored to the body. Like the muscular peasants in the paintings of S. M. Sultan,¹⁵ the Bengali lyric story tradition will then walk tall, moving and impressing the whole world.

14 A big conference on agrarian change is being organized in Calcutta in January 1995, occasioned by the remarkable progress that west Bengal has made recently in agriculture. Bangladesh's family planning programme is regarded as one of the most successful in the developing world. Democracy in Bangladesh has got on to its feet at last, and seems unlikely to be overthrown either by the military or by political extremists. The future of the region is more promising now than it has been for a long time.

15 Famous for his huge paintings in which the peasantry of Bangladesh are depicted with Michaelangelesque physiques, Sultan's view is that this reflects the strength that has enabled them to survive through the centuries. See Hasnat Abdul Hye's novel *Sultan*, translated by Kabir Chowdhury (Bangla-German Sampreeti, Dhaka, 1993).

THE SEGMENTAL PHONEMES OF BENGALI : AN OVERVIEW

Abu Daud Hasan*

It is unfortunate that even today not many systematic descriptions of Bengali Phonology exist and those that do, vary in their inventory and classification. For example, there is controversy as to whether Semi-vowels really exist in Bengali and in case they do exist, exactly how many of them are there in this language. In their descriptions of Bengali Phonology, some scholars have not mentioned Semi-vowels at all, because they rejected the very existence of Semi-vowels in Bengali. Some scholars also reject the existence of Diphthongs as well. Among others there are controversies over the number of Semi-vowels and Diphthongs. No two inventories of Bengali phonemes available today are similar. So it is necessary that the exact number and nature of Bengali phonemes are determined and this treatise would be our humble attempt at paving the way for the same. In doing so our objective would be to resolve the differences already existing with the help of reasons (put forward from the point of view of Linguistics), not to create new ones.

According to Dr. S.K. Chatterji,¹ although modern Bengali period started with the beginning of the 19th century, the first fifty years of it was under "the tyranny of Sanskrit". An artificial Bengali language was created following Sanskrit grammar which was known as 'Sadhu Bhasa' and was used in producing literature in prose. Thus an unnecessary dichotomy was created between this 'Sadhu-Bhasa' consisting of highly Sanskritized vocabulary and syntax and 'the Chalit' or real colloquial language. But no artificial process can live long. The artificial Bengali language which was distinctly different phonologically,

*Associate Professor, Department of English, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh

lexically and syntactically from the living colloquial language was in existence only till the end of the first half of the present century. It is not used today even in formal writing on serious subjects and never used in conversation even by the most learned. 'chalit Bhasa' is now clearly in dominating position. It is the living spoken language which is used by the educated people everywhere in social intercourse as well as in intellectual and literary activities. Thus the Sadhu and Chalit dichotomy has now been resolved in favour of the living spoken language and the main individual contributions to this victory of Chalit Bhasa were made by Pramatha Chowdhury and Rabindranath Tagore.

Another dichotomy which was of communal nature used to prevail in the colloquial Bengali till very recently. For example, Hindu speakers of Bengali would say only /jal/ for 'water' whereas the Muslims would say only /pani/. Hindus would say /snan/ for 'bath' whereas Muslims would say /gosl/. But all these distinctions have been amalgamated now and people of both the communities are now found to utter each of the distinctive words for the same object or process in different situations. Thus having been devoid of all differences, the modern standard colloquial Bengali has become uniform and universal for its speakers at least in Bangladesh.

Thus the modern standard colloquial Bengali is different from the earlier Sanskritized form. It borrows words and structures from different sources, especially from English and internalizes them in a manner that makes the language simpler and easily understandable to the common men. Today even on the most superficial level it can be seen that the movement of Standard Colloquial Bengali is clearly towards simplicity and directness which are considered to be the great virtues for the standard form of any modern language.

Segmental Phonemes

Systematic descriptions of the Phonology of Bengali made so far are not uniform in their inventory and classification. The most important of these descriptions are as follows :

- (a) S.K. Chatterji (1926) : *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language.*
- (b) S.K. Chatterji (1928) : *A Bengali Phonetic Reader.*
- (c) Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960) : "The Phonemes of Bengali".
- (d) Hai and Ball (1961) : *The Sound Structures of English and Bengali.*
- (e) Dimock et al. (1964) : *Introduction to Bengali.*
- (f) Punyasloka Ray (1966) : *Bengali Language Handbook.*
- (g) Kostic and Das (1969) : *A Short Outline of Bengali Phonetics.* (Published in 1972).
- (h) Suhas Chatterjee (1962) : *A study of the Relationships between Written and Colloquial Bengali.* (Mimeographed Ph.D. thesis.).
- (i) Suhas Chatterjee (1972) : "The Diphthongs of Standard Colloquial Bengali."
- (j) P.C. Paul (1972) : *Sound Structures of English and Bengali* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis.).
- (k) Krishna Bhattacharya (1988) : *Bengali Phonetic Reader.*
- (l) Krishna Bhattacharya (1993) : *Bengali-Oriya Verb Morphology* (Phonology section)

Regarding these descriptions we must point out that except Ferguson and Chowdhury, P.C. Paul and Krishna Bhattacharya, none of the others refers to the broad phonological considerations explicitly. The implicit assumptions are there no doubt, but these assumptions are not always clear, and sometimes even appear to be contradictory. In these descriptions the number of phonemes varies a lot, but they form, on the whole, a somewhat general agreement about the number of the consonants and the pure oral vowels. We can have a clear picture from the following figure :

	VOWELS				CONSONANTS								Total
	Pure			Diphthongs	Ploives	Affricates	Fricatives	Nasals	Lateral	Flaps	Semivowels	Nasalization	
	Oral	Nasal											
S.K. Chatterji (1926)	7	-	25	18	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	-	64
S.K. Chatterji (1928)	7	7	25	18	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	-	71
Ferguson & Chowdhury (1960)	7	7	-	20	-	2	3	1	2	4	4	-	46
Hai & Ball (1961)	7	7	18	20	-	2	3	1	1	1	i, e, o, u	-	59
Dimock et. al. (1964)	7	-	-	20	-	3	3	1	2	3	i, o, u	1	40
Punyashloka Ray (1968)	7	-	-	18	2	4	3	1	2	2	4	-	41
Kostic & Das (1969)	7	7	-	16	4	3	3	1	3	4	4	-	48
Rafiqul Islam (1970)	7	7	-	20	-	3	3	1	2	4	4	-	47
S. Chatterjee (1972)	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.C. Paul (1972)	7	7	18	20	-	3	3	1	2	2	-	-	61
K. Bhattacharya (1988)	7	-	-	16	4	2	3	1	1	1	-	-	34
K. Bhattacharya (1993)	7	-	-	20	-	2	3	1	1	1	-	-	34

Dr. Suniti Chatterji is generally considered to be an authority so far as Phonology of Bengali is concerned. But we must remember that as a pioneer in this field he made an attempt to describe the Phonology of his mother-tongue at a time when the very concept of Phonology was not as developed as it has been later. Naturally some discrepancies might be there in his description. For example, it is surprising that he did not consider nasalization of Bengali Vowels significant enough although it distinguishes meaning. Of the twenty-five diphthongs he mentioned nine (which we will discuss later) are found to be forming two consecutive but separate syllables instead of one single syllable and hence cannot be regarded as diphthongs. As for his two Affricates, there is no doubt that phonetically they start as Affricates and end as plosives, but phonemically it is better to treat them as stops since from the point of distribution they have the same pattern. Of the four Fricatives he has shown, if they are arranged as two pairs /f,s/ and /h,ɦ/, then the second member of at least the second pair can and should be classified as an allophone of the first. Regarding the two semi-vowels shown by him, it is reasonable that if these so-called semi-vowels are shown as a separate category of phonemes at all, the number must be four /i,e,o,u/ and not just two, because actually four such semivowels are used in Bengali.

Considering all these points the description furnished by Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960)² appears to be an improvement upon Chatterji's and is found to be more modern and reasonable. But then they have not included any diphthongs (they mentioned diphthongs separately no doubt, but even that list was not exhaustive). Moreover, keeping the phonemic criterion of 'economy' in mind, it would have been more reasonable to describe the four semi-vowels not as a separate category of independent phonemes, but as allophones of the four pure vowels /i,e,o,u/ since in standard Bengali these semi-vowels are found to form non-syllabic second elements of the diphthongs only.

In this respect P.C. Paul appears to be more reasonable but, as he himself admitted in the preface of his unpublished thesis

that he is not actually a Linguist but a teacher of English, he cannot be quoted as an independent authority in this respect. Rafiqul Islam, in his description, followed Ferguson and Chowdhury except that he described /f/ and /s/ as separate phonemes instead of two allophones of a single phoneme.

The latest description of the Phonology of Bengali is that of Bhattachariya's in which she appears to be much too economical in the sense that she did not recognize diphthongs as a separate category of independent phonemes and that she recognized only one flap phoneme instead of two as has been more or less uniformly recognized by all others. In doing so, she followed, perhaps, the clue given by Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960) that the phonemes /d/ and /ɾ/ could be considered as allophones of a single phoneme on the basis of the facts that both of them are 'retroflex' sounds and that while /d/ occurs only word initially, /ɾ/ occurs only word medially and word finally (complementary distribution). She however, cited in her distribution of these so-called allophones such examples of minimal contrasts as /codbe/ 'will get angry with' and /coɾbe/ 'will climb', /podbe/ 'will be yielding' and /poɾbe/ 'will read' and conceded taxonomic phonemic status to /ɾ/. We may quote in this regard the argument put forward by Sunanda Datta (1975)³. "But differences in the manner of articulation (plosive vs. flap) and the native speakers' intuition that there are two different units of sound would argue against such an analysis." If we mention another example of minimal contrast following Ferguson and Chowdhury - /kad/ 'card' and /kat/ 'snatch', we can, perhaps, come to the conclusion that it would be better to let these two sounds remain as separate phonemes in our description of the Phonology of Standard Colloquial Bengali. Again in spite of there being such glaring examples of contrasting minimal pairs like /aslo/ 'whole' and /aɽo/ 'used to come', /kastē/ 'sickle' and /kaɽtē/ 'while coughing', /baɽ/ 'living' and /bas/ 'motorbus' or /aste/ 'gradually' and /aɽte aɽte/ 'while coming', she did not grant [s] and [ɽ] independent phonemic status and treated these two sounds as allophones of a single phoneme. But the existence of the sound [s] in innumerable words of Bangla which were

originally borrowed from English, Perso-Arabic and other sources, but which are treated as Bengali-words now and are used very frequently even by the illiterate speakers of Bengali (not to speak of the educated ones), demands that /s/ should be treated as an independent phoneme along with /f/ (as another phoneme). "The phonemic contrast between /s/ and /f/ is clearly a part of Bengali phonology and the partial complementation of the sounds regarded above as allophones becomes 'now a case of limitation on distribution or of neutralization.'" (Ferguson and Chowdhury, 1960, pp. 35).

There are, in all, sixty-two segmental phonemes in Bengali of which seven are oral vowels, seven nasal vowels, eighteen diphthongs and thirty consonants. These sixty-two distinctive, meaning-signalling units of sounds form the inventory of the segmental phonemes of Bengali. Substitution of one of these units in a word by another (of these units) will bring about a change in meaning, e.g.

/daka/ 'to call', /taka/ 'money', /dhaka/ 'to cover'; /kal/ 'tomorrow', /kac/ 'glass', /kaʃ/ 'work'.

The Vowels : (a) Pure and (b) Nasal.

In the inventory of Bengali, there are seven pure vowel phonemes and seven nasal vowel phonemes. Nasalization in case of vowel phonemes of Bengali is pertinent as it distinguishes meaning. That means so far as Bengali vowels are concerned, nasalization is phonemic. Some scholars have treated nasalization as a phonemic feature and hence counted it as a separate phoneme in Bengali. According to them there are eight vowel phonemes in Bengali (7+1) instead of fourteen. Thus they have tried to interpret it as a suprasegmental feature only. But this sometimes creates confusion since nasal vowels always function contrastively with oral ones as the following examples will show :

Oral	Nasal
1. /i/ - /bidhi/ 'regulation, 'fate'.	8. /ĩ/ - /bĩdhi/ '(I/We) pierce'
2. /e/ - /era/ 'these people(ord.).	9. /ẽ/ - /ẽra/ 'these people(hon.)
3. /æ/ - /khaæda/ 'you drive'	10. /ã/ - /khaãda/ 'snub-nosed'
4. /a/ - /baḍha/ 'obstacle'	11. /ã/ - /bãḍha/ 'to bind'
5. /ɔ/ - /fɔron/ 'shelter'	12. /õ/ - /fõron/ 'remembrance'
6. /o/ - /phota/ 'to bloom'	13. /õ/ - /phõta/ 'dot'
7. /u/ - /kuti/ 'twenty'	14. /ũ/ - /kũti/ 'bud'

Thus we see that Dr. Suniti Chatterji, Ferguson and Chowdhury, Hai and Ball, Rafiqul Islam, and Kostic and Das are quite justified in giving the seven Bengali nasal vowels independent phonemic status instead of treating them as mere counter-parts or allophones of the corresponding oral vowels.

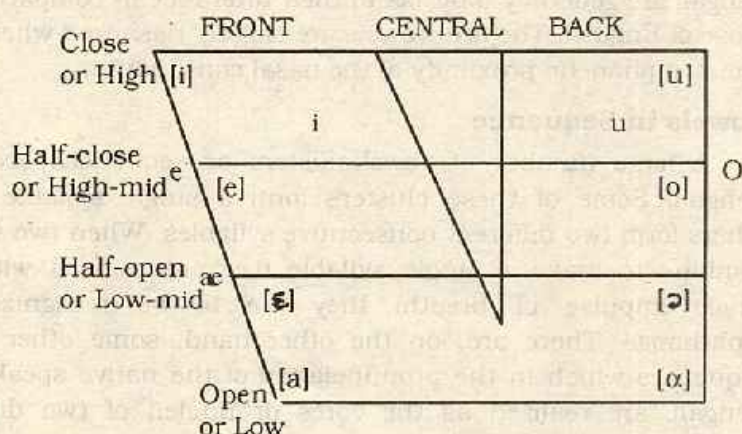
Classification of Bengali-Vowels

Bloch and Trager maintained that for the classification of vowels "There are three intersecting criteria : the part of the tongue which acts as articulator, the heights to which the tongue is raised, and the position of the lips." (1942 pp. 19). The tongue should not be treated as a single articulator. It has got different parts viz., tip, blade, front and back. Each of these parts acts as an articulator. The articulator involved in producing a vowel sound also denotes the region of the month where that sound is produced, e.g. if the tip, or blade or front part of the tongue is the articulator, the vowel sound is produced in the front region of the month; if the middle part of the tongue is involved in producing a vowel, then it is produced in the central region of the mouth; and if the back part of tongue is involved, the vowel is definitely produced in the back region of the mouth. Thus according to the first criterion, vowels in the phonology of Bengali can be classified into three categories -- front, back and central. These vowels can be further classified into three other categories as high, mid (including high mid and low mid) and low according to the height to which the tongue is raised while articulating those sounds. The height also denotes the closeness of the articulator and the point of articulation in producing a vowel sound. The higher the position of articulator, the more close the sound is;

the lower the articulator, the more open the sound is. These vowels may again be classified into 'rounded' and 'unrounded' according to the position of the lips. But this criterion is not so important so far as Bengali vowels are concerned, as all the back vowels are rounded and the rest are unrounded almost invariably. As regards central vowels, the position of the lips is neutral. (Vowel sounds are typically voiced and vowels of Bengali are no exceptions to this rule). These classifications can be shown in a chart in the following manner :

	front	central	back	Unrounded	Rounded
High	i		u	i	u
High-Mid	e		o	e	o
Low-Mid		æ	ɔ	æ	ɔ
Low		a		a	

It would be far better to show this chart with reference to the conventional vowel diagram which was originally devised to show the exact position of the cardinal vowels, that is, "a set of fixed vowel-sounds having known acoustic qualities and known tongue and lip positions." (Jones, Outline, pp. 28).⁴ In the following Cardinal Vowel Diagram we have tried also to illustrate the tongue positions of the Bengali Vowels - both oral and nasal with reference to the Cardinal Vowels :



In this diagram we have put the Cardinal Vowels in square-brackets inside the diagram and put smaller dots for them. Larger dots indicate the positions of Bengali-vowels.

Vowels of Bengali, in general, show little allophonic variation and stay away from the extremes of vowel articulation e.g. the high vowels are considerably lower than the highest possible, low vowels are higher than the lowest possible (except the central vowels), and back vowels are not very strongly rounded. The values of the back vowels /u, ɔ, ɔ̃, ũ, õ, ɔ̃/ are much closer together than those of the front vowels /i, e, æ, ĩ, ĕ, æ̃/ at least in comparison to the back vowels of English. "The nasal vowels are generally somewhat higher than the corresponding oral vowels. The phonemic nasality of the SCB nasal vowels is relatively weak . . . it sometimes happens that the nasal quality of a phonemically oral vowel next to a nasal consonant is more striking phonetically than the nasal quality of a phonemically nasal vowel." (Ferguson and Chowdhury, 1960, pp. 37).

Another mentionable feature of the vowels of Bengali is that all vowel phonemes, whether oral or nasal, may be phonetically either long or short, the difference in the length is not phonemic in Bengali. The articulatory positions of the nasal vowels are approximately the same as those of corresponding oral vowels; there would be a slight difference only in height. The vowels of Bengali are generally a bit lax in their utterance in comparison to those of English. The oral vowels are slightly nasalized when they occur in phonetic proximity of the nasal consonants.

Vowels in Sequence

A large number of vowel-clusters or sequences occur in Bengali. Some of these clusters form a single syllable while others form two different consecutive syllables. When two vowels combine to make a single syllable (i.e. pronounced within a single impulse of breath) they are to be recognized as diphthongs. There are, on the other hand, some other vowel sequences which in the pronunciation of the native speakers of Bengali, are realized as the cores or nuclei of two different consecutive syllables.

In case of two-vowel clusters forming single syllables, the four so-called semi-vowels -- which actually are the allophones of the pure vowels /i,e,o,u/ -- only can be the last components of those clusters. "The initial component carries the syllabic peak and the last component is a non-syllabic one--without having the syllabic prominence. Phonetically these vowel clusters are called diphthongs." (Bhattacharya, 1993, pp. 16).⁵

In the disyllabic clusters, the second component forms a separate syllable which is stressed and hence longer than the same vowel in the monosyllabic combinations. It has been a convention to distinguish the monosyllabic vowel clusters (or diphthongs) from disyllabic ones by using a hyphen in the latter cases between the two syllables. If that is maintained, no question of any contrast between vowels and semi-vowels would arise.

Bengali Diphthongs

It is from Greek that the word 'diphthong' meaning 'two-sounds' has derived ('di' + 'phthong'). But whatever may be its source or meaning, phonologically a diphthong functions as a single unit of sound forming the core of a single syllable. That means although it is a cluster of two vowel sounds, they are spoken so closely together that they, for all practical purposes, become one unit of sound having a single syllabic pick.

English diphthongs conforms absolutely to this definition. But Bengali diphthongs are said to be comprising a vowel and a semi vowel which gives rise to a controversy. For 'a semi-vowel' is essentially a consonant sound like English /w/ and /j/ or Bengali /j/ which function as consonants; but the cluster of a vowel and a consonant cannot be regarded as a diphthong. In fact, however, there is no real controversy regarding Bengali semi-vowels as the so called four 'semi-vowels' (one of which only can be the second and non-syllabic component of a Bengali-diphthong) are not consonantal at all i.e. they do not function as consonants. They are vocalic in nature and their only function is to be the second component of a diphthong. That is why they should be treated not as independent phonemes, but as allophones of four pure oral vowel-phonemes viz. /i/, /e/, /o/

and /u/. They are semi-vowels in name only and are so called only to be distinguished from other distinctive full-fledged independent vowel-phonemes of Bengali. But we are skeptical about the justification of attributing these sounds as 'semi-vowels' any longer in any phonological description of Bengali. For as they are clearly vocalic sounds without having any consonantal function and as they are not independent phonemes but only allophones with very limited distribution, attributing them as 'semi-vowels' causes more confusion than convenience in any phonemic description, since a separate semi-vowel is there among Bengali consonants, viz. /j/.

There are as many as eighteen diphthongs in Bengali :

1. /iɨ/ as in /diɨ/ 'I give'
2. /eɨ/ as in /fɛɨ/ 'that'
3. /aɨ/ as in /ʃaɨ/ 'I go'
4. /oɨ/ as in /boɨ/ 'book'
5. /ui/ as in /fui/ 'I lie'
6. /eo/ as in /Keo/ 'somebody'
7. /æo/ as in /næoʔa/ 'be fond of'
8. /ao/ as in /ʃao/ '(you) go' (imp.)
9. /ɔo/ as in /haɔ/ '(you) be'
10. /oo/ as in /foɔ/ '(you) sleep' (imp.)
11. /æe/ as in /dæe/ '(He /she) gives'
12. /ae/ as in /ʃae/ '(He/she) goes'
13. /ɔe/ as in /chɔe/ 'six'
14. /oe/ as in /foe/ '(he/she) goes to bed'
15. /iʉ/ as in /fiʉli/ 'a kind of flower'
16. /eʉ/ as in /Keʉte/ 'a kind of poisonous snake'
17. /au/ as in /dau-dau/ 'fire-burning'
18. /ou/ as in /Nouka/ 'boat'

Dr. S.K. Chatterji (1928)⁶ enlisted twenty five diphthongs belonging to Standard Colloquial Bengali. But later Suhas Chatterjee (1972)⁷ rejected nine of them on the ground that each

of those nine so-called diphthongs actually consists of two syllabic peaks instead of one. He, therefore, recognized only sixteen of those twenty-five diphthongs furnished by Dr. Suniti Chatterji and added four new diphthongs to the list.

Diphthongs enlisted by Dr. Suniti Chatterji were : ie, ia, io, iu; ei, ea, eo, eu; ae, aeo; i, ae, ao, au; e, a, o; oi, oe, oa, ou; ui, ue, ua, uo.

The nine diphthongs rejected as unacceptable by Suhas Chatterjee are : ie, ia, io, ea, a, oa, ue, ua, uo.

The four new diphthongs added by Suhas Chatterjee (1972) are ii, ee, æi, oo.

Of these four diphthongs, three viz, /ii, ee, oo/ were earlier mentioned by Ferguson and Chowdhury as well (1960). Incidentally, we cannot understand why Ferguson and Chowdhury failed to mention clusters like /eo/ etc. in their list of diphthongs.

We think that Suhas Chatterjee is justified in rejecting the nine diphthongs from Dr. Suniti Chatterji's list, because these nine items are always pronounced as disyllabic clusters with a juncture between the two syllables. Hence they cannot be treated as diphthongs. About the two diphthongs viz., /æi/ and /ee/ included in Suhas Chatterjee's list, there seems to be some doubt. The only example of /æi/ is that of the vocative sound /æi/ (meaning 'hey'), but this can better be shown as an allophone of /ei/ in free variation (as /ei/ also bears the same meaning). As for the diphthong /ee/ such examples of it as /mee/ 'daughter' or /pee/ 'having got' raises doubt as to whether it is a diphthong or a disyllabic vowel cluster. We have, therefore, excluded these two from our list of diphthongs.

The Consonants : Classification

There are as may as thirty meaning signalling consonantal sound-units in Bengali. These consonant phonemes are as follows : /p, ph, b, bh, t̪, t̪h, d̪, d̪h, t̪ʰ, t̪h̪, d̪ʰ, d̪h̪, c, ch, ʃ, ʃh, k, kh, g, gh, m, n, ŋ, l, f, s, h, r, ɽ, j/

These sounds may be classified by combining the two criteria of classification viz. point of articulation and manner of articulation. Some of them are pronounced as voiceless while some others as voiced. We can get the consonantal sounds of Bengali classified in a clear and simple way by the help of a chart like the following :

	Bilabial		Dental		Alveolar		Retroflex		Alveopalatal		Velar		Glottal
	Aspd.		Aspd.		Aspd.		Aspd.		Affrd. Aspd.		Aspd.		
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+		Affrd.	-	+	
										+	+	+	
Plosives-Vd.	p	ph	t	th			ʈ	ʈh	c	ch	k	kh	
+Vd.	b	bh	d	dh			ɖ	ɖh	ɟ	ɟh	g	gh	
Nasals	m				n						ŋ		
Lateral					l								
Fricatives			s						f				h
Flaps					r		ɽ						
Semi-vowel									j				

Notes : -Vd. = Voiceless

+Vd. = Voiced

+Affrd. = Affricated [plosives only]

-Aspd. = Unaspirated

+Aspd. = Aspirated

We need not describe all the phonemes in detail in this treatise. we are to take up only those phonemes for description regarding which controversies still exist.

Fricatives : their description and distribution

Fricative consonants are produced by blocking the air-stream and then letting the air push through a narrow opening. As the air is pushed through, a type of friction is produced and hence these sounds are called fricatives. There are three fricative speech-sounds or phonemes in Bengali, viz. /f/, /s/, and /h/.

/s/ - voiceless dental fricative

To produce this sound the front part of the tongue is raised to the inner side of the teeth-ridge leaving a narrow opening through which the air is pushed out with friction and thus a hissing sound is produced. The soft-palate is raised and the vocal cords are kept wide open. /s/ occurs individually only in the loan words, e.g.

/sampan/ 'boat', /salam/ 'greeting (Muslim)', /sinema/ 'cinema' /selim/ 'proper name', /salma/ 'proper name' /samia/ 'proper name' /kisti/ 'boat', /kismot/ 'fate', etc.

But this sound occurs initially as the first member in combination with /k/, /kh/, /t/, /th/, /n/, /p/, /ph/, /r/, /l/, /kr/, /tr/ and /pr/, /s/ occurs medially as the first member in combination with /t/, /th/, /sn/, /r/, /p/ and /tr/. For example, /stri/ 'wife', /snan/ 'bath', /sthan/ 'place', /spərfo/ 'touch', /skɔndho/ 'the shoulder', /stuti/ 'flattery', and so on and so forth. It never occurs alone initially or intervocally. It does not occur finally with other consonants except in loan words from English.

/f/ - Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative

This sound is produced by raising the front part of the tongue towards the hard-palate leaving a narrow opening through which air is pushed out with a friction. The soft palate is raised to close the nasal passage. The vocal cords are not vibrated. /f/ occurs in all positions, e.g.,

/fɔkal/ 'morning' /afa/ 'hope' /bãf/ 'bamboo'
/foɔa/ 'straight' /bafa/ 'rented house' /ãf/ 'fibre'
/fef/ 'end' /hafɪ/ 'laughter' /baɪaf/ 'breeze'

This sound is used in geminate clusters also, e.g. /foffo/ 'crops' /haffo/ 'laughter', /laffo/ 'glamour' etc.

/h/ - glottal fricative

This phoneme also has got two allophones of which one is voiceless [h] and the other is voiced [ɦ].

[h] : To produce this sound, the vocal cords are vibrated while the air-stream passes through them; middle part of the tongue rises

towards the hard palate, the air-flow passes through the narrow opening producing friction thereby; the nasal passage remains closed and the lips open. [h] occurs initially and medially, e.g.,

/hira/ 'diamond' /bibaho/ 'marriage'

/hrid̥ə/ 'heart' /bahon/ 'conveyance'

/hraf/ 'decrease' /fiṇho/ 'lion'

[h] does not occur in combination with other consonants

[h] : The process of articulation of this sound is same as that of [h], the only difference being that since the glottis is open, the vocal cords are not vibrated while the air-stream passes through it resulting in the absence of voice. [h] occurs only finally mainly in interjections and also in a few foreign words or names, e.g. /bah/ [expressing appreciation], /nah/ [expressing denial], /ḡah/ [expressing joy with shame or embarrassment], /baḡfah/ 'the king', /fahanfah/ 'the emperor' etc. [Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960) are doubtful about the quality of /h/ in general and opines that it may have a range of allophonic variation much like that of English /h/. Bhattacharya (1993) opines that [h] occurs word medially also, but to be so sure about it, laboratory investigation is needed.

Flap Consonants : description and distribution

No closure is involved in the production of flap sounds. In producing these speech-sounds, the tip of the tongue taps once against the alveolar ridge (or just behind it). There are two types of flaps in Bengali viz., the alveolar /r/ and the retroflex /ɽ/.

/r/ - voiced alveolar flap

In producing this sound the tip of the tongue makes a groove in the middle and flaps up against the front part of the alveolar region. The nasal passage is closed and vocal cords are vibrated. /r/ generally has got two allophones. Initially or after vowel or after another /r/, it turns into a trilling sound with two or three taps instead of one. But it is a flapped sound in the medial and final positions, e.g.,

/raṭ/ 'night' /gərom/ 'warm' /ar/ 'and'

/rin/ 'loan' /aram/ 'comfort' /ḡhar/ 'debt'

/rup/ 'beauty' /ḡrom/ 'shame' /nər/ 'masculine', 'man'

/ɽ/ - voiced retroflex flap

To produce this sound, the tip of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth and is slightly curled back as a result of which the underside of the tongue-tip touches the roof of the mouth and thus the air-stream is blocked. Then the blocked air pushes the tongue-tip forward to get itself released. The sound produced by this release has the quality of flapping. The nasal passage is closed and the vocal cords are vibrated. This sound occurs medially and finally, e.g.,

/nati/ 'pulse'	/mat/ 'starch'
/atal/ 'shelter'	/ʃhɔɽ/ 'storm'
/kɔɽa/ 'strict'	/d̪et/ 'one and a half'

/r/ and /ɽ/ are distinct phonemes of Bengali. Following are some of the examples of their contrasting with one another :

/r/	/ɽ/
/par/ 'cross' (river, tank etc.)	/pat/ 'border of a sari'
/nari/ 'woman'	/nati/ 'pulse'
/berie/ 'coming out'	/berie/ 'having taken a stroll'

/j/ - alveo-palatal semi-vowel

To articulate this sound, the tongue assumes the position for a front half-close to close vowel (depending upon the degree of openness of the following sound) and moves away immediately to the position of the following sound. The nasal passage is blocked and the vocal cords vibrate. This sound normally occurs word medially, e.g. /mojur/ 'peacock', /pɔjar/ 'kind of poetic rhyme', /kaja/ 'body', /chaja/ 'shadow', /nɔja/ 'new', /maja/ 'affection', /d̪ia/ 'sympathy', /baju/ 'air', /najok/ 'actor', /najika/ 'actress', /gajok/ 'male singer', /gajika/ 'female singer', /nɔjon/ 'eye', /bɔjon/ 'to spin', /ʃɔjon/ 'to sleep'.

It sometimes occurs in word initial position also e.g. /je/ 'an expression having no definite lexical meaning and commonly used to initiate a conversation. [This word may occur in any position of a sentence where it may have one of a lot of meanings e.g. /tumi ak̪a je/.

Consonants in Sequence

In Bengali there are two types of consonantal sequences - (i) the geminate clusters and (ii) dissimilar clusters. There are a number of geminate clusters which occur in word-medial positions as the last and first elements respectively of the two consecutive syllables of the same words and contrast with single consonants in the same position. We have already mentioned the geminate clusters while describing the distribution of consonant sounds. Geminate consonants have been described by some linguists as 'phonetically long consonants'. But there is a distinction between long consonants and double consonants. "A double consonant is one whose duration extends over two syllables whereas the duration of a long consonant is confined to a single syllable". (Abercrombie, 1967)⁸. Thus the geminates in Bengali are not long consonants but double consonants i.e. consonant clusters.

Consonant clusters (non-geminate) should be discussed only on the phonetic level. "Phonetically a cluster is the product of one impulse of breath and one consonant follows the other without any intervening syllabic break." (Bhattacharya, 1993, pp. 24). There is a scope of misunderstanding in this definition. If this definition is accepted some word-medial consonant clusters especially the geminates cannot be regarded as clusters. Thus the above definition can be accepted only with regard to the word-initial clusters not regarding the word-medial consonant clusters.

"The minimum number of consonants forming a cluster in SCB is two and the maximum number is three Chatterjee (1962) rightly points out that SCB clusters, be they biconsonantal or triconsonantal, occur always syllable-initially, even when they are word-medial," (Bhattacharya, 1993, pp. 24).

"In SCB word-medially a cluster cannot occur after an open syllable. If a SCB cluster happens to occur after an etymologically open syllable, it requires a slot-filler. The first element of the cluster is geminated. The first of the geminates is added to the open syllable and thus changing it to a close syllable; "(Bhattacharya, 1993, pp. 24). The author cited instances of this which are as follows :

(patro) 'potential bride-groom' which is pronounced as [pattro]; (nidra) 'sleep' which is pronounced as [niddra]. And she is perfectly right in her observation.

In Bengali there may be a number of two consonant clusters in word-initial position. But the number of three consonant clusters in the same position is very few. Two-consonant clusters in the word-medial position abounds in Bengali especially in words which have been derived from the Old Indo-Aryan stock, e.g. /fu-hriḍ/ 'friend', /ʃo-hriḍe/ 'kind', /raṭ-ṭri/ 'night' etc. Consonant clusters in word-final positions are not found in Bengali.

Marginal Aspirates

Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960), Suhas Chatterjee (1962) and Hai (1964)⁹ mentioned four aspirate phonemes of marginal value viz., /nh/ /mh/, /lh/ and /rh/. But Bhattacharya (1993) differs with all of them contending that these are actually sequences of two separate consonant sounds and not single phonemic units so far as the speech habits of present day native speakers of SCB are concerned. She also argued that there is always an 'intervening syllabic break' between the two consonant sounds. "The sequences are so distributed in a word that the first element which is one of the /n,m,l/, closes the first syllable and the second element which is a glottal fricative in each case, begins the next syllable." (Bhattacharya, 1993, pp. 27). She then goes on to point out that "in case of [lh] occurring initially and in case of [rh] occurring both initially and medially, the sequences are clusters /hl/ and /hr/ respectively." (ibid, pp. 27). She cited some examples as a proof of her observations (e.g. [bon-hi] 'five', [lha-dini] 'delighting', [hrod] 'a lake' etc.) and concludes that "phonemically also these so-called aspirates do not follow the regular distributional pattern of the other aspirates. Hence they are not 'unit phonemes' as the regular aspirates are. They are nothing but sequences of two phonemes." (ibid, pp. 28). [This reason put forward by her is quite untenable, for the sounds in question are not unique to Bengali alone; these sounds are there in all NIA languages and in every language they are realized as 'unit phonemes' of aspirates, not as sequences of two phonemes.

Professor S.S. Misra¹⁰, who is an authority so far as the process of development of the Indo-Aryan languages are concerned, also opines that Bhattacharya's idea regarding this sound is absolutely misconceived or ill-conceived and cannot withstand the reality. Like all other NIA languages, these sounds are realized as unit phonemes in Bengali as well].

In actual speech of the present SCB speakers, the words containing these sounds are not pronounced in the manner Bhattacharya has tried to prove they do. If at all there is any 'intervening syllabic break' in these words, the break occurs in between the so-called 'slot-filler' and the first element of these 'sequences' (i.e. geminates) e.g. [bon-nhi], [brom-mho], [al-lhad] etc. We, therefore, find it more convenient and logical to accept the sounds in question as 'marginal aspirates' rather than sequences of two absolutely separate sound units.

We would like to point out, in this connection, that we find it very difficult to accept Hai's (1964)¹¹ contention as well that "In non-pedantic pronunciation these intervocalic aspirated sounds under reference have lost aspiration and are pronounced as 'allad', 'bramma' only with their first component being doubled. A few Sanskrit words like 'lhadini', 'rhad' etc., with initial aspirated liquids which are used in Bengali have lost their aspiration in non-pedantic pronunciation and are realized as 'ladini', 'rod', etc." (pp. 145). What we have found out from the actual speech of a number of native speakers of Bengali is that although intervocalically the sounds in reference have lost their aspiration. (i.e. 'allhad' and 'brammha' are really pronounced as [allad] and [bramma] respectively), the initial aspirated liquids have not yet lost their aspirations as observed by Hai (1964) thirty years back. No speaker we have got no record have pronounced [rhod] as simply [rod] or [lhadini] as simply [ladini].

Syllabic Structures in Bengali

According to Ferguson and Chowdhury (1960), typical syllabic structures in SCB are V, CV, VC, CVC ; there are other structures, however, such as CCVC, which occur less frequently and hence the authors had not given a full list of them.

CV and CVC appear to be the most frequent syllabic structures in Bengali. However, Pabitra Sarkar (1979)¹² in a paper written in Bengali had described the canonical patterns of Bengali syllables. Following is a list of the patterns of Bengali syllables prepared on the basis of Sarkar's description.

Patterns	Words	Glosses
1. V	/o/	'he' or 'she'
2. CV	/na/	'no'
3. CVC	/ban/	'flood'
4. VC	/akh/	'sugarcane'
5. CCV	/mridu/	'light', 'a bit'
6. CCVC	/mr̥ittu/	'death'
7. CCCV	/spr̥iṭha/	strong desire'
8. CCCVC	/spr̥iṭto/	'bitten'
9. CVCC	/f̥ɔnst̥han/	'provision'
10. VV	/oi/	'that'
11. CVV	/bhai/	'brother'
12. VVC	/oif̥or̥ɔ/	'wealth'
13. CVVC	/f̥oif̥or̥ɔ/	'valour'
14. CCVV	/tr̥ɔɔ/	'trio'
15. CCVVC	/sih̥oir̥ɔ/	'tranquility'
16. CCCVV	/st̥roino/	'henpecked'

Sarkar appears to have treated a diphthong as two phonemes instead of one. But a syllable can never have more than one vowel phoneme in it. Hence his last seven structures (10-16) are not phonologically acceptable. So, that leaves us with only nine basic syllable structures in Bengali.

This is just an overview of only the segmental phonemes of Bengali, not a full-fledged Phonology of the language. In this treatise, we have deliberately skipped certain aspects regarding which there is no difference of opinion among the scholars concerned. We have kept the supra-segmental features out of the purview of our discussion here, for we intend to discuss those features in a separate paper later on.

Notes and References

1. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji in the introductory chapter of his famous book *The Origin and Development of Bengali Language*. (1926)
2. Ferguson, Charles A. and Munir Chowdhury : "The Phonemes of Bengali". *Language*. Vol. 36, January-March, 1960.
3. Datta, Sunanda : "Towards an Effective Learning Programme for Bengali Learners of English : Pronunciation". CIEFL (Hyderabad) Bulletin, No. 11, 1975, pp. 21-37.
4. Jones, Daniel : *An Outline of English Phonetics*. 1972.
5. Bhattacharya, Krishna : *Bengali Oriya Verb Morphology*. 1993.
6. Chatterji, S.K. : *A Bengali Phonetic Reader*. 1928.
7. Chatterjee, Suhas : "The Diphthongs of Standard Colloquial Bengali". *Calcutta Orientalists*, Calcutta. 1:1 pp. 27-33.
8. Abercrombie, David : *Elements of General Phonetics*. 1967, pp. 82.
9. Hal, M.A. : *dhanibiggan o bangla dhanitattya*. 1964.
10. Dr. S.S. Mishra is a Professor and the Head, Department of Linguistics, Banaras Hindu university, India and the author of a number of valuable books on Indo-Aryan Historical Linguistics.
11. "Aspiration in Standard Bengali". *Indian Linguistics*, 19. pp. 142-146.
12. Sarkar, Pabitra : "silebl-tattya o bangla bhashar silebl sangathan". *Bibhav*, 1979, 3:4, pp. 33-54.

Phonemic Symbols and Diacritics Used

Vowels

- /i/ = front close unrounded vowel
- /e/ = front half-close unrounded vowel
- /æ/ = front half-open unrounded vowel
- /a/ = central open unrounded vowel
- /ɔ/ = back half-open rounded vowel
- /o/ = back half-close rounded vowel
- /u/ = back close rounded vowel

Diphthongs

- /i_ɪ/ = beginning with close front unrounded vowel, moving towards close front unrounded semi-vowel
- /i_ʊ/ = beginning with close front unrounded vowel, moving towards close back rounded semi-vowel
- /e_ɪ/ = beginning with half-close front unrounded vowel, moving towards close front unrounded semi-vowel
- /e_ʊ/ = beginning with half-close front unrounded vowel, moving towards close back rounded semi-vowel
- /e_ɔ/ = beginning with half-close front unrounded vowel, moving towards half-close back rounded semi-vowel
- /æ_ɪ/ = beginning with half-open front unrounded vowel, moving towards centralized half-close front semi-vowel
- /æ_ʊ/ = beginning with half-open front unrounded vowel, moving towards half-close back rounded semi-vowel
- /a_ɪ/ = beginning with open central unrounded vowel, moving towards close front unrounded semi-vowel
- /a_ʊ/ = beginning with open central unrounded vowel, moving towards close back rounded semi-vowel
- /æ_ɪ/ = beginning with open central unrounded vowel, moving towards centralized half-close front semi-vowel
- /a_ɔ/ = beginning with open central unrounded vowel, moving towards half close back rounded semi-vowel
- /ɔ_ɪ/ = beginning with half-open back rounded vowel, moving towards centralized half-close front semi-vowel
- /ɔ_ʊ/ = beginning with half-open back rounded vowel, moving towards half-close back rounded semi-vowel

- /oi/ = beginning with half-close back rounded vowel, moving towards close front unround semi-vowel
- /ou/ = beginning with half-close back rounded vowel, moving towards close back rounded semi-vowel
- /oe/ = beginning with half-close back rounded vowel, moving towards centralized half-close front semi-vowel
- /oo/ = beginning with half-close back rounded vowel, moving towards half-close back rounded semi-vowel
- /ui/ = beginning with close back rounded vowel, moving towards close front unrounded semi-vowel

Consonants

- /p/ = voiceless bilabial plosive
- /b/ = voiced bilabial plosive
- /ph/ = aspirated voiceless bilabial plosive
- /bh/ = aspirated voiced bilabial plosive
- /t/ = voiceless dental plosive
- /d/ = voiced dental plosive
- /tʰ/ = aspirated voiceless dental plosive
- /dʰ/ = aspirated voiced dental plosive
- /ɭ/ = voiceless retroflex plosive
- /ɖ/ = voiced retroflex plosive
- /tʰ/ = aspirated voiceless retroflex plosive
- /dʰ/ = aspirated voiced retroflex plosive
- /c/ = affricated voiceless alveo-palatal plosive
- /ɟ/ = affricated voiced alveo-palatal plosive
- /ch/ = aspirated affricated voiceless alveo-palatal plosive
- /ɟʰ/ = aspirated affricated voiced alveo-palatal plosive
- /k/ = voiceless velar plosive
- /g/ = voiced velar plosive
- /kh/ = aspirated voiceless velar plosive
- /gh/ = aspirated voiced velar plosive
- /m/ = bilabial nasal
- /n/ = alveolar nasal
- /ŋ/ = velar nasal
- /l/ = alveolar lateral

- /s/ = voiceless dental fricative
- /f/ = voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
- /h/ = glottal fricative
- /ɾ/ = voiced alveolar flap
- /ɽ/ = voiced retroflex flap
- /j/ = alveo-palatal semi-vowel

Other Symbols

[] = phonetic or allophonic transcription

/ / = phonemic transcription

Diacritics

˜ = nasal or nasalized

◌̣ = voice lost

◌_h = aspirated (allophonic)

◌-h = aspirated (phonemic)

◌̪ = dental

Some Important Abbreviations Used

V = Vowel

C = Consonant

NIA = New Indo-Aryan

MIA = Middle Indo-Aryan

OIA = Old Indo-Aryan

SCB = Standard Colloquial Bengali

Bibliography

1. Grierson, Sir George 1903 : *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol. 1 Part I, Vol. V Parts I & II. Reprint 1968. Delhi : Motilal Banarasidass.
2. Chatterji, S.K. 1926 : *The Origin and Development of Bengali Language*. Calcutta : Calcutta University.
3. Chatterji, S.K. 1928 : *A Bengali Phonetic Reader*. London : London University Press.
4. Shahidullah, Muhammad 1956 : *bangla bhashar itibritta*. Dhaka : Bangla Academy.
5. Ferguson, Charles A. & Munir Chowdhury 1960 : "The Phonemes of Bengali". *Language*, Vol. 36, January-March 1960.
6. Hai, M.A. & W.J. Ball 1961 : *The Sound Structures of English and Bengali*. Dhaka : Dhaka University.
7. Dimock, Edward C. et.al. 1964 : *Introduction to Bengali*. Part I. University of Chicago. Honolulu : East West Center Press.
8. Ray, Punyasloka 1966 : *Bengali Language Handbook*. Washington : Center for Applied Linguistics.
9. Kostic, D' Jordje & Rhea S. Das 1969 : *A Short Outline of Bengali Phonetics*. Calcutta : Indian Statistical Institute.
10. Chatterjee, Suhas 1962 : *A Study of the Relationship between Written and Colloquial Bengali*. (Mimeographed Ph.D. thesis). Hartford Seminary Foundation, Washington.
11. Chatterjee, Suhas 1972 : "The Diphthongs of Standard Colloquial Bengali". *Calcutta Orientalists*, Calcutta 1 : 1 pp. 27-33.
12. Hai, M.A. 1958 : "Aspiration in Standard Bengali". *Indian Linguistics* 19, pp. 142-146.
13. Islam, Rafiqul 1970 : *An Introduction to Colloquial Bengali*. Dhaka : Bangla Academy.

14. Islam, Rafiqul 1970 : *bhashatatta*. Dhaka : Book View.
15. Bloch, Bernard & George L. Trager 1942 : *Outlines of Linguistic Analysis*. Linguistic Society of America. Indian Edition 1972. New Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal.
16. Paul, P.C. 1972 : *Sound Structures of English and Bengali*. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis). Calcutta University.
17. Sarkar, Pabitra. 1979 : "silebl-tattya o bangla bhashar silebl sangathan". *Bibhav* 3:4.
18. Bhattacharya, Krishna 1988 : *Bengali Phonetic Reader*. Mysore : Central Institute of Indian Languages.
20. Bhattacharya, Krishna 1993 : *Bengali Oriya Verb Morphology*. (Phonology Section). Calcutta : Dasgupta & Co. Private Limited.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON SOUTH ASIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BENGAL UNTIL THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

S.A. Akanda*

The development of historical research on Bengal which we will be examining and endeavouring to reconstruct and develop is the legacy of the past. The modern conception of a scientific, humanistic, rational and interpretative history was unknown to the ancient and early medieval historians. But it was primarily on a medieval base, mainly Muslim, that the pioneers of modern South Asian historiography raised their structure of historical research. Development of historical research on Bengal/Bangladesh¹ is inseparable from that of the South Asian subcontinent (India) as a whole. The heritage of medieval Muslim historiography was superseded by modern western historiography with the introduction of English education in India and the establishment of such institutions as the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the metropolis of Calcutta in 1784.²

The development of historiography in India was almost an exclusive contribution of the Muslims till late medieval times. Ancient India suffered from paucity of professed histories though there might have existed various categories of sources — literary or otherwise such as archives and genealogies of rulers in important Hindu courts.³ With the exception of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* ('Chronicle of the History of Kashmir', wr. about 1148-49 A.D.), no work worth historical merit is known to exist from pre-Muslim times of Indian history.⁴ As R.C. Majumdar aptly remarks : "Both in the theory and in its practical application, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* shows the high water-mark of historical knowledge reached by the ancient Hindus."⁵

*Professor of Social History & Former Director, IBS, Rajshahi University

With the commencement of the Muslim rule in India began the earliest exercise in Indian historiography. The number of historical chronicles produced in medieval India was in striking contrast to their paucity in the earlier period. The period constituted a seminal age in Indian historiography and added a new element to India's culture, viz. historical literature.⁶ The advent of Islam, writes Dodwell

begins a great series of Indian chronicles. Whereas Hindu history is a matter of archaeology, scrappy and almost incoherent, Muslim history possesses a wealth of documents which render it, if not complete, at least intelligible ... But the Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own (English) medieval chronicles. They are written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had been and taken part in the events they recount ... The Muslim period is one of vivid living men whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows.⁷

The Muslims had already an established practice in history-writing beginning from the ninth century A.D.⁸ Medieval Muslim historiography in India did not remain unchanged and static during the long period of more than one thousand years (711-1757). Pre-Mughal and Mughal histories had, of course, certain things in common, but they were cast in different moulds. Medieval Muslim historiography reflected mainly two distinct traditions of history writing — Arab and Persian.⁹ Early medieval Indo-Muslim historiography had certain characteristics. Firstly, it grew up in a tradition of Turko-Persian culture and largely bears the impress of Persian tradition of dynastic historiography rather than Arab tradition of history writing, the authors being either connected with royal court or solicitous of royal patronage. The Turkish conquests in India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries stimulated historical writings in Persian. Secondly, it was a projection of the general Muslim historiography growing up outside India. P. Hardy has described the period (1206-1440) as "a colonial period in Indo-Muslim historiography — a period when Muslim historians remained aloof within the civil lines of Muslim historical writings imitating the modes and manners of Arabic and Persian historians back at home ..."¹⁰ This was the approach followed by a long line of Indo-Persian chronicles viz.,

Minhaj-Us-Siraj (1200-1268), Ziauddin Barani (1285-1359) and others. Minhaj-Us-Siraj composed the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* in 1259-60 and traced the history of Muslim rule in India upto that period.¹¹ Barani continued the history of Muslim rule in India from the point where Minhaj-Us-Siraj stopped till the sixth regnal year of Feroz Tughlaq (1351-88).¹² Thirdly, the Indo-Muslim historians made history revolve round its 'great men' and deal with political problems and events. Works by Amir Khusrāu (1258-1325),¹³ Isami (b. 1311),¹⁴ Zia ud-din Barani (wr. 1358), Shams-i-Siraj Afif (b. 1342/wr. 15th c.),¹⁵ and Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi (wr. 1434-35)¹⁶ were considered to be the history of great men -- rulers, princes and nobles, and not of the lowly and the base -- not of the people. These works, according to Jagadish N. Sarkar, belong to the category of *manaqib* or *fazail* history or prose eulogy of rulers and individuals. According to him, Isami was the only chronicler who was above fear or favour of the Sultans.¹⁷

Mughal historiography reflected 'a distinctive Indian historical tradition.'¹⁸ The new distinctive form of historical writings and semi-historical literature of the Mughal age (16th through 18th centuries) may be grouped under the heads : (i) official records or court bulletins; (ii) official histories or chronicles; (iii) royal autobiographies and memoirs; and (iv) non-official or private histories or historical biographies. For the Mughal period (1526-1707), we have the official histories like the *Akbarnamah*,¹⁹ the *Ain-i-Akbari*,²⁰ *Padshahnamah*,²¹ and *Alamgirnamah*²² written by court historians during the reigns of Akbar (1556-1605), Shahjahan (1627-58), and partly under Aurangzeb (1758-1707) and Bahadur Shah (1707-12). These may be regarded as official biographical histories dealing with the achievements of the emperors concerned. Of all the Mughal historiographers, Abul Fazl (1551-1602), the court historian of Akbar and the author of *Akbarnamah*, comes nearest to the modern conception of a historian, though his approach to history was somewhat 'rex-centric.' Along with the *Ain-i-Akbari*, it gives a full picture of political affairs, the government, land revenue, social and economic condition of the country. The *Ain* appeared as an indispensable, and first-rate source book of pre-British

administrative system. The *Alamgirnarah* covers the first ten years of Aurangzeb's reign. The complete official history of the reign was written by Saqi Mustaid Khan (1710) long after his death.²³

The Timurides or the first few Mughals in India were highly educated and patrons of learning and literature. The memoirs produced by them differed from formal chronicles and constituted a most novel feature. They were written by members of royal family as well as by private persons. Among the royal autobiographies and memoirs mention may be made of : (i) *Baburnamah* or *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*,²⁴ *Humayunnama*,²⁵ *Tazkirat-ul-waqiat*,²⁶ *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*,²⁷ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*²⁸ and others. It may be pointed out here that some of the official histories, memoirs served as channels to secularise history writing in the Mughal period.

There are also the 'non-official' history or biographies written by some chroniclers who were either in imperial service or in the personal staff of some officer. It only means that none of such authors wrote to imperial order. In this group, the most important are the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*,²⁹ *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*³⁰ and *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*.³¹

It is important to point out here that during the many centuries when Bengal was a part of the Sultanate or Empire of Delhi, the only mention of the subah/province in the historical chronicles of Delhi occurred when something abnormal happened there. In fact, the Bengal affairs had no 'news value' to the royalty and the courtiers of Delhi.³² Hence no 'continuous history' of the Subah-i-Bangalah, Bang or the Province of Bengal or Bangladesh was written in Persian before *Riyaz-us-Salatin*. The *Riyaz-us-Salatin* was the first history on Bengal, written in Persian, by Ghulam Husain Salim in 1200 A.H. (1787-88) at the request of his English employer. The book was translated into English by Abdus Salam under the auspices of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta (1904).³³ It is regarded by some as a standard history of Bengal. It has been continuously quoted by Blochmann in his *Contributions to the History and Geography of Bengal*.³⁴ The *Riyaz* mainly deals with the history of the Muslim rule in Bengal

with a short introductory section on the Hindu period, which, in the opinion of R.C. Majumdar, is "full of absurd tales, myths and legends and worthless as history."³⁵ Whatever works exist in Persian dealing with Bengal affairs are historical biographies or memoirs. The *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* is a special history of Bengal during the reign of Jahangir (1605-27) written during the time of Shahjahan (1627-58) to the dictation of Mirza Nathan (entitled Shitab Khan, eldest son of Ihtimam Khan, Mir-i-Bahar [c.-in-c., Navy in Bengal during Jahangir's rule]), who was serving in Bengal all the time. It has been described by Jadunath Sarkar 'the only oasis' in this barren desert of historical ignorance.³⁶ Since the author was a self-conceited writer, claiming credit for himself for all successes, it has to be accepted with caution. However, it has great value since it gives a detailed account of the Mughal conquest and the occupation of Orissa, Bengal and Assam under Jahangir and of Khurram's (later emperor Shahjahan) rebellion in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It also refers to administrative practices and orders and to the extent of their implementation in a far off province as also to social customs and religious beliefs. We have also the *Tarikh-i-Shah Shuja* by the Shujaite historian Muhammad Ma'sum.³⁷ It gives an account of Prince Shuja's (Shahjahan's second son) governorship in Bengal (1639-60) and struggle with Mir Jumla (Subedar of Bengal 1660-63) in the war of succession, where the author was present as an eye witness. Besides, there is the diary (Travels) of Abdul Latif who accompanied Subedar Islam Khan (subedar, Governor of Bengal c. 1608-13 d. 1613) in 1609.³⁸ and the long and masterly diary *Tarikh-i-Asham* or *Fathiyyah-i-Ibriyyah* by Ibn Muhammad Wali Ahmad entitled Shihabuddin Talish (1663), the *Waqianavis* (news-writer) of Mir Jumla [Governor of Bengal (1660-63) and the conqueror of Assam], giving the most detailed and an eye-witness account in Persian of the campaigns of his master in the north-eastern India.³⁹ It is valuable not only for the military details but also for the vivid account of the country and the people of Assam. It was used in the *Alamgirnamah*.⁴⁰ Supplement to the above was added by Talish himself, giving the events in Bengal from Mir Jumla's death (1663) to the conquest of Chatgaon (Chittagong) in 1666 by Shaista Khan, Subedar of Bengal (1664-88).⁴¹ Among

other histories of Bengal in Persian, we have the *Tarikh-i-Bangalah* by Salimullah,⁴² *Tarikh-i-Daudi* by Abdullah,⁴³ *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana* by Ahmad Yadgar,⁴⁴ *Ahwal-i-Muhabat Jang* by Yusuf Ali⁴⁵ and the equally valuable personal records of Sayyid Karim Ali⁴⁶ and the most important *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* by Sayyid Ghulam Husain Tabatabai (b. 1727-28).⁴⁷ Here we shall discuss the importance of only two studies -- *Tarikh-i-Bangalah* and *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*. Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal (1760-64), employed Salimullah to write *Tarikh-i-Bangalah*, the history of Bengal. It was translated into English by Francis Gladwin under the title *A Narrative of Transactions in Bengal*. According to Jadunath Sarkar, the *Riyaz-us-Salatin* has mainly copied Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Bangalah*, and the copying has been done carelessly and, therefore, *Tarikh-i-Bangalah* as a source of history is preferable to the *Riyaz*.⁴⁸ The most popular and the best known among the contemporary Persian works by a Muslim historian on India in the eighteenth century was the *Siyar ul Mutakherin* (View of Modern Times) by Sayyid Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai in 1780. The book deals with the history of India from 1118 to 1194 A.H. / 1707-1780 A.D. and in particular gives specially detailed account of Bengal and Oudh affairs from 1738, to which the author has also added a critical examination of the government and policies of the East India Company there. R.C. Majumdar writes "The book may be regarded as the latest and at the same time the best history of India written by an Indian before the modern historiography made its influence felt in this country."⁴⁹ The value of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* lies in the fact that it fills in the gap that existed since the death of Emperor Aurangzeb (1707) to the year of its publication (1780). It covers the history of the independent Nawabs of Bengal from Murshid Quli Khan onwards.

About the value of Indo-Muslim medieval historical writings, opinions have differed. Though all these works supplemented or contradicted each other's contents, and are the only source materials for the reconstruction of history of Muslim rule in India/Bengal, the medieval Indian Muslim historians were deficient in critical acumen. They have been accused of being

recorders first and researchers afterwards. According to Grunebaum,

Historiography (in medieval Islam) did not set out to tell the saga of the evolution of society, nor did it wish to judge and interpret The reader was left to draw his own conclusions. The historian merely furnished the material.⁵⁰

According to Hardy,

history was a repetition of 'authoritative' known material, not a discovery of unknown data. The historian became a conduit, not a creator; he accepted without question; he transmitted information but did not transmute it in his own mind.⁵¹

An apologist of British rule in India, Sir Henry Elliot (1808-53) did not possess any high opinion of these works and held these to be "for the most part, dull, prejudiced, ignorant and superficial," and 'deficient in some of the most essential requisites of history'.⁵² On the other hand, Major W.N. Lees (1825-89, a well-known Oriental and Arabic scholar, Principal of Calcutta Madrasa, 1857-69) held that notwithstanding some limitations, he did not 'coincide in opinion with those who estimated as of little worth the large body of historical works'.⁵³ In fact, the Muslim historians were not capable of writing objective and analytical history and as such write neither any regional history nor the history of the land and the people. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of these works, the historical writings on India by the Muslim authors, however, extended well into the eighteenth century.

Thus what we find is that history was treated more as a biographical or political history material -- narratives of empire-building, imperial wars and peace, and the operation of a despotic government -- than as a sociological factor. Further, the complete silence of Mughal official historians about the social conditions of the people creates doubts about their being histories in the modern sense of the term.

With the downfall of the imperial Muslim power in India, a change occurred in the personnels of history writing on India. The task was taken up by the English writers -- East India Company officials, administrators, civil servants, politicians, missionary and historians -- from the middle of the eighteenth century. The first English writers on Indian history possessed very little knowledge of Ancient India, and though they had fairly developed ideas of historiography, their accounts of Ancient India were very poor and sometimes even 'ridiculous.' Therefore, upto the middle of the nineteenth century, the history of ancient India was treated in a very summary way and mainly as a background of the history of the Muslim and British periods. Things were different as regards medieval India. The Englishmen had a fair knowledge of the Indian histories written by the Muslims, and had interest in and capacity to write history on Bengal and India.

As said earlier, the English carried on the task of writing Indian history of the Muslims in the late Eighteenth century. Robert Orme (1728-1801) wrote *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the Year 1745* and published it in 1764. He was in the Company's service since 1743 and worked as the historiographer of the East India Company from 1769 to 1801. He published another work in 1782 under the title *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire, of the Marattoes and of the English Concerns in Indostan* from the year M.DC. LIX.

Robert Orme was an eye-witness of the events recorded in his *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan* from the year 1745, and therefore, it is treated as a source book even today and subsequent writers freely drew upon it. His information on the Mughals and Marathas was derived partly from his personal investigations and partly from secondary sources. He collected considerable source materials in the shape of printed books, tracts and documents which are now preserved in the India Office Library, London. His treatment of the Muslim ruling dynasties in India is fairly good, but he seems to have had

sketchy information about the Hindu rule in India regarding which his opinions such as

The Indians have lost all memory of the ages in which they began to believe in Vishnu, Isvara, Brahma and a hundred thousand divinities subordinate to these The history of these gods is a heap of the greatest absurdities.⁵⁴

reflect the English attitude to ancient Indian religions.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, another English historian, William Robertson published his *Historical Disquisition* concerning the knowledge which the ancients had of India, in 1792. The study was based on the works of classical writers. His statements in many places of the book are not well-founded historically. But as an early attempt, his venture at knowing ancient India is praiseworthy.

James Mill was the first great historian of modern India. He was a prolific writer and founder of Philosophical Radicalism in Europe. His *History of British India* was published in 1818. The book received wide commendation and enjoyed popularity for a long time. Macaulay spoke of it "as the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon."⁵⁵ But the Indians resented his denunciation of ancient Indian culture; the English did not like his unsympathetic criticism of British Indian rulers like Warren Hastings.

The ground for historical research in modern India was laid by the European scholars towards the end of the eighteenth century. The pioneering step in this was taken by Sir William Jones (1746-94), the British orientalist, who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta in 1784. James Mill made free use of the researches of Sir William Jones and other researchers in the compilation of his *History of British India*. But he often differed from Sir William Jones in assigning a high state of civilization to India in ancient times. He writes "... Sir William Jones was actuated by the virtuous design of exalting the Hindus in the eyes of their European masters."⁵⁶

James Mill appears to have not been biased by racial and colour prejudices towards the Muslims of India like most of the English writers who enjoyed a feeling of victory whenever they could wound the Muslim sentiment. He thus makes a statement of fact that "it will not admit of any long dispute that human nature in India gained, and gained very considerably, by passing from a Hindu to a Muslim Government."⁵⁷

Sir John Malcolm's *Political History of India* was published in 1826. Peter Auber, in his book, *Rise and Progress of the British Power in India*, published in 1837, gave vent to his anti-Muslim feeling in an unpardonable way. He devoted only one page to Hindu period and described the Muslims as "scourge of human race."⁵⁸ Such an attitude to the Muslims, who were till then the master of India would only represent the general feeling of the English for the Muslims.

Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) published his *History of India* in 1839 dealing with the Hindu and Muslim periods. He arrived in India in 1795 as a writer in the Company's service at the age of 16. He retired as Governor of Bombay in 1827. He was well-acquainted with the technique of modern historiography as it developed in the west. He started the history of the Hindus from the compilation of the Rigveda which he fixed at the fourteenth century before Christ. His attempt to fix the later chronology of the Indian history follows the modern method and his approximate dating of different ruling dynasties and reigns are not materially different from what is now generally accepted. His book was the result of much laborious study and research and was hailed as a great work. His treatment of political history is very meagre and somewhat uncritical.

Elphinstone studied Indian history — ancient and medieval — with a feeling of sympathy and was of the view that India's regeneration should not allow sharp break with India's past. He attempted to see medieval Muslim India in the round. The Rajputs, the Marathas and the Sikhs formed as essential a part of his story as the Indo-Muslim 'nation'. The racial composition of the Indo-Muslims, their natural characteristics, their attitude towards the non-Muslims of India, the influence of Indian

environment on the government, administration, language, social customs, religious beliefs and practices, the effect of the Muslim conquest on the Hindus and the influence of Islam on Hinduism -- all these aspects of medieval Indian history had as much interested Elphinstone as the war, government, literature, arts and prosperity of the Indo-Muslims. Although he had seen the Hindu and Muslim 'nations' as means of two markedly different civilizations, yet for him the significance of medieval Indian history lay in Hindu-Muslim rapprochement. He regarded Akbar as the creator of a 'national' state in India.

Henry Elliot as an historian suffered from imperialistic pretensions and presented medieval India as a gloomy phase of Indian history. His Biographical Index to the *Historians of Muhammadan India* was published in 1849. Elliot held poor opinion about the native chroniclers of medieval India, since they gave no account of social, political and religious institutions. Furthermore, he accused them of willful glossing over the effects of Muslim despotism on the non-Muslim subjects. "Not his scholarship so much as his contemptuous approach and hostile attitude mark off Elliot from the bulk of his predecessors on medieval India."⁵⁹

Henry Elliot was followed in the writing of the history of India by a large number of English writers who incorporated many information in their works collected from personal experience. They also supply many interesting contemporary views of men and things which we miss in later writings. All these books belong to the first half of the nineteenth century and may well be divided into two broad categories, viz., those dealing with Indian history in general and those dealing with regions.

In the first category belong the following works by R. Montgomery Martin :

1. *History of the Possessions of the Honourable East India Company* (2 vols., 1837).
2. *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern Bengal* (2 vols., London, 1838).

3. *The Indian Empire - Its History, Topography, Government, Finance, Commerce and Staple products with a full account of the Mutiny of Native Troops and an Exposition of the Social and Religious state of one hundred million subjects of the crown of England.* (3 vols., London, 1879-81).

The second category includes some standard authorities on the subject dealing with the regions and peoples and forms the main source of informations of subsequent writers. A few of these are :

1. Francis Buchanan Hamilton (comp. 1807), *Account of Assam*.
2. James Grant Duff (1789-1858), *History of the Mahrattas* (1826).
3. James Tod (1782-1835), *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829-32).
4. Stirling, *History of Orissa* (1846).
5. Macgregor, *History of the Sikhs* (1846).
6. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (1849).
7. Charles Stewart (1764-1837), *History of Bengal - from Muslim conquest to conquest of that country in 1757* (London 1813).
8. Marshman (1794-1877), *History of Bengal* (1838).

The development of Indian historiography in the second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by two major attitudes : (1) Critical study of books and documents; and (2). Discovery and study of the old inscriptions and monuments by archaeological explorations and excavations.

Organized attempts were made both by the government and private individuals, and institutions to make regular search for old manuscripts and publish descriptive catalogues of them. Preparation and publication of critical annotation of old texts and English translations were undertaken by individuals and institutions. The role of the Asiatic Society of Bengal was praiseworthy in this undertaking. Hundreds of articles were

published in the journal of the society and a large number of books on Indian history were published in the *Bibliotheca Indica* Series. German scholars took up the study of the history of India and its culture and published scholarly works on ancient India. Friedrich Max Muller wrote his *History of Sanskrit Literature* in 1859. He is also credited with the founding of the *Sacred Books of the East* Series.

The influence of these studies on historiography was tremendous. Henry Beveridge (1837-1929) wrote his *A Comprehensive History of India, Civil, Military and Social*, from the first landing of the English to the suppression of the Sepoy Revolt including an outline of Early History of Hindustan. The book was in three volumes and was published during 1858-62. He claims in the preface that the book was the product of research and that he observed strict impartiality in writing the book. Beveridge had, however, a poor opinion about Hinduism as a religion, although he held Hindu scholarship in high esteem. He was somewhat free from the imperial sentiments that characterized the works of Henry Elliot and V.A. Smith. He was critical of the British policy in India and criticized Hasting's treatment of Nanda Kumar and the annexation of the Native states of India by Dalhousi.

Indian historiography entered a new phase after Beveridge with the discovery of inscriptions and their decipherment and also their use as a source material of history. James Princep (1799-1840) discovered the key to the understanding of the Brahmi script in which the ancient Indian inscriptions were written. These revealed new materials for ancient Indian history. "Thus for the first time the historians of ancient India got a solid core of facts, arranged in chronological order, and the evidence of inscriptions was supplemented by ancient coins and monuments."⁶⁰

Alexander Cunningham (1814-1894), who arrived in India as an army cadet in 1833 and retired from the army as Major-General in 1861, was appointed the first archaeological surveyor; he held this post from 1861 to 1865. He was Director of the Department of Archaeology from 1870 to 1885. Besides carrying

excavation, Cunningham wrote notes and discussions on many historical matters in the course of his tour across the subcontinent. He also wrote *Ancient Geography of India*, published two volumes on the two great Stupas of Sanchi and Bharhut and edited the Asoka inscriptions.

Thus before the closing of the nineteenth century, Indian historiography underwent yet another development as a result of the discovery of archaeological sources. These coupled with the developed ideas of modern historiography from the west laid the basis of subsequent history-writing in India. The early attempts in this new epoch were those taken by J.F. Fleet, who wrote the *Dynasties of Kanarese Districts* in 1896 and R.G. Bandarkar, who published his *Early History of the Deccan* in 1895.

Historical writings of the Christian missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries substantially enriched Indian historiography. Charles Grant (not a missionary himself, but was an important personality in the missionary circle) wrote his *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* about the year 1792 (n.d.). He was very critical of Hinduism. The people of India, in his opinion, were in a 'degenerate' condition and Hinduism was the chief cause of this. Dishonesty, perjury, selfishness, social divisions, sexual vice, the low position of women -- all these evils, Grant considered, to be the result of Hinduism. He did not spare the Muslims either, but he called them 'a bolder people'. He was as well critical of the British rule. In his opinion, Bengal was in a much better state under the last two Mughal Viceroys, Murshid Quli Khan (1717-27) and Shujauddin Khan (1727-40) than it had been under British rule.⁶¹

Thirty years after the accession of Mir Jafar "the country and the people were not in so good a condition as that in which we found them."⁶² Though it appears that Grant was sympathetic to the cause of the Indians, he had in view the communication of Christianity to British possessions in the East. By his criticism of the British rule, he wanted to emphasize that Britain owed a debt to India which she should discharge by promoting western education in the English language and thus facilitating the

spread of Christianity. The subsequent missionary historians of India tended to regard the history of India as part of some divine plan in which Britain had an important function of fulfil.

W. Ward wrote his *A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos* : Including a Minute Description of their Manners and Customs, and Traditions from their principal works in four volumes (3rd ed.; London, 1817-20), wherein he thanked God for placing the subcontinent under the British Government.

J.C. Marshman (1794-1877) who at the request of the Calcutta University, wrote *The History of India from the Earliest Period to the Close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration* (3 vols; London, 1867) also believed in the Providential will for placing Britain in charge of the administration of India. G.U. Pope wrote his *A Text-Book of Indian History* (1880). He was confident of the impossibility of a resurgence of Indian national power and concluded that "India's life in future must be identified with that of the PAPAMOUNT POWER."⁶³

J.C. Marshman, however, was critical like Charles Grant of some aspects of British rule in India, particularly the economic and taxation policy. He approved the Permanent Settlement but added that in general

Cornwallis was not able to advance beyond the traditional creed of England, that all her colonial and foreign possessions were to be administered primarily and emphatically for her benefit. No effort was to be spared to secure the protection, the improvement and the happiness of the people; but it was with an eye exclusively to the credit and the interest of the governing power.⁶⁴

He was of the opinion that the revenue demands of the British Government from the natives were excessive and criticized the exclusion of Indians from responsible posts, commenting at length that "... it would be difficult to discover in history another instance of this ostracism of a whole people."⁶⁵

The missionary historians treated the Indian Mutiny as a human case and accused the British Government of ruthless

atrocities. Thus G.U. Pope, writing in 1880, was able to suggest that the British had not been guiltless of atrocities. Concerning Cawnpore massacre he remarked that "Circumstances like these account for, while they cannot justify, the indiscriminate slaughter that too often disgraced the British soldiers at this maddening crisis."⁶⁶

Nineteenth century historiography on Persian chronicles, specially of Ferishta was translated by Alexander Dow (1768-1872), Jonathan Scott and John Briggs. Elliot's *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, in eight volumes (1861-77) made the English translation of important passages of these texts available to English historians. On the other hand, the task of historians of ancient India was harder in the absence of such ready-made source materials.

The development of scientific history writing in the nineteenth century was initiated by Niebuhr and Ranke, the two great historians of Europe. Niebuhr (1776-1831) evolved some fundamental principles while writing the history of Rome. He made a critical examination of the sources and credibility of the early Roman history and rejected much of the narrative that was till his time accepted as history. According to him, the writing of history was a sacred task performed "in the sight of God."

Ranke, the other great representative of modern historiography, applied to modern history those tests which Niebuhr applied to ancient history. The beginning of the critical era of historiography is generally held to date from the publication of his first work, *Histories of the Romance (Latin) and Teutonic Peoples* (1824). To him the nearest witness to an event was the best. He assessed carefully both the source materials as well as the writer himself, particularly with reference to the motive of the latter. It is well-known that medieval Muslim historiography of India suffered from distortion and suppression of facts due to selfish motives of the chroniclers.

English writers of the nineteenth century on India professed to be married to the high ideals innunciated by Niebuhr and

Ranke. In practice, however, their role was otherwise. Since most of the historians were Englishmen once in the service of the Company, it was their deliberate policy to write for perpetuating the British rule in India. With this end in view, most of them used their pen for widening the difference between the Muslims and Hindus of India. In fact, ex-civilians like Elliot, Dowson, Briggs and others were encouraged to write about the history of Muslim rule in India "as an age of Muslim tyranny over the Hindus." James Grant Duff in his *History of the Mahrattas* (1826) and James Tod in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829-32) highlighted the Maratha and the Rajput resistance to Muslim rule. This only added to the division in the population of India which only served to widen the differences between the Muslims and the Hindus and perpetuate the British rule in India.

So far we have emphasized the development of Indian historiography in general. Now let us turn to the development of British historiography of Bengal in the nineteenth century. Actually the foundation of modern Bengal historiography was laid in the nineteenth century by a handful of civilian and missionary writers, some of whom have already been mentioned. The civilian and missionary writers who were the pioneers in the Bengal historiography were (1) Charles Stewart (1764-1837), John Clark Marshman (1794-1877), Henry Ferdinand Blockmann (1838-1878), William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900), and Henry Beveridge (1837-1929). Writing history was their self-inflicted part-time occupation, yet amazingly their writings were voluminous and distinctive. They wrote both at trans-regional and regional levels.⁶⁷

Charles Stewart's work⁶⁸ was based upon Persian sources. This was the first work in English that was ever written on the subject and it held its ground as the standard work until 1948 when *History of Bengal*, vol. II, edited by Jadunath Sarkar, was published by the Dhaka University. J.C. Marshman, in the compilation of the study,⁶⁹ seemed to have consulted the published works in English then existing on the subject. The work presents a brief and simple outline of the History of Bengal

from the Vaidya dynasty to the close of Lord William Bentinck's administration, H.F. Bockmann⁷⁰ was an oriental scholar. He was finally the Principal of Calcutta Madrasah during 1870-78. From the list of Sir W.W. Hunter's publications,⁷¹ it appears that early in his career the history of Bengal was his main field of investigation. It becomes apparent from the various works that the author attempted to tap unexplored materials and give a fresh interpretation to Indian history by depicting the historical growth of the people of Bengal and then to trace the early effects of British rule on the state of society. The main characteristics and principal concerns of his writings were to depict in vivid colours affairs in Bengal, in his own words, 'when the scepter departed from the Mussulman race.'⁷² Hunter projected the Muslims as the true preceptors and predecessors of the English and this prompted him to advocate special treatment for this Muslim community by British Indian government who were distinct from the Hindus for whom the English occupation of the country was never more than a change of masters and who adapted themselves easily with the changed circumstances. But for the Muslims, Hunter advocated, the position was different. They lost a throne and bore particular grudge against the English. Therefore, 'the Bengal Muhammadans, the superior race' refused a system which gave them no advantages over the people whom they have so long ruled,' and 'are now shut out equally from government employ and from the higher occupations of non-official life.'⁷³ Hunter, therefore, favoured that the British rule should be adapted to the real Muslims' situation. Henry Beveridge spent 35 years of his Indian career as a civilian in various districts of Bengal and retired as a District and Session Judge. Unlike other historians, who were mainly stationed in Calcutta, his understanding of the people was more wide and direct. His first publication was about a district of Eastern Bengal.⁷⁴ He lived more than 35 years after retirement (1893), and from the list of Beveridge's writings before 1895 it becomes clear that the overwhelming theme of his literary labours was events in Bengal history.⁷⁵

Bengal Historiography in Late Nineteenth Century

British and other European historians, as has been discussed above, developed in the nineteenth century an "imperialist" historiography of the Indian subcontinent which was first imitated and then reacted against by the Bengali historians. Indeed, the nineteenth century witnessed not only the beginning of Bengali consciousness about self-identity,⁷⁶ but also the beginning of modern Bengali historiography. Two specific factors seemed to have been at work in preparing the ground for the rise of Bengali historiography in the nineteenth century. In the first place, the impact of colonial rule and the attitude of English historians such as, James Mill, Henry Elliot and others towards the Indian/Bengali races wounded the pride and vanity of the Bengali people. Secondly, the introduction of western education through the medium of English provided for the Bengalis an access to western knowledge and learning. As a result, the educated segment of the society, the emergent middle class and the elite group created through the new system of education under colonial rule were the first to imbibe the spirit of western nationalism and afterward pay the colonial rulers in their own coins. Hence, it has been claimed latter that the Indian nationalism was 'the product of the British Raj.' The first batch of Bengali historians belonged to this segment of western educated elite group and middle class intellectuals, and they began writing of history first by imitating the traditions, methodologies and works of the western scholars and historians they were familiar with. In their mission, they seemed to have been influenced by two schools of thought : conservative and liberal. The first school, led by H.T. Colebrooke, upheld the glories of ancient culture and civilization and vehemently opposed western intrusion into them. The other school under the influence of utilitarians like James Mill preferred British domination of India for improving the Indian society through a series of paternalistic reforms. Thus the colonial rule and the resultant impact prepared the ground for making an effort to retrieve the glories of the past with the aim of redressing the contemporary situation. Thus the nineteenth century nationalism projected itself towards

the past as well as towards the future. These aspects and phases of nascent nationalism were reflected in contemporary historiography. In producing such a type of historiography, the historians in India or Bengal could not, of course, claim any originality or uniqueness. In fact, historiography under colonial domination anywhere in the world reveals similar characteristics.⁷⁷ Thus the Bengali historians initially followed and imitated the available western model in the absence of an indigenous tradition of historiography.⁷⁸

The historians of the 19th century belonged to the western educated emergent middle class and hence could not think or write about the common masses and thus were silent about peasant resistance movements challenging the British rule. They were more interested in writing about past glories, religious traditions and social rejuvenation of their communities. Some of them even supported the British rule and many of their exploitative measures. We find that even Raja Rammohan Roy (1774-1833) and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894), regarded as the harbingers of Indian nationalism, never raised any voices against the Permanent Settlement (1793), despite the unwelcome impact of its introduction, as opposition to Permanent Settlement meant to them opposing the British rule and creating serious chaos in the Bengali society.⁷⁹ Even Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was in favour of maintaining the status quo of the middle class social structure. The nineteenth century Bengali historians thus shared such a view and it reflected in their writings.

The nineteenth century Bengali historiography may be divided into two periods : Pre and Post 1870. The period prior to 1870 may perhaps be called one of imitation, that is during this first phase, the Bengali historians followed the western methodology and the beaten paths of the English historians.⁸⁰ *Bangalar Itihasa* (History of Bengal, 1848) by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, *Bharatvarser Itihasa* (History of India, 1858) by Nilmoni Basak, and *Murshidabader Itihas* (History of Murshidabad, 1854) and many others may be mentioned in this

category. A slight departure was made by Rajkrishna Mukherjee in his small book, *Prathama Siksa Bangalar Itihasa* (First lessons in the History of Bengal 1874) which were considered to be an independent and concise work offering an unbiased account of Bengal with emphasis on society and the people rather than on kings and Emperors.⁸¹ Besides, the preliminary attempts by Bengali historians were in the form of translation of some major school texts. This included *History of England* by Goldsmith, and *A Brief Survey of History* by Marshman and others. *Pratapaditya Charita* by Ram Ram Bose (1801) was probably the first history in print authored by a Bengali.⁸²

At this stage of development of historiography there were people who thought of the importance of history. The lead was given by Krishna Mohan Banerjee who considered that one of the ways to develop national consciousness was to study history.⁸³

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Bengali historiography passed on to a further stage of development. The educated and the intellectual segment of the Bengali society refused to take the history of his country from foreigners uncritically. The spirit of criticism took the place of blind imitation or half-hearted defence of his religion or society against the foreigner's attacks.⁸⁴

The spirit of criticism in works of Indian history by foreigners and a feeling of pride, love and appreciation of the good in the country's past led directly to a new investigation of the sources by a number of historians and scholars. This may be called the period of inquiry in Bengali historiography.

The lead was given by Rajani Kanta Gupta (1848-1900) who authored *Sipahi Yuddher Itihas* (History of the Sepoy War, 1876) in five volumes. He depended for his materials on European writers no doubt, but he used and interpreted them in his own way. He presented that the Indians were loyal to the British, but it was the misrule of the Company which provoked the rebellion. He vigorously criticised the territorial policy of Dalhousie, condemned the brutal and high-handed conduct of British

soldiers and high-lighted the characters of Rani of Jhansi, Nana Sahib and others. His essays on historical events especially on personalities, published in the contemporary Bengali Journal *Bangabasi* were subsequently collected and published in a book entitled *Aryya-Kirtti* (The activities of the Aryans). The nature of the subjects chosen for these two works and the method followed in their treatment prove that the aim of Rajani Kanta Gupta was

... to create and develop in the Indians in general and the Bengalis in particular a national consciousness, a sense of self-respect, and a feeling of pride for all that was good and honourable, chivalrous, and glorious in their country's history.⁸⁵

However, like most of the nineteenth century Bengali Hindu historians he also had a liking for the good old days, British rule and disliking for the Muslim rule. According to him, the Aryan civilization was the golden age in Indian history;⁸⁶ and Muslim rule was replete with instances of 'oppression and injustice'.⁸⁷

In this period one of the first persons to address himself to professional historiography was Akshay Kumar Dutt (1820-1886). His *Bharatvarsiya Upasak Samrady* (vol. I, 1870; vol. II, 1883) was the first publication based on rigorous research findings. In writing this book, Dutt followed H. Wilson's *A Sketch of the Hindus* with the difference that he discussed 103 religious sects while Wilson only 43.⁸⁸ Akshay Kumar's perception vis-à-vis history had, like Bankim Chandra, two important features : (i) he accepted British rule as something providential, and (ii) he also looked to past legends to glorify his own race.⁸⁹ Accordingly, observers find in him somewhat communal overtones when he accepted British rule as a welcome alternative to Muslim rule.⁹⁰

One of the great forces behind the transformation of Bengali historiography from imitation to reaction was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and his paper *Bangadarsana*. Though he was not a historian in a professional sense, Bankim Chandra, more than any one else, deeply felt the absence of historical works in Bengal and exhorted every Bengali to address himself to the duty of writing history of Bengal.⁹¹ His essays on various aspects of the history of Bengal published in *Bangadarsana* during 1874-84

were a source of inspiration to the rapidly expanding, self-conscious intelligentsia of Bengal. Bankim's historical writings contain three types of influence - ancient Indian heritage, contemporary European historiography, and writings of contemporary Bengali historians.⁹² The purpose and objective of his writings was to seek glories in the past achievements of his race and promote Hindu revivalism, which subsequently prepared the ground of the Swadeshi Movement at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Like Rajendralal Mitra (1822-1891), Bankim also welcomed the British domination as a providential inevitability and as a relief from Muslim misrule. But it would not be justified to project him in a communal perspective. In his essay *Bangadesher Krishak*, he narrated the sufferings of two peasants, one Hindu and the other Muslim -- Rama Kaiwartya and Hashim Sheikh -- with equal sympathy.

The first to respond to the call of Bankim was Akshay Kumar Maitra (1861-1930) whose book *Sirajuddaula*, published in 1898, was an outstanding piece of historical work. It once drew attention of another dominating personality of the day, Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941). Akshay Kumar, in Tagore's opinion, ushered in a new era of 'independence' in Bengali historiography.⁹³ His other historical works were *Sitaram Rai* (1898) and *Mir Kasim* (1906). In all these studies, he discussed the history of the period between the end of Muslim rule and the beginning of British rule.

Akshay Kumar Maitra had a global perspective of history. He was unhappy with the disjointed histories of human groups all over the world. He was inclined to view experience of humanity in the totality of global history. As such he advocated for a scientific methodology in historical writing. To him, history was synonymous with truth for the quest of which a historian must rise above any bias for his community, country and religion.⁹⁴ This perspective explains the success he achieved as a non-communal historian in *Sirajuddaula* and *Mir Kasim*. With this objective in view he, with a band of scholars and historians

founded the Varendra Research Society and Museum at Rajshahi in 1910.⁹⁵

Like Akshay Kumar Maitra, Nikhil Nath Roy was another historian in the area of non-communal and secular historiography. The most distinguishing feature of his writings was that for the revival of Hinduism and glory of his race, he did not turn back to past glories but referred to Muslim rule in Bengal.⁹⁶

One of the pioneers in the field of economic nationalist historiography was Ramesh Chandra Dutt (1848-1909). He was influenced by western liberal historiography and British political economic thinking. His works directly influenced the economic programme of the Swadeshi activists. His important publications include : *The Peasantry of Bengal* (1874), *The Literature of Bengal* (1877), *History of Civilization of Ancient India* (1889-90), *England and India* and *Economic History of India* (1902/1904). Land revenue appeared to him to be the most important aspect of the economic history of an agricultural country like India. Though he was critical of the exploitative nature of British rule, but never he could think of ending British rule in India. He seemed to work hard for creating public opinion in favour of India in the liberal British circle.

Haraprasad Shastri (1853-1931) was one of the great pioneers in the writing of history by marshalling information from ancient manuscripts. He collected some 11,530 ancient manuscripts from various places in India and Nepal and deposited them with the Asiatic Society. While for Bankim, regeneration of the Hindu race depended on reading and writing of history, for Haraprasad, it was searching and reading of ancient history.⁹⁷ These galaxy of historians were followed by a number of historians like Rama Prasad Chanda (1873-1942), Rakhal Das Banerjee (1885-1930), Sir Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1958), R.C. Majumdar (1888-1980), Nihar Ranjan Roy (1903-1981), A.B.M. Habibullah (1911-1984), Md. Abdul Karim (1928-) and others who prepared the ground for the development of modern historiography in the twentieth century.

Conclusions

From a review of the background of Historical Research in Bangladesh in the 19th century, the following conclusions may be drawn :

- i) The historical research in Bangladesh is a legacy of the past;
- ii) The development of historical research in Bangladesh is inseparable from that of India as a whole;
- iii) With the exception of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (History of Kashmir) no work worth historical merit is known to exist from pre-Muslim times of Indian history;
- iv) The plethora of historical chronicles produced in medieval India was in striking contrast to their paucity in the earlier period;
- v) Medieval Indian Muslim historians were deficient in critical acumen. They have been accused of being recorders first and researchers afterwards;
- vi) The conception of history enlarged both in width and depth during the modern period beginning with British rule;
- vii) The histories of India written by British authors suffer from the fact that they blindly accepted the official version and wrote from an imperialistic point of view;
- viii) As regards the Indian historians, the chief defect arose from national sentiments and patriotic fervour which magnified the virtues and minimised the defects of their own people. It was partly a reaction against undue depreciation of the Indians in the writings of British historians like Mill, and partly an effect of the growth of national consciousness and a desire for improvement in their political status.⁹⁸
- ix) The Bengal historians of late nineteenth century prepared the ground for historical research in Bengal/Bangladesh in the twentieth century.

Footnotes and References

1. It was from Bengal (occupied in 1757) that the British started expansion and raised the superstructure of British Empire (1757-1947) in India. Bengal, the most important Presidency/Province, was divided into Eastern and Western Bengal between Pakistan and India at the time of independence in August 1947, and the Province of Eastern Bengal or the Eastern Wing of Pakistan emerged as sovereign independent state in 1971.
2. The foundations of Indological studies were laid in Bengal by Sir William Jones and his colleagues. This small band of scholars formed the Asiatic Society of Bengal on 15 January 1784 "for enquiring into the history and antiquities, the arts, the sciences and literature of Asia." The Asiatic Society, or the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal as it came to be celebrated later, proved a great success right from the beginning. The founders, as well as the others who subscribed to the objectives of the Society proved indefatigable explorers, researchers and authors. The numerous tracts and essays published in the *Asiatic Researches* and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (first published in 1834) provide an eloquent proof of their achievements in unveiling the subcontinent's past (For details see, *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. I, Varanasi : Bharat-Bharati, 1972).
3. C.H. Philips, in his introduction, opines that "the Hindu peoples of Ancient India had no sense of history" and hence the first four papers in the study by R.C. Majumdar, L.S. Perera, A.K. Warder and A.L. Basham drew attention to the remarkable dearth of historical writing in the period down to 1000 A.D. C.H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London : Oxford University press, 1961, pp. 4 and 13-65.
4. The Kashmir historian, Kalhana, stands alone among the Hindu historians, ancient and medieval, and not withstanding some defects, occupies an honourable place among the historians of ancient and medieval periods. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *History of History-Writing in Medieval India : Contemporary Historians*, Calcutta : Ratna Prakashan, 1977, p. 2.

5. R.C. Majumdar, "Ideas of History in Sanskrit Literature," in C.H. Philips (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 13-28.
6. Jagadish N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
7. H. Dodwell, *India*, Vol. I, 1936, pp. 22-24.
8. "Historiography was an acquired characteristic in Islam." For details, see Jagadish N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-29.
9. Arab historiography had a wide range covering society, institutions, politics and culture, in a word, the history of the age. Persian historiography had a narrower limit, the history of the rulers. *Ibid.*
10. P. Hardy, "Some Studies in Pre-Mughal Muslim Historiography," in C.H. Philips (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 15-27.
11. Minhaj-us-Siraj (1200-1268, in Bengal during 1242-44 for collection of materials for the book), *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, text in Bibliotheca Indica Series, Eng. tr. by Maj. Raverty, 1873-81; Elliot & Dowson, *History of India as told by its Own Historians*, (8 vols), 1867-77, vol. II, pp. 239-383.
12. Zia-ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (wr. 1358), text in Bib. Ind. Eng. tr. in Elliot vol. III, JASB, 1869.
13. Amir Khusrau, *Qiran us Sadain*, ed. Muhammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918; E. & D. vol. III.
14. Abdul Malek Isami (b. 1311) *Futul-us-Salatin* (wr. 1349-50) text ed. by A. Mahdi Husain, Agra, 1938.
15. Shams-i-Siraj Afif (b. 1342), *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (wr. 15th c.) ed. M.W. Husain text in Bib. Ind., Calcutta 1888-91, Eng. tr. in Elliot, vol. III 1890.
16. Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi (wr. 1434-35), *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, text in Bib. Ind. Eng. tr. by K.K. Bose, 1931.
17. Jagadish N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
18. H.A.R. Gib. Article on Tarikh in *Encyclopaedia Islam*, supplement, 1938, pp. 239-425; quoted *Ibid.*, p. 37.
19. Abul Fazl Allami, *Akbarnamah*, 3 vols. text Bib. Ind., 1878-86, Eng. tr. by H. Beveridge, 1902.

20. -----, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 3 vols., Eng. tr. by Blockmann & Jarrett, 1873-94 (vol. II for Bengal), Bib. Ind., 1877; revised by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta, 1949.
21. Abdul Hamid Lahori (d. 1654-55), *Padshahnamah*, ed. by M. Kabiruddin and M.A. Rahman, 2 vols. Bib. Ind., Calcutta 1866-72, Elliot & Dowson, VII, 3-72.
22. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnamah*, ed. by M. Khadim Husain and M. Abdul Hai, Bib. Ind., Calcutta 1865-73, E. & D., VII, 174-80.
23. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* (wr. 1710) Bib. Ind. 1873, tr. by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta, 1947.
24. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur (1486-1530), *Baburnamah or Tuzuk-i-Baburi*, 3 vols. Eng. tr. by (i) Leyden & Erskine, 2 vols., (ii) Mrs. Beveridge, London, 1921 : Reprint New Delhi, 1972, also E. & D. IV, 218-87.
25. Gulbadan Begum (Babur's daughter, 1523-1603), *Humayunnamah* (wr. 1587) text ed. and tr. Mrs. A.S. Beveridge, London : Royal Asiatic Society, 1902.
26. Jauhar Aftabchi (Humayun's ewer-bearer), *Tazkirat-ul-Wagiat* (wr. 1586-87) Eng. tr. by C. Stewart, in O.T.F. 1832; E. & D. V, pp. 136-149.
27. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Eng. tr. M.I. Broah, Gauhati, 1936.
28. Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir (1569/1605-1627), *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, text ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, 1863-64; Standard Tr. A Rogers & H. Beveridge (Memoirs of Jahangir), 2 vols. London, 1909-14; Reprint, New Delhi, 1968.
29. Khwajah Nizam ud-din Ahmad Bakshi (d. 1594), *Tabagat-i-Akbari* (wr. 1592-94) Text, & Eng. tr. Bib. Ind., 1927.
30. Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni (1540-1615), *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Bib. Ind., 3 vols., Calcutta, 1865-69, Eng. tr. by Ranking (1898), Lowe (1924), and Haig (1925), E. & D. V, 477-549.
31. Mulla Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah surnamed Ferishta (1570-1923), *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*, better known as *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (wr. 1619-20), Eng. tr. by Briggs.

32. Jadunath Sarkar, *The History of Bengal*, vol. II (Muslim Period, 1204-1757), Dhaka : University of Dhaka, 1948, Second Impression, 1972, p. 503.
33. Ghulam Hussian Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin* (wr. 1787-88), Text and Eng. tr. by Abdus Salam, Bib. Ind. 1898 (1904).
34. H.F. Blochmann, *Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1968.
35. R.C. Majumdar, *Historiography in Modern India*, London : Asia Publishing House, 1970, p. 6.
36. *The Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* was brought to light by Jadunath Sarkar in 1919 and translated into English by Dr. M.L. Borah and published by Assam government (Gauhati, 1936); Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 503.
37. Muhammad Ma'sum, *Tarikh-i-Shah Shuja*, India Office Library, Ms. copy in Sarkar collection, National Library, Calcutta ; OPL Ms. in Jadunath Sarkar Number), *Bengal Past and Present*, 1970.
38. Abdul Latif, *Travels*, Eng. tr. by J. Sarkar in J.B. & J.R.S. and *Bengal Past and Present*, 1970; also see Abdul Karim, "A Fresh Study of Abdul Latif's Diary." (North Bengal in 1609 A.D.), *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. XIII, 1990, pp. 23-46.
39. Shihab-ud-din Ahmad Talish, *Fattiyyah-i-Ibriyyah* (1663) or *Tarikh-i-Mulk-i-Asham*, Ms. in Asiatic Society, Calcutta, Blochmann in J.A.S.B., 1872.
40. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnamah*, ed. by M. Khadim Husain and M. Abdul Hai, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1865-73; E. & D. III.
41. Text in Bodleian Library (Oxford), Ms. 589; some extracts tr. by J. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, JASB, 1906 & 1907.
42. Salimullah, *Tarikh-i-Bangala* (wr. 1763), Eng. tr. by Francis Gladwin (Calcutta 1788), reprint (Calcutta 1918).
43. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng. tr. in Elliot, vol. IV, pp. 434-513. The work was devoted to Daud Karrani, Sultan of Bengal (1572-75).

44. Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afaghana* or *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, ed. by M. Hidayat Husain, text in Bib. Ind. (1939); Eng. tr. in Elliot, Vol. V, pp. 1-64. The study dealt with the Afghan rule in Bengal and India.
45. Yusuf Ali, *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang*. Yusuf Ali was the son of Ghulam Ali and son-in-law of Nawab Sarfaraz Khan of Bangal (1739-40), son of shuja-ud-Din, Nawab of Bengal (d. 1739), son-in-law of Murshid Quli Khan (d. 1727). The work was devoted to the biography of Alivardi Khan, Nawab of Bengal (1740-56).
46. Sayyid Karam Ali, *Muzaffar-Namah* (wr. 1772). Eng. tr. in part by Jadunath Sarkar in *Bengal Past and Present*, 1947. It was written in honour of Muhammad Reza Khan (Diwan of Bengal) of the early English period in 1760 and 1770's.
47. Sayyid Ghulam Husain Tabatabai (1727-82), *Siyar ul Mutakherin*, (wr. 1780, 3 vols.). Eng. tr. by Raymond, a French Convert to Islam, (Mustafa) first printed 1789 (dedicated to 'Nota Manus' to Warren Hastings), reprinted by Cambray & Co. (Calcutta), 1902.
48. Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 503.
49. R.C. Majumdar, *Historiography in Modern India*, London : Asia Publishing House, 1970, p. 6.
50. Von G.E. Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam : A Study in Cultural Orientation*, Chicago, 1946, 1953; pp. 281-83.
51. Quoted in Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.
52. Elliot, *op. cit.*, vol. I, Bib Index, pp. XIII-IV.
53. Quoted in Philips, *op. cit.*, 140-41.
54. Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nations in Indostan from the Year 1745* (ed. 1803), p. 2; quoted by R.C. Majumdar, *Ibid.*, p. 8.
55. Statement of Macaulay in the House of Commons on the Charter Act of 1833, quoted by G.P. Gooch in *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century*, 1913, p. 306.

56. James Mill, *The history of British India*, II (5th ed. 1858), p. 108.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
58. Quoted in R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
59. Mohibbul Hassan (ed.), *Historians of Medieval India* (Meerut, India : Meenakshi Prakashan, 1968), p. 231.
60. R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
61. K.A. Ballhachet, "Some Aspects of Historical Writing on India by Protestant Christian Missionaries during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, edited by C.H. Philips (London : Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 345.
62. Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society Among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*, 1792, pp. 36-37.
63. G.U. Pope, *A Text-Book of Indian History* (London, 1880), p. 479; quoted by K.A. Ballhachet, *Ibid.*, p. 346.
64. J.C. Marshman, *The History of India from the Earliest Period to the Close of Dalhousie's Administration*, II (London, 1867), p. 35.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 462.
66. G.U. Pope, *A Text-Book of Indian History* (1880), p. 403; K.A. Ballhachet, *Ibid.*
67. For details of works of these oriental British scholars, see M. Delwar Hussain, *A Study of Nineteenth Century Historical Works on Muslim Rule in Bengal*, Dhaka : Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1987.
68. Charles Stewart, *The History of Bengal - From the first Muhammadan Invasion until the virtual conquest of that country by the English A.D. 1757*, London, 1813.
69. J.C. Marshman, *Outline of the History of Bengal*, compiled for the use of youths in India, Serampore, 1844.
70. H.F. Blockmann (Principal of Calcutta Madrasah, 1870-78), 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal', Nos. I, II and III were published in the *JASB*, vols. 42, 43 and 44 of the years 1873, 1874 and 1875 respectively. No. IV of the contribution appeared in abstract form in the *JASB's* proceedings for December 1877, vol. 46, but it was never published as an article.

71. (Sir) W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, London, 1868. His *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, 20 vols, London 1875-77, recognised as the 'Domesday Book of Bengal' in which 'The dry bones of statistics live' is still a model in the field. Other scholarly works of Hunter are : *The Indian Musalmans*, 2nd edition, Simla, 1871; and *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 14 vols, 1881 and 1887; *The Indian Empire : Its People, History and Products*, 1882; *Bengal Ms. Records with an Historical Dissertation on Land Tenure in Bengal*, 1894; and *A History of British India* (1899-1900).
72. W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, vol. 1, London, 1868, p. 8.
73. W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, pp. 167-176.
74. Henry Beveridge, *The District of Bakarganj : Its History and Statistics*, London, 1876.
75. *Trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar : A Narrative of a Judicial Murder* (1886), *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Tr.), and *The Akbarnama of Abul Fazl* (Tr.) expand and illustrate his views on an understanding of the history of Muslim rule in Bengal. For details of his works, see M. Delwar Hussain, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-78.
76. For details see David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance : The Dynamics of Indian Modernization*, Calcutta : Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969; David Kopf and Safiuddin Joarder (eds), *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance*, Rajshahi : Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1977.
77. G.D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India 1784-1858*, London, 1961, pp. 69-78.
78. A.R. Mallick, "Modern Historical Writing in Bengali", C.H. Philips (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 446-448.
79. *Bangladeshers Krishak*, Chapter 4, p. 84.
80. Shaymoli Sur, "Bangalir Itihastatter Vikas", Ph.D. Thesis, Jadavpur University (Calcutta), 1980.
81. Quoted in Mallick, *op. cit.*, p. 448.
82. Translations of *Shahnama* (1847) by Birseswar Dutt, and *Jiban Charita* (1849) by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar became very popular in the contemporary Bengali society.
83. Mallick, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

84. One of his writings on the theme is (i) "On the Theme and importance of Historical Studies" (1838). Quoted in Syed Anwar Hossain, "Historiography in Nineteenth Century Bengal", an unpublished paper.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 449.
86. Rajanikanta Gupta, *Bharat Kahini* (Vernacular), Calcutta, 1883, p. 1.
87. Rajanikanta Gupta, *Oitihāsik Path* (Vernacular), Calcutta, 1882, p. 149.
88. Syed Anwar Hossain, *op. cit.*.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Prachin Hindudiger Samudrajatra o Vistar* (Vernacular), Calcutta, 1901, p. 145.
91. "Banglar Itihas Samparke Koekti Katha" (Vernacular), *Bangadarpan*, 1228.
92. Shaymoli Sur, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
93. *Bharati*, Sravan, 1305 B.S. (1898), p. 370. Also quoted in Probodh Sen's *Banglar Itihasa shadhana*, p. 34.
94. Cited in Shayamoli Sur, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
95. Mukhlesun Rahman, "The Varendra Research Society and Museum. Rajshahi," in S.A. Akanda (ed.), *Studies in Modern Bengal*, Rajshahi : The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1981, pp. 235-291.
96. Nikhilnath Roy, *Sonar Bangla* (Vernacular), Calcutta, 1906, p. 34.
97. Cited in Shaymoli Sur, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
98. R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

91. One of the early and notable figures in the history of the development of the modern scientific method is the English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626). His work, *Novum Organum*, laid the foundation for the scientific method, which is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
92. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
93. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
94. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
95. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
96. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
97. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
98. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
99. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.
100. The scientific method is a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation. It involves making observations, formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions based on the results. This method has been the cornerstone of modern science and technology.

THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN BANGLADESH : PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Mohammed Mohibullah Siddiquee*

1. Introduction

We may briefly define local history by claiming it to be that which describes the history of a particular place, its geographical aspects, various statistics connected with it, trade and business thereof, administration, revenue system, social customs and practices, cultural rites and ceremonies and the socio-economic conditions as well as the political antecedents of the masses of that place. This article is mainly devoted to an adequate understanding of the pivotal importance, problems and possibilities of local history in the context of Bangladesh. It also attempts as briefly as possible to trace the origin and evolution of this branch of history, and some suggested solutions to the problems raised in the article have been included.

The idea of writing local history in Bengal was conceived by the British in 1769 when European Supervisors were appointed in the districts with an order to prepare brief reports on the topography, history, trade and commerce, land revenue, local customs, agriculture, administration of justice and economic survey of the districts.¹ In fact as a member of a commercial concern, the Supervisors failed to submit general survey reports on the districts.² But the Company did not give up their attempt. As a result, Court of Directors wrote a letter to John Taylor, the Commercial Resident of Dhaka to collect materials for the use of the Company's historiographers.³ At that time, Nawab Nusratjang was the Naib Nazim of Dhaka. John Taylor requested Nawab Nusratjang to help him by supplying information on the

*Dr. Siddiquee is an Assistant Professor of the Dept. of Islamic History & Culture, & a former Ph.D. Fellow of IBS, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh

various aspects of the history of Dhaka. Accordingly the Nawab compiled a booklet in 1799 named "Tarikhi-i-Jahangirnagar Orfe Dhaka" which is known as '*Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*', the first local history ever written in Bengal.⁴ John Taylor compiled *An Account of the District of Dacca* in 1800 on the basis of the *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi* and other available sources.⁵ Later on the Company commissioned Francis Buchanan in 1807 to make tours to various districts of Bengal and compile reports on them. The first volume of his reports was published from Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta in 1833 entitled *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of the District or Zilla Dinajpur in the Province or Soubah of Bengal*.⁶

2. The Importance of the Study of Local History

A growing child acquires increasing familiarity with his parents, relatives and neighbours; he also gathers knowledge about his own village, local town, district headquarters and the capital of the country. As part of the acquisition of knowledge, he starts questioning the reasons why his village or ward is named such as it is. He tries to know why the road that passes by his home is called such and such, why is the river named thus and thus. Satisfactory answers to these self-questionings points to the necessity and importance of studying local history.⁷

Secondly, the larger areas of human life can not be analysed without a familiarity with and intimate knowledge of the smaller segments of human activities.⁸ Therefore, it is essential that a knowledge of one's family, clan, society along with that of social customs and practices, economy, culture etc. should be looked upon as a prerequisite for the study of history in broader perspectives. That is why the writings of regional and national history and their enrichment inevitably show the utmost importance of the knowledge of local history. Its importance can not indeed be minimised without doing grave injustice to the whole endeavour of grasping the national history in its entirety.

Thirdly, it is difficult to administer a country merely with the laws and regulations enacted by the state. The local administration should arm itself with a through knowledge of local usages, habits and customs, social dynamics, economy of

the region and the peculiarity of its parochial history. In the absence of such knowledge, the local administration may find it difficult to carry on smoothly the governance of the locality. So we see that the study of local history was encouraged by the British administration and as a result various Reports and Gazetteers were compiled by the British administrators. It may be safely concluded without fear of contradiction that for proper administration, a thorough knowledge and analysis of smaller geographical areas or units are essential.

Fourthly, the medieval age mainly confined the study of history to the narrow confines of the emperor's court, the rise and fall of the empire, praising the emperor's competence and eulogising his capabilities and achievements, tracing the genealogy of his family, his battles against his enemies and victories in the battlefields and so on were the stuff of this kind of restricted royal narrative. But with changing times, new angles of vision have emerged in the study of history. To-day, man is engaged in studying the economy, culture and literature of a society. As a consequence, local history or the regional history has gained special interest over that of extended history of ancient empires. In contemporary studies, the history of a particular topic has assumed far more importance than the old-fashioned history of large empires and their powerful rules.

Fifthly, in our time, the history of regional development occupies an important place in the historical studies initiated by the modern scholars. The reason is simple : mankind can not dream of developing entire humanity all at a time in one big sweep. Therefore, planning and development involves identifying the particular area or region inviting the attention of the planners. Without such detailed planning, development will be a chimera and a delusion. As regional development requires a regional plan, so does regional planning need regional history. Because if the planner lacks in the knowledge of the history of the place, its geography, culture, its socio-economy and politics, his planned proposal for the development of the area can not be realistic and meaningful. It will simply entail wastage of money and labour.

Sixthly, system and technique of production, skilled labour force, steady supply of raw materials, balanced foreign trade etc. are the pre-conditions and basic requirements for development in the present-day world. For meeting these fundamental conditions, regional co-operation is an imperative necessity. For making the regional co-operation fruitful and permanent, an adequate idea and through knowledge of the history and culture of the co-operating countries are essential. This is especially so in case of bilateral relationship. So sincere and genuine regional co-operation prompts the establishment of a historical bond based on the study of local history.

3. The Problems of Studying Local History

Like the writings of other forms of history, the compilation of the local history must derive its primary and fundamental materials from the historically important documents, both official and unofficial, personal collection of materials, archeological findings and legends. The orders and directives in the historically important documents, correspondence between and among parties, petitions submitted by ordinary citizens, statistical surveys, maps and sketches all these constitute basic source for the writings of local history. Besides, Census Reports, Statistical Accounts, Survey and Settlement Reports, Linguistic Surveys, all these contain valuable source materials for the local historians. Despite the facilities, there are numerous problems and obstacles facing the local historians which are detailed below :

In writing the history of India or for that matter of the national history of Bangladesh, the universally accepted periodisations are : the ancient, the medieval and the modern age. The scientific basis of such periodisation may be questioned. In this respect our historians generally used the landmarks of a particular time. No age can be properly characterised without giving due importance to the modes of production and their changes.⁹ It is also relevant to be conscious of the difficulty in adopting in the writing of local history the periodisation of the national history. Therefore, it is not surprising that our historians are silent on the exact de-limitation of periodisation on the basis of a particular event or cause. Though our local historians draw the line of periodisation across the infinity of

time yet instead of solving the related problems that approach further complicates the issue of periodisation.

Secondly, from the very beginning of the British rule, the district headquarters having become the centre of administration, all the documents and papers relating to the Administration, Judiciary, Survey, Education, Public Health etc. were preserved in the district Record Room. Though these are the principal sources of local history, yet considerable number of these documents were destroyed by natural calamities, such as, flood, cyclone and deluge. As most of these Record Rooms were constructed either at the end of the Mughal rule or at the beginning of the British administration, so many of these Record Rooms were in ruins. On top of it, the climate of our country causing long period of rainfall and the neglect in properly keeping the records also contributed towards their destruction, or at least, their uselessness.¹⁰

Thirdly, a large number of zamindar families emerged as a consequence of the Mughal Mansabdary System and the British Permanent Settlement. Those families built up Family Archives in order to preserve documents, especially those concerning revenue, which are considered valuable in writing the local history. But it must be admitted, that most of these zamindar families did not care to protect the papers properly and the few families who carefully preserved the documents saw them destroyed by natural calamities, or else, time has made them almost useless.¹¹

Fourthly, during the whole of Mughal period and the initial period of the British rule, nearly all documents were beautifully written in Persian by hand and these are the main source for constructing the history of the middle ages. In this connection Professor Mafizullah Kabir says "Our young people lack eagerness to learn Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic. Many who would undertake research work on the middle ages give up the idea for fear of learning Persian language".¹² Besides problem of language, official and jargon words pose obstacles to the writing of local history.

Fifthly, the want of full and continuously connected information, the contradictions and discontinuity of available materials and the qualitative lacuna and defect also stand in the way of efforts to depict the history of a region.¹³

Sixthly, most of the proven and important documents required for research on ancient and modern age of India are in the India Office Library, London. Apart from that, many records relating to local history are to be found in the West Bengal State Archives in Calcutta and the Record Rooms of Darjeeling. All these indispensable source materials, essential in the writings of local history, are not within easy reach of research students of Bangladesh.

Seventhly, historians do not merely write their histories on the basis of documentary evidences, they also try to explain the source materials scientifically. They analyse the biased views and personal preferences of the editors who have helped preserve these documents. The partisanship of the compilers fully or partly obfuscate the historical narrative and ends up as an example of egoism.¹⁴ Like the Marxists who analyse history in terms of Dialectical Materialism and class conflict, the nationalist historians and historians inspired by different ideologies attempt to interpret history in the light of their respective ideas. Consequently, history becomes a vehicle for the ideological prepossession of the individual historians, reflecting faithfully their respective individual point of view and personal interpretation, losing the necessary character of impersonal and unbiased approach of a true historian. In the writings of local history, this propensity for interpreting historical events from the stand-point of the individual writer may indeed assume damaging proportions. If the historian while chronicling local history is overtaken by hostility towards a particular family or place, or if he is overcome by an excessive fondness for a family or place, truth will undoubtedly suffer from the intrusion of such personal predilection.

Eighthly, another problem is that with changing times the geographical position of a place may change and even alter radically beyond recognition. As a riverine country, Bangladesh ceaselessly undergoes changes of terrain, though imperceptibly,

most of the time. But we can easily guess that the contour of a place changes with passing time. In this connection, we may take a look at the coastal districts. Besides all these, the unit of administration may change from time to time for various reasons which can hinder the writings of local history and which in fact has generated 'Ancient Geography' as an indispensable and separate branch of study of local history.

4. The Possibilities of Studying Local History

Though it can not be claimed that Bangladesh has reached the height of success in the study of local history, it is true that abysmal failure has not attended the efforts of our local historians. In colonial time, the English administrators concentrated on the study of local history side by side with the study of Indian languages, literatures, cultures and histories.¹⁵ As a result Buchanan's *Dinajpur* (1833) Taylor's *Dhaka* (1844), Westland's *Jessore* (1871), Beveridge's *Bakerganj* (1876), Cotton's *Chittagong* (1880), are notable compilations¹⁶ and are now acknowledged as valuable achievements in the study of local history. In addition to these, Hunter's *Statistical Accounts of Bengal* inspired and supported by the government, and the *District Gazetteers of Bengal* compiled by the British officials added a new dimension to and opened a new chapter in the study of local history.

Towards the closing period of the 19th. century, Bengalees studying local history and wrote quite a few historical accounts based on the families of the zamindars and local traditions. It will not be an exaggeration to say that most of these books were produced by the individual writers at their own initiative, without official patronage though financially helped by some zamindars, wealthy persons and men devoted to learning. But as most of these annals were written by men of letters and not by historians, these books are more of a literary creation than strict historical compositions. Despite this obvious draw-back, many of these historical writings in Bengali have earned the praise of indigenous and foreign critics and scholars. Among these local histories, A.C. Chowdhuri's *Sylhet* (1910), A.F.M. Abdul Jalil's *Sunderban* (1968), Ananda Nath Ray's *Faridpur* (1927), M.A. Hamid's *Chalan Beel* (1967), Wahidul Alam's *Chittagong* (1989)

Kazi Mohammed Meser's *Rajshahi* (1965), Abdur Rahim's *Tangail* (1977), Delwar Hossain's *Sherpur* (1969), Pravash Chandra Sen's *Bogra* (1912), Mohammed Afzal's *Nawga* (1970), Jagendra Nath Gupta's *Bikkarnpur* (1909), Rada Raman Shaha's *Pabna* (1923), Satish Chandra Mitra's *Jessore-Khulna* (1914), Syed Mortuza Ali's *Sylhet* (1962) are works that deserve our attention.¹⁷ 172 local histories have been written in Bangla language till 1990.¹⁸

Bangladeshi scholars have also written local histories in English, Persian and Urdu. Khan Bahadur Hamidullah wrote in Persian a history of *Chittagong* (1855), Aga Ahmad Ali's *Dhaka* (1865), Nawab Nusrat Jung's *Jahangirnagar* (1799) and Hakim Habibur Rahman's *Dhaka* (1952). Munshi Rahman Ali Tayesh's *Dhaka* (1952) in Urdu, Syed Ahmadul Haque's *Chittagong* (1948), Syed Mortuza Ali's *Chittagong* (1964), S.A. Hossain's *Dacca* (1912), S.M. Taifoor's *Dacca* (1952), Z.A. Tofael's *Kushtia* (1966), all written in English are admirable achievements.¹⁹ Though Arabic is widely influential as the language of Faith, perhaps no local historical work has been done in that language.

At the university level, the following local histories have been produced. They are the results of intensive research work. Though concerned with a definite period these books throw light on special topics. The books are : Ahmed Hasan Dani's *Dhaka* (1956), Abdul Karim's *Dhaka* (1964), Alamgir Mohammed Sirajuddin's *Chittagong* (1971), A.B.M. Mahmud's *North Bengal* (1970).²⁰ These are research works and contain detailed information. Above all, it is extremely encouraging that many research scholars are engaged in Bangladesh and abroad in the study of local history at the university level.²¹

Local histories, ranging from isolated individual effort to official enterprise, and especially the official endeavours in writing the histories of the Districts and the Gazetteers, and the result of research studies at the University level, all these scholarly undertakings have produced publications in Bengali, English, Urdu, Persian containing exhaustive details of the subject dealt with. In the background of regional differences, administrative changes, patriotism manifesting itself in local loyalty the local histories so written may be open to doubts as to their qualities but these compilations are not beyond questioning

as to their quantity. In spite of all these short-comings the future of the study of local history is indeed bright in Bangladesh. The reasons for such optimism are as follows :-

Firstly, during the middle ages, historians mainly indulged in chronicling the annals of kings, kingdoms, capital of the kingdom, the king's valour and bravery, the victories and defeats of the Sovereign etc. Under the British regime historians wrote the histories of nationalism, reforms, communalism, communal relationships, administration etc. But in the post-liberation period of Bangladesh, distinct changes in writing of history are quite discernible.²² To-day, while trying to compile local histories of different places, historians are pragmatically investigating into the various aspects of social life of rural masses. The change in the historians point of view has opened new possibilities in the writings of local histories. This is indeed, a heartening change which will place the different aspects of local history in their true perspectives.

Secondly, man, generally, concentrates his focus of attention on the centres of power, be they political, economic or administrative. So long our peoples' attention was concentrated on Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi and Islamabad. With independence, their centres of thought are now altered. For this reason men and women of our country are now eager to know about their homeland and their localities. In the changed situation thirst for knowledge will certainly act as a fresh impetus to the study of local history.

Thirdly, there is an intimate relationship between the state power and language. So it is not surprising that Bengalees have written historical works not only in Bengali but also in Persian, Urdu and English. The obvious explanation is, of course, the concentration of state power in the hands of outsiders whose mother tongues were either Persian, Urdu or English. Bengalees have now attained state power with the independence of the country and Bengali language has now been established as the national language in full glory. So it is but natural to expect that with the emancipation of Bengali language, from the clutch of the foreign influence the study of local history in Bengali will gain momentum.

5. Conclusion

As the path of writing local history is bestrown with pitfalls and plagued by problems, so are the bright possibilities of achievement in this branch of historical writing. In Europe, there is arrangement for the learning of languages for the scholars doing research works on medieval period so also there should be scope for our scholars to learn languages for facilitating their research studies. This will be a step in the right direction for encouraging and sustaining our historians. This would certainly solve their language problems. In contemporary age, the research on and study of medieval history is stagnating for want of proficiency in language. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should collectively try to collect and recover valuable historical documents from the India Office Library. The Government of Bangladesh could collect the relevant documents from the Record Rooms of Calcutta and Darjeeling. This would have been of great help to the scholars of local history. This would give them easy access to important and primary source of materials for original research. It is, in addition, desirable that old Record Rooms should be repaired, the Record Keepers be trained and the scientific methods of preserving records be adopted. With financial aid from the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Education, the nearly destroyed documents could still be made available to the scholars by gathering the papers at one particular place and thus helping the local historians to write their works on local and regional themes. Without this vital step, decrepit documents will disappear through disuse. In this connection, it may be emphasised that the Universities in our country should include in their curriculums the study of the particular areas in which they are situated. This would encourage the teachers, students and research scholars to study local history with zeal.

Above all, unless we change our attitude to the study of local history and raise our consciousness about and commitment to it, we may lag behind our aim and goal.

Foot Notes :

1. A.M. Khan, *The Transition in Bengal, 1756' - 1775*, (Combridge : University Press, 1969), p. 200.
2. A.M. Serajuddin "Observations on District Studies in Bengal" *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*. Vol. XXXIV-VI (Hum.) p. 125.
3. Dr. Abdul Karim, "An Account of the District of Dacca dated 1800" *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. VII, No. II, p. 289.
4. For details information about Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi see Mohammed Mohibullah Siddiquee, "Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi : An Evaluation" *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. XV (May, 1992), pp. 1-12.
5. Dr. Abdul Karim, *Op.*; *Cit.*: p. 289.
6. Md. Delwar Hossain "Some Aspect of Henry Baveridge's History of Bakergonj" *Bangladesh Historical Studies*, Vol. IV, (nd. 1979), p. 90.
7. Dr. K.M. Karim, "আর্কিভেটের দৃষ্টিতে স্থানীয় ইতিহাস চর্চা" *Journal of Bangladesh Itihas Samiti*, Vol. IX, 1980, p. 26.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Mamlazur Rahman Tarafdar, *Itihas-O-Ayitihasik* (History and Historians) (Dacca : Bangla Academy, 1981) p. 21.
10. Sirajul Islam, *Rural History of Bangladesh : A Source Study* (Dacca : Tito Islam, 1977) p. 28.
11. A.M. Serajuddin, *Op.*; *Cit.*: p. 125.
12. Quted from the Presidential Address of Professor Mafizullah Kabir in the Annual Conference of Bangladesh Itihas Samiti at the University of Chittagong on 21st and 22nd April, 1973. *Journal of Bangladesh Itihas Samiti*, Vol. II, 1973, p. 5.
13. Ratan Lal Chakkabarti, "বাংলাদেশে গ্রামীণ ইতিহাস রচনায় স্থানীয় উৎসের মূল্যায়ন : একটি পরীক্ষামূলক প্রচেষ্টা" *Dhaka Visvavidyalaya Patrika*, Vol. XIV, December, 1981, p. 11.
14. Mamtazur Rahman Tarafdar, *Op.*; *Cit.*: p. 43.

15. Dr. K.M. Karim, *Op.*; *Cit.*; p. 27.
16. Detail bibliographical informations of the books mentioned above, are as follows : F.H. Buchanan, *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of the District or Zilla of Dinajpur in the Province or Soubah of Bengal* (Calcutta : Baptist Mission Press, 1833); James Taylor, *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariate Press, 1840); J. Westland, *A Report on the District of Jessore : Its antiquities, Its history and Its commerce* (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariat Press, 1871); H. Beveridge, *The District of Bakergonj : Its History and Statistics* (London : Trubner and Co. 1876); H.J.S. Cotton, *Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong*, (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariat Press, 1880).
17. Detail bibliographical informations of the books mentioned above are as follows : A.C. Chowdhuri *Srihattar Itibrata* (History of Sylhet) (Calcutta : Upendra Nath Pal Chowdhuri, 1910); A.F.M. Abdul Jalil, *Sundarbaner Itihas*, (Dhaka : Linkman Publication, 1968); Ananda Nath Roy, *Faridpur Itihas*, (Faridpur : Jitandra Nath Roy, 1920); M.A. Hamid, *Chalan Beeler Itihas*, (Pabna : Amader Desh Prakashani, 1967); Wahidul Alam, *Chattagramer Itihas*, (Chittagong : Baighar, 1989); Kazi Mohammed Meser, *Rajshaher Itihas*, (Bogra : Kazi Prakashani, 1965); Khondaker Abdur Rahim, *Tangailer Itihas*, (Tangail : Jamuna Prakashani, 1977); Delwar Hossain, *Sherparer Itikata*, (Sherpur : Sherpur Powrashava, 1969); Pravash Chandra Sen, *Bagurar Itihas*, (Rangpur : Rangpur Shahita Parishad, 1912); Mohammed Afzal, *Nowga Mahakumar Itihas*, (Nawga : author, 1970); Jogendra Nath Gupta, *Bikkarnpurer Itihas* (Calcutta : Battachariya and Sons, 1909); Rada Raman Shaha, *Pabna Zillar Itihas*, (Pabna : author, 1923); Satish Chandra Mitra, *Jessore-Khulnar Itihas*, (Calcutta : Chakkarabarti, Chitterjee and Co. 1914); Syed Mortuza Ali, *Hazarat Shah Jalal-O-Shelheter Itihas* (Dhaka : Bengla Academy, 1962).
18. Mohammed Mohibullah Siddique, "Origin and Development of District Studies in Bangladesh", *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. XVI, (June, 1993), p. 17.

19. Detail bibliographical informations of the books mentioned above are as follows : Khan Bahadur Hamidullah Khan, *Akhadisu'l Khawarin*, or *Tarikh-i-Hamidi* (Calcutta : Mazharul Arab Press, 1855); Aga Ahmed Ali *Tawrikh-i-Dhaka*, (Dacca : nf, 1865); Nawab Nusratjang, *Tarikh-i-Nusratjangi*, (Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911); Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Asudgna Dhaka* (Dacca : 1944); Munshi Rahman Ali Taish, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, (Dacca : Star of India Press, 1910); Syed Ahmadul Hoque, *History of Chittagong*, (Chittagong : Author, 1948); Syed Martuza Ali, *History of Chittagong*, (Dacca : Standard Publishers Ltd., 1964); Syed Aulad Hossain, *Antiquities of Dacca* (Dacca : Author, 1912); Syed Mohammed Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dacca*, (Dacca : S.M. Perwez, 1952); Z.A. Tofaiell, *History of Kustia*, (Dacca : Ziaunnahar Khanam, 1966).
20. Detail bibliographical informations of the books mentioned above are as follows : Ahmed Hasan Dani, *Dacca-Records of its Changing fortune* (Dacca : S.S. Dani, 1956); Abdul Karim, *Dacca, The Mughal Capital*, (Dacca : Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1964); A.M. Serajuddin, *The Revenue Administration of the East India Company in Chittagong 1761-1785*, (Chittagong : University of Chittagong, 1971); A.B.M. Mahmood, *The Revenue Administration of the Northern Bengal 1765-1793* (Dacca : National Institute of Public Administration, 1970)
21. Mohammed Mohibullah Siddiquee, *Op.*; *Cit.*: p. 14.
22. Dr. K.M. Karim, *Op.*; *Cit.*: p. 29.

THE ORIGIN, GROWTH AND COMPOSITION OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN BENGAL : A REVIEW OF DIFFERENT EXPLANATIONS

Md. Mahbub Ullah*

Introduction

Many contradictory explanations are sought by historians and census authors with regard to the origin, growth and composition of Muslim population in Bengal. Due to the prevalence of contradictory explanations, it has become difficult for contemporary writers to bring out an objective explanations of the historical cases of the origin and growth of Muslim population in Bengal. Keeping this problem in view, this article attempts, first, to assimilate and narrate the process of Muslim settlements and their growth and composition in Bengal from historical standpoint, and second, to review and clarify the different explanations of the causes of the sudden growth of Muslim majority in Bengal.

The Origin and Growth of Muslim Population in Bengal

Speaking historically, it is an undenyng fact that the origin and the growth of Muslim Population in Bengal was not a matter of a day or two but the result of a long process of gradual historical growth. History reveals that the first group of Muslims to step into the soil of Bengal were the Arabs who came to the coastal regions of Eastern India including Bengal through their commercial and sea faring activities from the 8th century A.D.

However, it is not still definitely known whether these Arab Muslim traders had penetrated into the land of Bengal from the aforesaid century. Stories about a number of Mahisawar and other Muslim saints coming by sea and propagating religion

*Dr. Mahbub Ullah is an Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology,
at the University of Chittagong.

during the pre-Muslim period are popular in the country but it is difficult to examine their veracity or to fix the saints to any definite chronology.¹ On the other hand, the uncharted history of Bengal's folklores and traditions revealed that the first contact of Islam with Bengal took place very early in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. through the Arab traders and missionaries. The Arab merchants seen to have collected precious forest products of Chittagong and Assam from the Chittagong coastal line of the Bay of Bengal as their ships passed back and forth through it from Sandvip to Arakan, in the Asian trade route. It is revealed from history that Chittagong in Bengal became a small colony of Arab Muslim traders in the early Hijrah when the Arab traders used to visit Bengal often for reason of their eastern trading and commercial pursuits though the actual political conquest of Bengal by the Muslims took place much later by Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji in the early 13th century.² From the traveling accounts and writings of Verthema, Barbosa, Caesar Frederick, Ralph Fitch and also of the Portuguese, it is revealed that Satgaon (Chittagong) and Hughli two sea-ports of Bengal coast became the place of influential community of the Muslim merchants and residents and many of them were Arabs. The Arab became a fairly influential community in Bengal in the later part of the 15th Century and this made possible the establishment of an Arab dynasty on the throne, in person of Saiyid Ata-al-Din Hussain Shah (1493-1517 A.D). Bengal became the place for habitation of Muslims of all nationalities with its political conquest by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1201 A.D.

It would be unwise and unrealistic to go for explaining the origin, growth and composition of Muslim population in Bengal without taking due consideration of the characteristics of the Muslims of the whole subcontinent of India. This is because of the fact that the Muslim population of Bengal was largely composed, derived and followed from the Muslim community of India as a whole. From the time of Sultan Mahmood Ghazni down to the accession of Emperor Jahangir the Muslims of Hindustan had developed into a partially indianized heterogeneous community around the small nucleus of foreign

conquerors and immigrants of diverse races, the Arab and the Afghan, the Turk and Turkoman, the Mughals and the Mongoloid Tatar³.

Though the Muslim community of India presented itself to the superficial views as *prima facie* a solid homogenous block hold together by the cement of Islam, it was in reality a composite community having within its fold representatives of races from all over the Muslim world and native converts especially of Hindus of all grades. In the 17th century the Muslims from outside Hindustan were predominantly Turks, Afghans and Persians with a sprinkling of Abyssinians and Arabs. The foreigners were divided into two main groups - the Turani and Irani. Broadly speaking, under the heading of Musalmans, may include two types of people : one, whose ancestors had, as a result of the steady flow of foreign immigration poured down upon the Indian soil and made it their new home; and second, the native converts to Islam who were called *Nau-Muslims*. The Bengal Muslims too, in the contest of their comprised, what may be called, the Muslim masses both in the context of India in general and Bengal in particular.

The gradual increase and province wise uneven distribution of Muslim population in India is shown in India census of 1921.

Table 1. Province wise Distribution of Muslim Population in India, 1921

Province	Number	Percentage
Madras	2,840,488	6.74
Bombay	3,820,153	19.74
Bengal	25,210,802	54.00
U.P.	6,481,032	14.28
Panjab	11,444,321	55.33
Bihar & Orisswa	3,690,182	10.85
Central Province & Berar	563,574	4.05
Assam	2,202	28.96
North West Frontier Province	2,062,786	91.62

Source : Census of India, India Part II, p. 43

In table 1, it is found that Muslim population constituted one fifth of the total population of India and in the context of Bengal, Muslim population become predominant by constituting 54 per cent of the total population of Bengal.

In Bengal, the great majority of the Muslims were peasants, in origin, probably low-caste Hindus, and were bunched in the northern, central and eastern districts of the province. They were also half, 47.3 per cent in central Bengal, 59.8 per cent in Northern Bengal, 69.9 per cent in Eastern Bengal, and a mere 13.4 per cent in Western districts⁴.

Divisions among Muslims were reflected in their economic and educational status. The vast majority of Bengali Muslims were peasants. Among the ordinary cultivators, they were almost double the number of Hindus, but among the landlords there were nearly twice as many Hindus as Muslims⁵.

The Muslim around the world gradually entered this land (in Bengal) as governors, administrators, generals, soldiers, missionaries, teachers, traders and fortune seekers. The early Arabs who came to Bengal were mostly the traders, sufis and missionaries. Though the early Muslim community of Bengal was mostly composed of foreign immigrants, their century long spread of Islamization by the sufis and missionaries, - the volume of Muslim population increased at a faster rate by conversion of natives (mostly Hindus and Buddhists) to Islam. The accounts of the foreign travellers, such as Varthema and Barbosa also give an idea that a large number of Persian merchants lived in the port and cities of Bengal⁶. The Persian officers became the part of Muslim administration from the beginning of Muslim rule in Bengal. Due to Mughal invasion of Persian territories, it is learnt that many Persians left the country and went to Hindustan and few of them came to Bengal. A considerable number of Persians were introduced in Bengal with the conquest of Bengal by the Mughals. The Nawabs of Murshidabad were Persians and during their time,

due to their patronization, a large number of Persians came to Bengal as officers, generals, soldiers, scholars, teachers and physicians.

Another composition of Muslim population in Bengal were the Abyssinians who were introduced in this country mostly as slaves. It is learnt that Barbak Shah had at one time in his service eight thousand negro slaves, well mounted and armed, and finding them faithful and attached to him, he promoted several of them to high ranks and responsible offices⁷. As a result of these promotion their influence increased so much that they had succeeded in establishing a dynasty that ruled Bengal for a few years.

It is guessed from historical evidence that the Turkoman Muslims must have come to Bengal in large numbers along with its conqueror Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji. Evidence suggested that Khilji must have left behind a considerable force under his chiefs, in the way of his conquest of Bengal, to control over the newly acquired territories of North and West Bengal and to conquest such territories as jajnagar, etc. Gradually these Turkoman Muslims, continued to pour into Bengal with every new governor who fell in the Tibet expedition, reviled the adventurous general, Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji, holding him responsible for the lose of their husbands and fathers⁸.

The Afghans came to Bengal as soldiers in the army of the Turkoman generals and rulers. The Habshi Sultan Muzaffar Shah, it is learnt, had a few thousand Afghans in his army. In the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah, a body of Afghan soldiers are found in his service⁹.

With regard to the composition of Mughal population in Bengal, it is learnt that many of the Mughal officers and soldiers were serving and living in this province for two or three generations from the time of Emperor Akbar. Mirza Nathan informs that some officers including the author himself built

bungalows in Jessore. It is learnt from *Akbarnama* that Emperor Akbar liberally granted jagirs to the officers and soldiers in Bengal.

Thus it appears from historical evidences that the early Muslim population in Bengal composed of different racial affiliations Arab, Persian, Turk, Mughal, Afghan, Abyssinian and others who came to Bengal and settled there in different times. But with the passage of time, the Muslim population in Bengal started composing of local converts. This conversion of native to Islam was the main cause behind the growth of Muslim population a majority community in Bengal in the later half of the 19th and first half of the 20th century.

Causes of Growth of Muslim Majority in Bengal

To understand the growth of Bengal Muslim population over the different historical periods and the causes of its preponderance, it is required to know their structural composition both in relation to their proportion to the immigrant Muslims and the native converts. From historical data, it is observed that Bengal gradually became one of the place for Muslim dominance on the Indian subcontinent much before than it was politically conquered by the Muslim. The fact of Muslim majority in Bengal had agitated the minds of scholars of the country since the observance of the trend of Muslim majority and dominance in Bengal. The growth of Muslim majority in Bengal was a surprising historical fact to the authors of the census reports of India. It appeared from the census figures of 1901 that Delhi, Agra and other places of northern India which had long been the centers of Muslim rule and culture, the Muslim population is represented by only a fraction of the total population, whereas it appeared that in Bengal, Muslim population is figured by 41 per cent of the total population¹⁰. This was a contrary finding to the expectation of the census authors and thus the question of the Muslim majority in Bengal puzzled the English administrators since 1872 when the first regular census was held in India. H.

Baverely and H.H. Risely came up to explain the cause of Muslim majority in Bengal by relating the fact of conversion of low caste natives to Islam and their views dominated the minds of the administrators and writers. Baverely wrote :

But probably the real explanation of immense preponderance of the Musalman religious element in this portion of the delta (Bengal) is to be found in the conversion to Islam of the immense low castes (the chandals and Rajbansis), which occupied it¹¹.

Baverely found close resemblance between the Musalmans and their fellow countrymen, the low caste of the Hindus in support of the contention of his view. He stated in favour of strengthening his argument that there is a close resemblance in identity of physique and similarity of manners and customs between the Musalmans and their fellow countrymen, the low caste of the Hindus¹². From an anthropological examination of 185 low class Muslims (mostly jailed of East Bengal), H. Risely Showed, on the basis of their nasal index, that the Muslims of Bengal were converted from the Chandals, Pods, Rajbansis etc.¹³

Mr. F. Rubble objected the contention of Baverely and H. Risely. He opined this view as biased and unfounded. This view was biased, according to him, on the ground that it was intentionally done to lower down the prestige of the Bangali Muslims by relating their genealogy to the lower class Hindus. According to him, Muslim population of Bengal was in a large measure descended from those who came there as teachers, preachers, officials and soldiers from all over the Muslim world during the five and a half centuries of Muslim rule in the area¹⁴.

But from the objective assessment of historical data both the views appeared as extreme though have got truths of history. It is historically true and was obvious that the Muslim population in India including Bengal, in its early composition, was absolutely composed of the foreign immigrants of different

racess and professions. And it was also true and obvious that this early foreign composition could not and did not make Muslim population in Bengal a majority community. The massive conversion of the natives, and from lower castes, definitely added the volume of Muslim population and their preponderance in Bengal¹⁵. In support of historico-situational relevance and also in support of the census data, there is no denying the fact that the local conversion (from low caste in a massive scale) played a very dominant rule in swelling the ranks of the Muslims in Bengal¹⁶.

To what extent conversion was intensively working in making the Muslim community a majority one in Bengal, by surpassing the Hindu community can easily be guessed from the trend of enormous growth of Muslim population found in the census reports from 1872 to 1891. The census reports during British rule, beginning from 1872 revealed very important fact with regard to the Muslim population of Bengal. These reports revealed that there was an enormous increase of the numbers of Bangali Muslims during the period of the British rule in this country. In the *Census Report of 1891*, C.J.O. Donnel observes, "In 1872 Muhammadans were merely half a million less numerous than the Hindus in Bengal proper. Now (1891 A.D.) they surpass them (Hindus) by million and a half."¹⁷ In 1872 Hindus were 16.8 million and the Muslim were 16.3 million. In 1891, the Hindus recorded 18 million, while the Muslims numbered 19.5 million. Islam has gained 100 persons in Western Bengal -- on the average 157 persons in the whole of Bengal proper."¹⁸

It appears from the census figures of India that the rate of the growth of Muslim population was higher than the Hindus in India, higher still in Bengal, and the highest in Eastern Bengal. Beside conversion to Islam, this higher growth rate in Muslim community was also responsible for making the Muslim community a majority one in Bengal in 1891¹⁹. The factors which were responsible for higher growth rate in the

Muslims of Bengal were the early marriage, widow marriage and practice of polygamy. These were responsible for high fecundity and high fertility in the Muslim community. In demographic figures of Bengal Muslims, these factors were quite apparent as shown in the different census reports of Bengal. Mr. J.A. Ves, quoting the *Census Report of 1901*, says :

The Muhammadan population is growing at a relatively much greater rate than the Hindus. This is not due to conversions, of which very few are recorded. The greater fecundity of the Muhammadans is explained by the prevalence of polygamy and widow marriage the lesser inequality between the age of husband and wife (due to early marriage), the greater meritoriousness of dietary and their greater material prosperity²⁰.

J.A. Ves is very much correct in identifying the socio-demographic causes of high growth rate in the Muslim community of Bengal appeared in the census of 1891. But he undermined the role of conversion which acted as a dominant factor in outnumbering the Muslims to the Hindus in Bengal.

Regarding the background of the converted Muslims in Bengal, a considerable portion is found to be represented by mixed blood and converts from the Hindu community. Although the conversion took place intensively from the lower class, there were conversions from the upper caste Hindus as well. It is evident from history that quite a large number of the Brahmins and Kayasthas were recruited to Muslim society, so that the Bengali Muslims represented a certain portion by the people whose ancestors belonged to the aristocracy of the Hindu community. But the overwhelming portion of the converted Muslims were Hindus and Buddhists who flocked to Islam to escape from the persecution of the Brahminical Hindu society. The authors of the census reports assigned two causes which resulted in the conversion of the non-Muslims to Islam; one was the force and the other was the caste system.

Baverley says :

The Muhammadans were ever ready to make conquest with the Koran as with the sword. Under Sultan Jalaluddin (Jadu), for instance, it is said that the Hindus were persecuted almost to extermination. The exclusive caste system of Hindu again naturally encouraged the conversion of the lower orders from a religion, under which they were no better than despised outcastes, to one which recognized all men as equals.²²

The allegation of forcible conversion is baseless and unwarranted. It is historically unfounded that the Muslims used force to gain converts to higher faith. The real cause of the spread of Islam in Bengal was its great inherent quality which fascinated the Hindus and Buddhists to be converted to gain justice, status and respectability in society from that of degradation and persecution of humanity under casteism.

The problem of conversion to Islam in India is found to be discussed in detail and explained with objectivity by Richard M. Eaton in his paper on Conversion to Islam.²³ In this paper, he has elaborately discussed and explained the three basic prevailing theories of conversion to Islam in India. These three theories are -- the religion of sword theory, the political patronage theory, and the theory of social liberation. By a careful and objective evaluation of these three theories, Eaton has emphasized the theory of social liberation as more conditionally relevant in the explanation of the massive conversion to Islam was fundamentally based on egalitarianism. This egalitarian approach to life preached by sufis and saints in Bengal attracted the lower class Hindu population in a large scale to convert themselves from Hinduism to Islam to escape social persecution of Hinduism on the one hand and enjoy social liberation of Islam on the other. Thus it appears that conversion played an important role in swelling the Muslim population in Bengal. This process of swelling of Muslim population was further accentuated by demographic variables.

Notes and References

1. For a discussion of these Saints see Abdul Karim, *Social History of Muslims in Bengal* (Pakistan Asiatic Society), 1959, pp. 86-90
2. See Enamul Hoque and Abdul Karim, "Arakan Rajshabhaiy Bangla Shahitya", and also A.H. Dani, "Early Muslim Contact with Bengal" in *The Proceedings of the Pakistan Historical Conference*, Karachi, 1951
3. Mohammad Yasin, *Social History of Islamic India* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Ltd.), 1974, p. 1
4. *Census of Bengal*, 1921, Part I, p. 159
5. *Ibid.*, p. 413
6. Purchas, S., *His Pilgrims*, Vol. II (Hakleyt Society, London), 1904-5, p. 144
7. C. Stewart, *History of Bengal* (Oriental Publishers, Delhi), 1971, p. 100
8. Abu Umar Minhaj-al-Din-Uthman bin Siraj al-Din-al-Juzzani, *Tabagat-i-Nasiri*; H.G. Raverty (Trans.) (Calcutta : "Bibliotheca Indica"), 1898, p. 572
9. Gulam Hussain Salim, *Riyadall-Salatin* (Calcutta : "Bibliotheca Indica"), n.d., pp. 128 and 133-34
10. *Census of India*, 1901, Vol. I, pt. 1, pp. 66-69 and 384
11. *Census of Bengal*, 1872, p. 132
12. *Ibid.*, p. 133
13. *Ibid.*
14. See Khondker Fuzli Rubbie, *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal*, (Messers. Thacker Spink and Co., Calcutta), 1895

15. However it should not mean that the process of native conversion to Islam in Bengal was limited to the lower caste Hindus and Buddhists alone. Conversion took place from upper castes also. But it was very insignificant compared to the massive conversion of low castes. The figures from different census reports of British Bengal confirm this truth.
16. Professor Abdul Karim recognized this conversion as an important factor in the spread of Islam in Bengal and in this regard he emphasized the role of the Sultan, Muslim scholars and the Sufis in the growth of Muslim society in Bengal -- See Abdul Karim, *Op. cit.*, Chapter III
17. *Census of Bengal*, 1891, Vol. II, p. 2
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3
19. *Ibid.*, p. 120
20. J.A. Ves. *District Gazetteer, Rangpur*, 1911, p. 2
21. According to Hindu tradition, Shams-al-Din Ilyas Shah, the Bengali Sultan, married a beautiful Brahmin Widow, who was named Phulmati Begum. The Sultan had several sons by Hindu wife -- N.K. Bhattasali, *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal* (Cambridge), 1922, p. 83 -- It is known from poet Mohammad Khan that his great ancestor Mahisawar married a Brahmin girl. By this marriage Mahisawar left behind an illustrious family which produced some distinguished governors and generals of the time of the Ilyas Shahi and Hussain Shahi Sultans -- quoted from Abdul Karim, "Bangla Prachin Puthir Vivarana", *Bangiya Shahitya Parishad Patrika*, Pt. I. Add., B.S. 1310, p. 159
22. *Census of Bengal*, 1872, p. 132
23. Richard M. Eaton, "Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India", in *Islam and the History of Religions*, ed. by Richard Martin, University of Arizona Press, Tucson (in Press) and cf. by A. Momin Chowdhury, "Conversion to Islam in Bengal : An Explanation", in *Islam in Bangladesh*, ed. by Rafiuddin Ahmed, (Dhaka), 1983, p. 11.

HUMANISM : IT'S IMPACT ON THE BENGAL RENAISSANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAMMOHUN ROY'S SOCIAL THINKING :

Abdul Hye Talukder*

1. Humanism as a Philosophical doctrine in European thoughts :

Humanism is the Philosophical and literary movement which originated in the second half of the fourteenth century. It flourished all over Western Europe during later centuries. It is an attitude which gives primary importance on man, on his worldly life and well-being and on his hopes and aspirations in this world. It recognizes the value and dignity of mankind as a whole and acknowledges human nature, its limits or interests as its theme. It is the product of European Renaissance which is concerned with the revival and development of capacities and powers that the ancient Greeks and Romans had possessed but were lost in the middle ages. The Renaissance humanists rejected the medieval heritage and embraced the classical one. They developed a modern outlook of individual freedom, elevated man's capacity to form his own world in order to rebuild or to better it according to his own designs and desires.

Humanism is derived from the Latin *humanus*, 'human', of home, 'man', hominies, 'mankind',¹. It is a basic aspect of the Renaissance through which its thinkers sought to reintegrate man into the world of nature considered to be the real world. In it human interests were shifted from the medieval outlook of otherworldliness to this worldliness. The humanists of the Renaissance period thus asserted the intrinsic value of man's life till death.

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* : vol, 11, Landon : Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, William Benton, 1973, p. 823.

The Philosophy of humanism is as old as the philosophy of man. The Philosophy of man, we know, begins with man's concern with the environment in which he lives, moves and had his being. Thus the fundamental urge behind philosophising had been man's quest for finding relationship with his environment. The emphasis laid on the different aspects of the problems at different times led to the diversity of man's thinking. But man had remained the pivot round which human thinking mainly rotated. Even when man's thinking was chiefly guided by religious consideration and his activities were inspired accordingly, his wellbeing had been the main focus of his earthly life.

In the history of western philosophy humanism is claimed to have originated in Greece in the fifth century B.C. The sophists marked the transition of the Greek philosophy from naturalism to humanism. They questioned the validity of faith in the Gods and Goddesses of Olympus and destroyed the faith in the moral codes that had largely originated from fear for the wrath of Gods and Goddesses. The first notable humanist was Protagoras, a Greek teacher and Philosopher of the fifth century B.C. He is chiefly noted for his famous doctrine : 'man is the measure of all things' ; of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not. This is interpreted by Bertrand Russell as meaning that each man is the measure of all things, and that, when man differs, there is no objective truth by virtue of which one is right and the other is wrong.² That is to say, Protagoras meant by 'man' the individual man and by 'the measure of all things' the standard of truth of all things. Morality thus comes to be nothing but social convention. There can be no universal moral code. This is the teaching of Protagoras.

In contrast with the contention that morality is simply a social convention, Plato and Aristotle argued that there were certain moral principles of goodness and justice which man can discover by virtue of reason. In an etymological sense, humanism is simply human being-ism, i.e., devotion to the welfare of human beings irrespective of their living and status. It can not tolerate any discrimination against any people or any nation. Humanistic philosophy advocates service to all men irrespective of their castes, creeds and colours.

2. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971, p. 77

Humanism as a philosophical doctrine thus lays emphasis on the importance of man as an individual and on his freedom and responsibility. This man centred philosophy emerged as a reaction against naturalism and idealism. It emphasises subjective truth and person's conditioned thinking as an existing individual. The humanists consider individuals to be unique and not an eternally realised fact in the Absolute.

Really speaking the concern of humanism is long and stimulating. Its roots go far back into the past and deep into the life of civilisation. It has also found eminent representatives in all the great nations of the world. Professor Edward P. Cheney, an American historian of wide repute, has reflected in the following sentences the diverse things that humanism incorporates within itself :

It may be the reasonable balance of life that the early humanists discovered in the Greek, it may be merely the study of the humanities or polite letters; it may be the freedom from religiosity and the vivid interests in all sides of life of a Queen Elizabeth or a Benjamin Franklin; it may be the responsiveness to all human passions of a Shakespeare or a Goethe; or it may be the Philosophy of which man is the centre and sanction. It is in the last sense, elusive as it is, that humanism has perhaps its greatest significance since the sixteenth century³.

The term 'humanist' first came into use in the early sixteenth century to designate the writers and scholars of the European Renaissance encouraged by liberal patrons, especially, the Medicis and the humanist popes. Humanism is the product of the Renaissance which is an outlook that differs from medieval period in many ways. Of these the following two are usually regarded to be most important, i.e., (1) the diminishing authority of the church and (11) the increasing authority of science.

The scientific outlook of humanism brought certain revolutionary changes in history, Politics, literature and sociology in Europe. The publication of the Copernican theory in 1543 played a very important role towards humanising man's thoughts. The humanistic thinkers in all spheres of life found an

3. *Encyclopaedia of the social sciences*, New York : Macmillan, 1937, vol., IV p. 541.

eloquent support with the improvement of the Copernican theory by Kepler and Galileo in the seventeenth century.⁴ This gave impetus to looking at things scientifically. Humanism thus accepts the pronouncements of science tentatively, freedom of choice between alternative desires, postulates and interests free from the influence of religious dogmas. This philosophy was mainly concerned with the emancipation of intellect from the authority of the church. It advocates freedom of thoughts and actions in religious and other fields of human life. It, however, gave birth to the Reformation Movement in Germany and the French Revolution in France⁵. Bertrand Russell remarks that it produced very great men, such as Leonardo, Michelangelo and Machiavelli. It liberated educated men from the narrowness of medieval culture leading to individualism. This freedom led to an wonderful display of genius in art, literature, politics and in other fields. Though it considers reason to be the final judge of what is true, good and beautiful, yet it insists on reason for fully recognising the emotional aspect of man. It is a many-sided philosophy congenial to the modern age, and is also aware of the teachings of history and of the long legacy of philosophy. The task of humanism is to organise the chief elements of philosophic truth into consistent and intelligible whole and to make that synthesis a mighty force and reality in the minds and action of living men.

From the discussions we notice that humanism is a man-oriented philosophy - a philosophy of man's concern with his environment, and hence people from different fields of enquiry have dealt with humanism. Europe, in the middle ages, was largely oblivious of man's creative faculty and, as such, in the fourteenth century Italy and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries other parts of Western Europe felt the rediscovery of its glorious past. In peaking of such a rediscovery the humanists rejected the medieval heritage and chose the classical period. This rebirth was at the root of the Renaissance in Europe. But this view can not be accepted without qualification, because man's first encounter with nature, and his attempts for survival were the expression of his manliness, and right from this moment humanism might be supposed to have begun its rise.

4. Note 2, p. 492.

5. Latifa Begam, 'Dr. G.C. Dev., the Humanist', *Philosophy and progress*, Vol. II, June, 1984, p. 91.

Whatever view-point we favour, we must be convinced that the birth of humanism was synchronous with man's first confrontation with his environment. So humanism can not be the monopoly of one or two nations. It is the proud heritage of mankind in general.

Though the idea humanism is a modern coining and is synchronous with the Renaissance of Europe, yet its presence in some form or other is not untraceable in this land. Bangladesh which is a meeting place of the ancient, medieval and the modern thoughts and ideas has been a product of their inter-mixture. Though this land underwent several political changes, Yet her living and thinking flowed like a perennial stream. In the ancient period of her history and culture she had the legacy of her popular thought and culture in the form of the 'Lokayata Darshan' (People's philosophy) depicted in her folklore, and in the Budhistic Philosophy and some other Indian systems of thought which specially betray the revolt against Brahmanistic thought. Though humanistic outlook had not been wanting in Bengal and the south Asian subcontinent, the impact of the humanism of Renaissance Europe had its far-reaching effect on the thinking of the people of Bengal. In fact the first impact of modern humanism was felt in Bengal, and then spread to other parts of south Asia. The Western humanistic approach to life and society came to this land with the advent of the British in India, specially in the nineteenth century. The impact of the Renaissance which lifted Europe from the limitations of the middle ages now infused a new life in Bengal's intellectual tradition, brought about revolutionary changes in her thoughts and ideas. These changes were secular and were the result of English education that a section of Bangalis eagerly received and assimilated. This gave rise to what we call the 'Bengal Renaissance'. In the nineteenth century, Bengal came in contact with English education and was thereby initiated to the Western concept of humanism, democracy, and nationality. This new vista of knowledge brought Bengali intellectuals to a new enlightenment led them to a stage of enormous creativity.

II. Humanism in Rammohun Roy's thought :

The period produced a galaxy of reputed writers, thinkers and social workers whose mission was directed towards the upliftment of the status of man. Men like Raja Rammohan Roy

(1772-1833), H.I.V. Derozio (1809-1831), Devendrahath tagore (1817-1905), Keshub Chandra Sen (1833-1884), Akshay Kumar Datta (1820-1886), Michael Madhusudan Datta, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), and others came forward to save the wretched victims of social injustice and religious superstitions. The measures adopted by the reformers were not accepted so easily. The conservative section threw strong challenge and unyielding opposition to the reformers. As a result, there was a tug-of-war between the progressive and the reactionary sections.

It should be noted here that the introduction of novel ideas in the nineteenth century Bengal had its far-reaching effects on the people's ways of life. The English educated Bengalis came forward to purge the society of all evils. They tried to remove misunderstandings centering round the practices of religious rites and rituals. They also took initiative to improve Bengali literature and to extend the dimension of their culture in order to bring the nation to march in line with the progressive thoughts of the world. The English educated intellectuals of Bengal also started constitutional measures towards the liberation of the motherland.

It was found that the then Hindu society was steeped in religious superstitions of various types, such as, sati-rite, early marriage and polygamy. The custom like sati-rite was, no doubt, an inhuman act that was a torture on women folks. Polygamy which was a bad practice prevailing in the society, was also torture on women folks. Further, the society was strictly caste-ridden where the sudras stood at the lowest stratum. The lower-caste people suffered untold miseries. In these dire need the Hindus welcomed western education, while the Muslims, robbed of their territorial authority, economic solvency and social privileges, developed distrust towards the British rule. So in the first phase of reawakening, the Muslim community could reap little or no harvest from western education. But they realised their fault and began to make good the loss in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Nawab Abdul Lalif (1828-93), Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) and other Muslim intellectuals came

forward to remove the veils of dark ness form the minds of Muslim Community by spreading western education.

Some generous Hindu repormers realised the status of man and manifested humanistic attitude through their revolutionary works and thoughts in the nineteenth century. The most prominent feature of the nineteenth century in India is the rapid transformation from medievalism to modernism which was inaugurated by Raja Rammohun Roy. For this reason he is rightly called the father of modern India. The social evils mainly arising out of ignorance and superstitions led to revolt that had been resulted from secular motives based on rationalistic critiques of the society leading to a secular as well as religious movements for social reforms. Rammohun Roy was the first rebel who challenged the older systems and heralded the birth of new India which could not see the light without reformation. He vividly described the degraded state of society and acknowledged the virtues of western learning, social institutions and the western social ethics. He clearly understood the need of both social and religious reforms for social advancement. So to get rid of the pitiable situation, he initiated his many sided reforms, i.e., religious, social, literary, educational and political. A.F.S. Ahmed says : "Age-old traditions, beliefs and rituals which were never challenged before were for the first time attacked from within"⁶

Of course, Rammohun did not cut off connections with the past but made a synthesis of ideas of the old and the new. He began to rationalise the Hindu religion and observed that idolatry, which had been deep-rooted in the minds of the Hindus, was destroying the texture of the society. He wrote commentaries on the Upanishads and showed the unity of Godhead and called his religious brethren to the worship of one God which he thought to be the true teaching of Hinduism. In 1815 Rammohun founded a society called 'Atmiya sabha' to propagate the true spirits of Hinduism and to exchange news and views among friends.

6. A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, "The Bengal Renaissance and the Muslim Community" in *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance*, ed. by David Kopf and safiuddin Joarder, p. 34.

The 'Brahmo Sabha' was established in 1828 by him to bestow mental benefits on the people from the rich treasure of theological and moral instructions in the Vedanta. But this attempt at turning the minds of his coneligionists from the erroneous conceptions and practices of idolatry was severely criticised and as such, angry epithets, such as, destroyer of religion, 'renegade' etc. were hurled at him.⁷ to call Rammohun a destroyer of religion was the most unjustified, unfortunate and uncharitable accusation. He said in his autobiographical sketch :

"The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition to Brahminism but to a perversion of it"⁸ he took up some reformative measures : to introduce English education as well as to found schools and colleges for both men and women, the enactment of Sati-rite, the removal of press Act, to stop polygamy and early marriage, to call people to the worship of one god-to plead in favour of Brahmoism and to fight for granting civil and political rights to the people. His heart always cried for his countrymen and cherished to do good to the people and the nation. He realised that to broaden the outlook of his countrymen as well as for the establishment of the ideals of freedom and, an unbiased mind, there was no alternative for English education. He also could come to realise that in order to know the modern world and to create a new epoch based on contemporary scientific knowledge, English Language was indispensable. Having settled in Calcutta in 1814, Rammohun Roy chalked out programme for reformation. The objective of his 'Atmiya Sabha' was to exchange news and views among the educated intelligentsia.

The Hindu College was established in 1817. Though Rammohun was not associated with the college committee, he wholeheartedly supported the scheme. He established an English School at his own cost. He bought a land for the school and built the school building in 1822 at his own cost. Instead of establishing English schools and colleges, the government

7. J.K. Majumdar (ed), *Raja Rammohun Roy and the progressive Movements in India : A selections from Records (1775-1845)*, Calcutta: Art press, 1941, p. XX.

8. J.C. Ghose (ed.), *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta: 1885, p. 224.

desired to establish a Sanskrit college in 1823 in Calcutta. In protest of their decision Rammohun wrote a letter to Lord Amherst, the then governor General. He wrote :

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian Philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy with other natural sciences.⁹

Rammohun Roy urged upon the necessity of knowing European science and culture instead of oriental studies for general enlightenment. The above mentioned letter was a pointer to his sagacity to see the real way of modernism in his country. Though English education for which he advocated was not implemented in this country during his life time, yet his advocacy was finally materialised. Mr. Howel remarked : It took twelve years of controversy, the advocacy of Macaulay and the decisive notion of the Governor General before the committee could, as a body, acquiesce, in the policy urged by him (Rammohun)"¹⁰

Rammohun studied the Vedas, the Bible and the Quran and came to the conclusion that the real spirit of true religion lies in the consciousness of one God and in the realisation of the value of life. He presented 'Tohfatal Mauahidin' to the theists and was above any sort of parochialism of sectarian religion. The Brahmo Samaj was open to all worshippers of one God irrespective of their castes and creeds. He thought not for the people of any particular religion but for mankind as a whole, especially for the poor people of his country.

9. *English works*, p. 774.

10. Quoted in Saumendranath Tagore, *Rammohun Roy, His Role in Indian Renaissance*, Calcutta : The Asiatic society, 1975, p. 24.

In England while at church he was found to shed tears. Once a friend asked what made him weep. The Raja replied that the remembrance of his poor countrymen gave him no rest.¹¹

Rammohun declared crusade against all social and religious crimes. Among those the satirite was the most important one. It should be mentioned here that the British Government from the very beginning of their administration were aware of this inhuman rite. But they did not venture to stop it by legislation for the fear of revolution. They had been waiting for an congenial atmosphere. In 1817, the Nizamat court circulated some rules imposing duties to the Magistrates and the police officials to check this inhuman practice.¹² But the measures taken by the Government went in vain. The Government came to realise that mere restrictions would not mitigate the sufferings of the poor Hindu widows.

In this dire need, Rammohun appeared on the scene to play his befitting role. He wrote and published several tracts on Satirite Rammohun quoted from the scriptures and showed that it was not supported by the shastras. Rammohun's strong arguments created an atmosphere that gradually public opinion was going in favour of Rammohun's interpretation of the shastric utterances. He published his first tract on sati in 1818 and second tract in 1819. He translated both the tracts in English. His tracts on sati created a stir in the society and received the attention of the Government. The India Gazette of guly 1818 wrote :

"We come to know that the small tract on sati has been reprinted in a Bengali journal. This tract will bring a good result. This Bengali journal was the 'Sambad Kaumudi'¹³.

Rammohun's enlightened reasorings made a good stride towards forming public opinion. But the conservative section stood dead against the abolition of satirite.

-
11. Quazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*. Calcutta : Biswabharati Granthalaya, 1363 (B.S.), p. 38.
 12. Nagendranath Chatterjee, *Mohatma Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta : Day's Publishing, 1381 (B.S.) p. 171-172.
 13. *The Indian Gazette*, July, 1819.

In 1825 the dispute between Rammohun and conservative section arose again. The wave in favour of satirite was so strong that the Government did not dare to stop it through legislation. Lord Amherst, the then Governor General said :

"I strongly believe that if anything is done incompletely that produces no fruit. To abolish satirite completely through legislation, I do not think wise. I have no consent in that work"¹⁴.

In this regulation of Amherst there was a section in which it was told that permission from the Magistrate should be taken personally by the widow. It is needless to say that this solution of the Governor general did not satisfy Rammohun and his followers. On the 4th July, 1828, Lord William Bentinck became the Governor General. Rammohun again came forward and started his movement against satirite. During this time, the Hindu college students directed their attack against the degraded state of Hinduism and supported Rammohun's plan. At last the Government in 1829, ignoring the strong opposition of the conservative section of the people passed the legislation abolishing Satirite. The generous Lord William Bentinck, convinced by the strong arguments of Rammohun Roy and encouraged by the rising tide of public opinion against Satirite, decided to abolish this inhuman custom. In the minute of November, 1829 Bentinck said.

"Government in this act will be following and preceding the tide of public opinion."

It should be acknowledged that the tide of public opinion came from Rammohun's reasonable and humanitarian appeal both in English and in Bengali. S. Natarajan has said.,

"Raja Rammohun Roy must be given the credit for creating the atmosphere for such legislation"¹⁵

Rammohun's religious and social reform movement and the attack of conservative section remind us of Sree Chaitanya's reforms movement in Bengal in the sixteenth century. Sree chaitanya preached Bhakti to protect Hinduism and Hindu society from the attack of other religions.

14. *Ibid*.

15. Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reforms in India*, London : Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 10.

The promotion of human welfare, especially the improvement of the country men was the aim of both Sree chaitanya and Rammohun Roy. Rammohun was greatly influenced by Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill and this helped him undertaking reforms movement.

Rammohun's contribution to literature and culture :

Rammohun was pre-eminently a reformer, an educationist, a humanist, a free thinker of high water mark. Notwithstanding this, he had the first credit of creating prose literature in Bengali. In 1815, he published 'Vedanta Grantha', his first prose work. During the fifteen years of Rammohun's writing from 1815 to 1830, he wrote as many as thirty books in Bengali, besides his works in English and in Persian. Professor Asit Kumar Banerjee, a reputed historian and a critic of Bengali literature, expressed in his famous thesis¹⁶ that Rammohun appeared in the field of literature as a fighter to substantiate his own reasoned views and so his expressions were atonce direct and straight forward, devoid of procrastination and verbosity. Though he quoted professedly from the Shasta, he was, nevertheless, guided by free thinking and rationalistic approach. Saumendranath Tagore thus rightly remarked.

"The excellence that the Bengali prose achieved in literary form under Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath owes its beginning to the Bengali prose form developed by Rammohun"¹⁷

Rammohun Roy's Contribution to politics :

The origin of national consciousness is to be traced to Raja Rammohun Roy. He is rightly called the father of modern Political thought in Bengal. B.B. Majumdar has said, "As the history of western Political thought practically begins with the name of Aristotle, the history of political thought in Modern India begins with Raja Rammohun Roy"¹⁸

We have mentioned earlier that the mission of Rammohun Roy was to do good to the people. But in this mission he was not alone.

16. Asit Kumar Banerjee, *Unbingsha Shatabdir Prathamardha O Bangla Sahitya*, Calcutta : Bookland PVL Ltd., 2nd ed., 1965, p. 99.

17. Note 10, p. 27.

18. B.B. Majumdar, *The History of Political Thought from Rammohun to Dayananda*, Vol. 1., Calcutta University, 1934, p. 1.

Dwarkanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy, prassonno coomer Tagore, Sree Ramchandra Vidyavagish, Boycontonath Roy, Radhapersad Roy and Ramanath Tagore were his main companions. These wealthy, educated and distinguished persons gathered round Rammohun and engaged in humanitarian activity. Rammohun wrote booklets, pamphlets and published journals to infuse western rationalistic ideas among his country men. In 1821, he started a Bengali journal named the Sambad Kaumudi. He also started a persian newspaper the Miratul Akhbar. His Sambad Kaumudi ventilated public grievances and supported moves at securing social welfare and progress. In 1830, radical London journal described the Samdad Kaumuedi as 'The morning chronicle of India' advocating freedom, opposed to corruption and tyranny'¹⁹ His the Miratul Akhbar which was mainly for the educated classes dealt not only with internal affairs but also with international problems. Rammohun was a lover of liberty for which he supported the Turks in stead of the Europeans in the Greek war of Independence. He gave a public dinner at the town hall when he heard the news of the establishment of constitutional Government in spain. He became over joyed on hearing the success of the second French Revolution. When the constitutional Government of Naples was overthrown in 1821, he felt so much grief that he had to cancel an engagement with Mr. Backingham, the editor of the Calcutta Journal. Rammohun wrote :

From this late unhappy news, I am obliged to conclude that I shall not live to see liberty universally restored to the nations of European colonies Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been and never will be ultimately successful.²⁰

Rammohun fought for the freedom of the press which he considered to be one of the best safeguards of liberty. In 1823, Mr. Adam, the acting Governor General, took away the freedom of the press by issuing a press ordinance. He along with five of his

19. Note 6, p. 88.

20. Works, p. 923. Here raja referred to India as a colony of Britain and cherished love for freedom.

friends submitted a petition against the press regulations to the Supreme Court. This remarkable document regarding the freedom of the press has been regarded as the 'Areopagitica of Indian History'. This memorandum was dismissed by Sir Francis Magnaghten, the acting judge of supreme court. As a mark of protest Rammohun discontinued the publication of his persian weekly, 'Miratul Akhbar'. Having been frustrated in his efforts to restore freedom of the press, Rammohun appealed to the king of England in Council against the ordinance.

Though Rammohun's protest against the press ordinance did not bear fruits immediately and his appeal to the king in council remained unfulfilled, nevertheless efforts did not end in vain. His attempts gradually proved the way for the liberation of the press. He not only published newspapers but was also the harbinger of a new way in the realm of journalism. In 1835, Metcalfe put forward an Act that repealed the restrictions on the press in Bengal and Bombay. Rammohun did not live to see the free press in India but the Indians will never forget the move of Rammohun and his followers for the free press. In the free press dinner given to Charles Metcalfe in the town Hall on the 9th February, 1838, Mr. Leith proposed a toast to the memory of Rammohun Roy and prossonno coomar Tagore rose as a friend of late Rammohun Roy to thank the liberator of the press.²¹

Rammohun opposed a Jury Act passed in 1826. The Act stated that from now on any Hindu or Mohummedan could be tried by either Europeans or native christians, but no christion, either European or native was to be tried either by a Hindu or a Muslim juror. Rammohun with the help of one of his English friends crawford submitted petitions against the Act signed by both the Hindus and the Muslims to both houses of parliament. Rammohun argued for political rights which the Indians enjoyed during the Mohammedan rule.

21. *The Asiatic Journal*, May, 1838

In his appeal to the king in council, he said,

"Your Majesty is aware, that under their former Mohammedan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state"²²

Having noticed the racial discrimination of the British Government in the Judicial and Government service, Rammohun made a fervent appeal to the Government to maintain justice between the Europeans and the natives. The Jury Act also provoked protest from the Muslim, Hindu and parsi communities of Bombay. They sent petitions to the parliament. This Act further caused excitement in the presidency of Madras. All these agitations against the jury Act ended in effecting the amendment of the Act and in August, 1832, the amended Indian Act was passed, abolishing the discriminating clause. This successful agitation was one of the political endeavours made on the constitutional lines in the early part of nineteenth century. Rammohun Roy severely Criticised the Government for depriving his countrymen of their political rights.²³

Though Rammohun was not opposed to the East India company and had no aversion to the foreign rule, as the western knowledge and technology which were beneficial to his country came there of, nevertheless he fought for the individual liberty for his countrymen. Besides, that was not the time for demanding self Government or independence. That was a thing of much later development. That Rammohun was a lover of freedom, a champion of liberty was an established truth. While in England he became a staunch supporter of the Reform Bill. When the lords finally passed the Bill in June, 1832, Rammohun was overjoyed. Such was Rammohun's love for justice and liberty. He was a man of constitutional temperament, not a political revolutionary. So he fought for intellectual illumination of his countrymen and thought that the cherished constitutional change might come in this way.

22. *Works*, p. 462.

23. *Ibid*; p. 463.

Rammohun was against the monopoly of rights enjoyed by the East India company. One of the objects of his journey to England was to demand more rights and privileges for the Indians at the time of the renewal of the charter in 1833. He submitted before the select committee demands for the substitution of English for Persian as the official language in the courts of law; separation of judicial and executive functions in the administration of criminal justice; appointment of native in the civil courts; trial by jury; employment of the Indians in the civil service and the consultation of Indian public before enacting legislation. The last point referred to here indirectly pointed out the need for an Indian legislation.

The political demands of Rammohun Roy reveal his sound scholarship, critical analysis and clear thinking. His political views, like his social and religious thinking, arose out of practical necessity of bringing about changes of his countrymen. Taking into consideration his thoughts, ideas and actions. We found that Rammohun Roy was a great humanist and a sound intellectualist in this sub-continent, may in the whole world.

III. Humanism in post Rammohun Renaissance of Bengal :

After the demise of Rammohun Roy in 1833, this progressive humanistic movements were carried on by English educated Hindu youths of Bengal. H.L.V. Derozio, a Eurasian poet, free thinker and a 'rebel' teacher of Hindu college took up the task of reformation. Derozio possessed a magnetic personality and a number of young pupils rallied round him. These students formed an Academic Association with his cooperation. He became the first president of the Association while Umacharan Bose its first Secretary. Rasick Krishna Mallick, Krishnamohon Banerjee, Hare Chandra Ghose and others were main speakers in the meetings sponsored by the association, whereas Ram Tanu Lahiri, Shib Chandra Dev, Peary Chand Mitra and others were the audience. They were afterwards called "Young Bengal".

The young men gathered round Derozio's hospitable table, read their papers, discussed and debated night after night under

his (Derozio's) presidency. They felt encouraged by Derozio to think freely and discussed the age-old social, moral and political problems. They created a stir in the Hindu society and had started a new-era in the history of Bengal. What the 'young Bengal' and their master intended to focus was the degraded state of the Hindus as well as to re-establish their prestigious position by eradicating the causes. The Hindu patriot compared the 'Academic Association' with the Cambridge and the Oxford club.²⁴

Derozio's patriotic and humanistic feeling has been expressed in his poem 'In the Harp of India,' 'Freedom to the Slave,' 'Thermopole', 'To India : My Native Land' etc. In these poems, he focused the injustices and inhumanities of the society. He also dreamt of free India in his poem. The Calcutta Gazette wrote,

"Probably before Derozio, no Indian had depicted the picture of modern age either in English or in Bengali poem. He is the first person who dreamt of free India."²⁵

After his removal from the college, Derozio took the profession of a journalist. Later on he became the assistant editor of the Indian Gazette and an editor of the Calcutta literary Gazette. He contributed to the Calcutta Magazine the Indian Magazine and the Bengal Annual. Through his writings Derozio contributed much to the development of humanistic ideas among his countrymen. He loved his countrymen and was moved by their will and woes, sorrows and sufferings. He waged crusade against all kinds of injustice and slavery. Neither the progressives nor the conservatives did utter a single word regarding slave trade. But this humanist poet expressed his joyous feeling in his poem, 'Freedom to the slave' when the slaves were declared free in 1827.²⁶

24. January., 1868; Quoted in Jogesh chandra Bagal, *Derozio*. Calcutta. Jiggyassa, 1382 (B.S.) p. 71.

25. *The Calcutta Gazette*, 29 December, 1881.

26. Quoted in Kumud Kumer Bhattacharya, *Rammohun Derozio Mullayon*, Calcutta, Chirayat Prokasoni PVT: Ltd., 1982, p. 18.

The humanist poet died prematurely at the age of only 22. But his impact continued to be manifested in collective ways through his young disciples. Derozio's hopes and aspirations were carried into effect by his students. They were gifted with intellectual powers and energies. They make valuable contributions to social, cultural, literary and political fields. They supported the reforms movement of the reformers. They supported Rammohun's plan to abolish satirite. It should be mentioned here that the agitations against polygamy and for widow marriage were started earlier. The 'young Bengal' were aware of these problems. In 1836, the 'Gyanannesan' a reformist journal published a list of Polygamous kulins. In 1842, young Bengal's mouth piece, the Bengal Spectator' contended in favour of widow marriage and said.

"If man can marry after his wife's death, why should not a woman marry after her husband's death. . proposals have been given for many years, We should not stop our writing till it is not materialised by a new principle."²⁷ Susobhan Sarker rightly remarks the role of Derozians in the Humanist movement in nineteenth century Bengal when he says.

"It (Academic Association) was supplemented by an epistolary Association in which the Derozians exchanged opinions in the true Renaissance, humanist style"²⁸

In 1845 Devendranat Tagore formally accepted Brahma Religion. Before that he started the Tattwabodhini Sabha in 1839. In the year of his conversion, he also started the 'Tattwabodhini Journal. This journal played a very important role in the awakening of the Bengalis under the able editorship of Akshay Kumar Datta. Tattwabodhini Sabha bridged the gulf that separated the followers of Rammohun Roy and the Hindu College radicals. Many disciples of Derozio such as Tarachand Chakravarty, Peary Chand Mitra, Chandra Sekhar Dev, Ramtanu Lahiri, Ramgopal Ghose become the members of Tattwabodhini Sabha. This sabha became a forum for religious and social reformers.

27. Quoted in Nemat sadhan Bose, *Indian Awakening and Bengal*, Calcutta : Firma K : L, Mukhopadhyay, 1970, p. 212.

28. Susobhan Sarker, *Bengal Renaissance and other Essays*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1981, p. 117.

It became the organisation of those who stood for progress.²⁹ Many disciples of Derozio such as peary chand Mittra, Ramtanu Lahiri and others participated in literary activities of the nineteenth century. Through their literary activities they had stressed the inclusion of humanistic approach in our thinking and expression.³⁰

The humanistic philosophy which originated in Europe in the fifteenth century, found its way to India through the newly established colleges and universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in which education was Western. The Indian students read the works of the French liberals, Mill's 'Utilitarianism' and 'On Liberty', Thomas pain's 'The Rights of Man', Their works advocated the rights of man, liberty, equality, justice and the dignity for all. They placed man in the centre of the universe, and considered him to be an autonomous, independent and self-determining agent. The teachings of these liberal Western thinkers gave rise to such institutions as democracy and capitalism to guarantee the individual's political and economic rights. All these were successful owing to the reformative activities initiated by the reformers in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The social reforms which was initiated by Rammonun Roy was successfully carried out by Derozio, his young disciples, as well as Devendranath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and others. Through their revolutionary reformative works in various fields, they contributed much to disseminate education, to reorganise the society by removing the ills and oppressions therein, and to create an enlightened Beagali literature in order to make their countrymen realise the status and dignity of man as human beings. They thus felt the entity of the Bengalis in themselves and this realisation evoked a humanitarian feeling in them for their countrymen. As Philanthropists and benevolent sympathisers with the suppressed and oppressed section of the people in the Bengal society, they thus stand in a Unique position comparable to few at that time or even during this time.

29. Promath Nath Bose, *A History of Hindu Civilisation during Prttish Rule*, Calcutta : Newman and Co, 1894, 98, 99.

30. Sunil Kumer Dey, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth century* 2nd ed, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962, p. 607.

DELWAR HOSSAIN AHMED MEERZA AND HIS UTILITARIAN REFORMS OF THE THEN MUSLIM SOCIETY : A BRIEF SURVEY.

M. Shafiqul Alam*

The main purpose of this paper is to present a vivid, critical and pragmatic utilitarian social reforming views of Delwar Hossain Ahmed Meerza [1840-1913]¹ with a comparative estimate of his contemporary Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur [1828-1893]. While making out this comparative study, the other three notable giants Syed Ahmed Khan [1817-1898], Syed Ameer Ali [1849-1928] and Syed Ameer Hossain would also come under the purview of the discussion. Both Delwar Hossain Ahmed² and Abdul Latif, no doubt, were progressive in outlook but the former was the symbol of modernity, while the latter was of a follower of traditionality. Both of them worked for the welfare of the Muslim community from a separate point of view but the aim remained almost the same. The progress of the Muslim society was their actual dream. While doing this work, a focus would be given on the nineteenth century Hindu-Muslim society in order to understand clearly the weakness of the Muslim community. The intention of the study is to find out the causes responsible for the decline of the Muslim society in the nineteenth century and to offer quick remedies, as presented³ by Delwar Hossain Ahmed, through the process of interpretation.

¹the first Muslim graduate in Bengal, born in Hooghly. His use of appellation "Meerza" shows that his forebears claimed Mughal ancestry. His father's name was Gulam Qudir. He was awarded the title of "Khan Bahadur" in 1894. He used to write pseudonyms of "Ismahu Ahmed", "Mutazellah" and "Saeed". He wrote many essays and books on Mohammedan social problems. He was elected Vice-President of Central Mohammedan Association in 1911. He also worked on several capacities. Sultan Jahan Salik ed. *Muslim Modernism in Bengal : Selected Writings of Delwar Hossain Ahmed Meerza 1840-1913*, [Dhaka: Centre for Social Studies, 1980], pp. iii-vii.

²same as Delawarr Hossaen Ahmed.

³Delwar Hossain Ahmed, *Essays on Mohammedan Social Reforms* in 2 vols. Calcutta : Thacker, Spink & Co., 1889.

*Asstt. Registrar, University of Chittagang & Ph.D. Fellow of IBS.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Hindu society was dominated by the conservative and orthodox religious ideas. Raja Rammohan Roy [1772-1833]⁴ played a vital role through his reform movement. His liberal Brahmo movement saved Hindus from having been converted into Christianity. The Hindu society was suffering from the social vices like; caste discrimination, sati-rite, widow remarriage, childhood marriage etc. To remove these customs and prejudices, some prominent intellectual social reformers from Hindu society came forward and worked hard. Along with Rammohan Roy, the name of Akshay Kumar Dutta [1820-1886], Iswar Chandra Vidysagar [1820-1891], Bankeem Chandra Chatterjee [1838-1894], and Keshab Chandra Sen [1838-1884] were most important in this line.

The early nineteenth century social reformers in Bengal saw the position of Hindu women as the greatest abuse in society and their crusade against 'sati' occupied most of their attention. So, the customs of sati naturally attracted the attention of Rammohan Roy.⁵ He was a stern fighter against social evils and a champion of those suffering from social oppression. This is illustrated by his historic campaign against the inhuman custom of the sati.⁶

Askhay Kumar Dutta was famous especially for his equation "Labour = Corn; Labour + Prayer = Corn; therefore, Prayer = 0" resembles Mill's Logic.⁷

⁴regarded by common consent as one of the most outstanding personalities of the nineteenth century India. This view rests upon his manifold activities in social, religious, literary, educational and political spheres, backed by a robust intellect and a high degree of rational thinking which enables him to rise above current beliefs and prejudices and extends his version to a distant horizon far beyond the general conception of the time. R.C. Majumder, *On Rammohan Roy*, [Calcutta : The Asiatic Society, 1984], p. 19.

⁵Kanailal Chattopadhyay, *Brahmo Reform Movement* [Calcutta : Papyrus, 1983], p. 12.

⁶Sumit Sarkar, *A Critique of Colonial India*, [Calcutta : Papyrus, 1985], p. 17.

⁷See for Bengali, Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Manash O Bangla Sahitya* [Muslim minds and Bengali literature], Dhaka : Lekhak Sanga Prakashan, 1387 B.S., p. 17.

He tried to combine the ego-centric philosophy of Bentham with the Aristotelian conception that the development of man is derivative, largely dependent on the nature of the society.⁸

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar secured the first act raising the age of consent in 1860. He combined his extraordinary intellect with an iron determination and advocated for remarriage of widows. He also worked hard from the beginning of his service life for the cause of women education.⁹

Bankeem Chandra was a direct follower of Rammohan and Vidyasagar. He believed that a widow herself should decide whether she ought to re-marry or not after the death of her husband. Legalized widowhood of a woman upto the end of her life is an act contradictory to common sense. He also worked for widow remarriage.¹⁰

Keshab Sen was the first among the Brahmo Samaj leaders to take up the cause of the upliftment of women.¹¹ He played an important part in making the Brahmo samaj of East Bengal a well-knit organization. Immediately after joining the Brahmo samaj in 1857, he undertook the responsibility of reorganizing the Brahmo samaj.¹²

Thus, the nineteenth century Hindu society paved the way for such social reforms as the abolition of the satirite, introduction of widow remarriage and spread of modern and pragmatic education of the west.

⁸John Plamentaz, *English Utilitarians*, [Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1968], pp. 93-107. Also, Satyandranath Pal, *Rise of Radicalism in the 19th Century* [Calcutta : Manisha, 1991], p. 396.

⁹See for Bengali, Biman Basu [ed.] *Prasanga Vidyasagar* [Calcutta : Bangiya Saksharta Prasher Samity, 1991], pp. 311-20.

¹⁰Vora Novikovo, *Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya*, trans. by Nishitish Banerjee [Calcutta : National Publishers, 2nd ed., 1982], p. 103.

¹¹V.S. Naravane, *Modern Indian Thought* [Bombay : Asia Publishing House, rept., 1967], p. 38.

¹²Amalendu De, *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal* [Calcutta : Ratna Prakashan, 1974], p. 133.

Almost during the same period in the Muslim society in the nineteenth century, the so-called Olemus i.e., religious preachers were strongly opposed to modern education. They enacted 'Fatwa' that western knowledge is prohibited in Islam, as it is the subject of infidels. Thus the advancement of Muslim community especially in the field of education was obstructed and gradually declining. Education was the main problem of the then Muslim society. Delwar Hossain Ahmed, the first Muslim graduate in this sub-continent, wrote about a century before on the decline of the Muslim society in Bengal. He clearly understood the causes of their decline. The other Muslim thinkers, like, Syed Ahmed, Abdul Latif, Ameer Ali and Ameer Hossain also worked for the regeneration of the Muslim community.

Fact reveals that Delwar Hossain Ahmed was not an illiterate moulvie. He was a highly educated man of his time who took B.A. degree in 1861 from Calcutta University. After graduation, he held the position of Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector, which was a post highly coveted by an Indian Muslim in those days.¹³ Aside his job responsibility, he was concerned with the problems of Muslim community although he could not participate in the active politics of the day. Observing the miserable and pitiable condition of the Bengali Muslims, he endeavoured himself to identify the causes of their backwardness. Through his regular forceful writings in *The Englishman*, *The Moslem Chronicle* and *The Mussalman*, the leading weeklies of the older Calcutta, he gave various suggestions for the improvement of the Muslim society.

Delwar Hossain Ahmed believed that the existing social institutions and practices of Islam were not directly connected with pure religious faith and beliefs. These are being exercised in the Muslim society, responsible for their miserable and wretched present condition. He also believed that nothing in this world is exempted from operation of the laws of nature - nothing can therefore be exempted from the laws of evolution.

¹³History of Services of Officers holding Gazetted Appointments under the Government of Bengal (compiled in the office of the Accountant General, Bengal) for the year 1889, p. 547.

Everything is changeable. So, the condition of the Muslims would definitely be changed. But it does not mean that it will automatically be changed. The Muslims will have to work for that.¹⁴

Darwin's *Theory of Evolution* was published in 1859. It is not the question whether Delwar Hossain Ahmed was influenced by this theory or was aware of this innovating theory but it is sure that he was inclined to and conscious about the current problems of his Mohammedan co-religionists. And he rightly understood the problem with which Muslim society had been confronted.

Let us look at the condition of the then Muslim society. Around 1860s the Muslims of Bengal were in a hostile and disguised position about English rule in India and western knowledge as well. The rebels of 'Farazi' and 'Wahabi' movements made Muslims suspicious to the English administration. An impartial inquiry into the matters will reveal the fact that the 'Fatwas' were mainly responsible for the repulsive attitude of the Muslims towards the British rulers and the western education. Fortunately, in early 1870s this attitude of the Muslims was changed through some renowned Muslim personalities. Syed Ahmed, Abdul Latif, Ameer Ali, Ameer Hossain and Keramat Ali [1800-1873] worked to change the minds of Muslims towards British rule and English education. To some extent they were able to remove the misunderstanding between the rulers and their Muslim subjects by building up a bridge of reliance. Hence, the Muslims were ready to accept English education and the situation turned Muslims mind to the western knowledge.

There was the synthetic view of Syed Ahmed Khan, who sought to reconcile the spirit of Islam with that of modern west.¹⁵ He came of an aristocratic family of central Asia origin and was the scholar in oriental language.

¹⁴See for Bengali Shahidul Islam, "Adhunik Biswa O Islam [modern world and Islam], *The Dally Janakantha*, Dhaka, April 1, 1984, p. 6.

¹⁵Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of Modern India 1740-1947* [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965], p. 288.

His combination of oriental with western learning fitted him to be an interpreter between the conservative east and the encroaching west. His forceful character enabled him to impress his ideas on the Indian Muslims.¹⁶ He gave the community a new sense of justification and a new line of conduct. He also made possible a new sense of security by pointing the way to a reconciliation with the ruling power.

Syed Ameer Ali promoted the cause of education among the Muslims and agitated for a share for the Muslims in the government services. He was the founder of the Central National Mohammedan Association, Calcutta. He founded it to promote welfare of the Muslims by 'all legitimate and constitutional means'. Ameer Ali in his paper entitled 'A Cry from the Indian Mohammedans' [1882] traced decadence of the Muslim community. But he had no direct contact with the common people and their problems. His association worked for the welfare of the selected few and not for the common people.¹⁷

Syed Ameer Hossain, a close associate of Ameer Ali, believed in the ideas of regeneration of the Muslim community through English education and their large scale participation in the government services. He believed in the development of the Muslim community in alliance with the British government.¹⁸ In order to give the Muslim an English education, Ameer Hossain proposed to abolish the Hooghly madrassah and suggested to curtail expenditure on the madrassah education and to open a B.A. College attached to the Calcutta madrassah. Interestingly, the proposal was welcomed by the *Hindoo Patriot*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *Bangalee* and the other leading journals of Calcutta. Of course, the proposal was partially fulfilled and facilities had been given to the Muslim students to get admission in Calcutta College at a lower fee.¹⁹

¹⁶Spear, *The Oxford History*, op cit., p. 359.

¹⁷Pradip Kumar Lahiri, *Bengali Muslim Thought 1818-1947*. [Calcutta : K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1991], pp. 51-52.

¹⁸Syed Ameer Hossain, *A Pamphlet on Mohammedan Education in Bengal* [Calcutta : Bose Press, 1880], pp. 20-24.

¹⁹De, *Roots of Separatism*, op cit., p. 35.

Like Syed Ahmed Khan, Abdul Latif had been working for a reconciliation between the rulers and the Bengali Muslims. His extortion for English education more or less had been accepted by the Muslim community. The reason behind this may be considered, as keeping religious sentiment intact, he was earnestly supplicating western knowledge for his co-religionists. Delwar Hossain was also advocating for English education suggesting establishment of more colleges in the different parts of India by abolishing some madrassahs. He was a radical, and was influenced by the progressive ideas of Henry Louis Derozio [1809-1832]²⁰ who advocated for the modification or even for bringing about certain change or abolishing the social and religious institutions of Islam in the light of modern needs and ideas with the changing circumstances. He was also in favour of Vernacular i.e., Bengali education and observed that most of the Bengali people use Vernacular language in their day to life. So Bengali should be included in the curriculum of education.²¹ It is to be noted here that Delwar Hossain put similar emphasis on English and Bengali. The main difference between Delwar Hossain and Abdul Latif was that the former was in favour of English and Bengali education by abolishing madrasa education thus changing some social and religious institutions; while the latter emphasized on English and Persian or Arabic education, whereby necessary, by keeping religious sentiment and education intact. Thus Delwar Hossain may be regarded as one of the earliest Bengali Muslim nationalists and as the pioneer of Vernacular education in Bengal.²²

²⁰ played a considerable role in building up a social and radical consciousness among the young men of the older Calcutta which ultimately took the shape of Young Bengal Movement. He actively promoted the radical ideas. According to the testimony of one of his followers [Rashikrishna Mallick ?] "It was he [Derozio] that first awakened in the minds of his pupils a curiosity and a thirst for knowledge It was he that aroused them to think for themselves". A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal 1818-1835*. [Calcutta : The Technical and General Press, 2nd ed., 1976], p. 48, fn. 1.

²¹ Salik, *Muslim Modernism in Bengal*, op cit., p. xi.

²² *ibid.*, xli.

To compare Delwar Hossain Ahmed's view with that of Abdul Latif, it may further be said that the latter advocated the cause of English education for the Muslim community merely for their material benefit simply ignoring Bengali as their mother tongue. Similarly, it may be said that though an advocate of vernacular education Delwar Hossain seems to have written mostly in English and contributed nothing to Bengali. He represented a thought in the late nineteenth and early part of twentieth centuries, which did not seem to have any remarkable predecessor. In reality, the conservative Muslim society did not accept his modern and radical ideas.

Abdul Latif made a sharp line of demarcation between urban elite and rural population and suggested different types of education for different classes of people.²³ Delwar Hossain realized that for the promotion of the general improvement of Muslim community in India, the existing communication gap between the urban elite and the rural population should be bridged. He strongly opposed the type of education that was being imparted in the madrassahs. He advocated their abolition and suggested that new Colleges should be established in Calcutta and other cities for the exclusive benefit of the Muslims where English, Bengali and other modern subjects would be taught. According to him, the education which was given in the madrassahs was "utterly unsuited to the times and it was a mere waste of means to supply people with that has no present value and will be of any future use".²⁴

The main difference between Abdul Latif and Delwar Hossain Ahmed was that the former was of conservative attitude, whereas the latter belonged to a radical and most progressive mode of thinking of the day. It is perhaps the period, in which they lived, and which had influenced their thoughts and ideas.

Abdul Latif sought to regenerate the Muslim community with the help of receiving English education by keeping religious sentiments and practices intact.²⁵

²³Enamul Haque, *Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif : His Writings and Related Documents*, [Dhaka : Samudra Prakashani, 1963], p. 68.

²⁴Salik, *Muslim Modernism in Bengal*, op cit., p. 110.

²⁵Mohar Ali ed., *Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur : Autobiography and Other Writings*, [Chittagong: The Mehrub Publications, 1968], p.1.

Delwar Hossain was not of that sort. He wanted to give English education among the Muslims by changing certain orthodox socio-religious institutions and practices of Islam which were inconsistent with their progress. Though they belonged to the same social category, Delwar was perhaps much more pragmatic - a realist - than Latif. He straightforwardly spoke against the conservatism of the old leadership and their aversion to Bengali and also talked about the problems of the ordinary Muslim freely. His concern for the well being of the ordinary Muslim found reflections in his recognition of the fact that for a Bengali Muslim there was no other alternative than to accept Bengali as his own language. While Abdul Latif may be regarded as a conservative loyalist, Delwar Hossain is a bold and a liberal-logical thinker.

Thus, Delwar Hossain Ahmed who was an exceptional thinker among his contemporaries, fought against some superstitious practices in the customs of Muslim society through his ironic writings. This is mostly evident in his writing entitled, *"The Economical Condition of the Muslims"* in connection with loans and banking transactions.²⁶ He sought to regenerate the Muslims by reforms and used to write essays in English in order to bring progressive changes in the outlook of the Bengali Muslims. Delwar Hossain urged the Muslims to adapt to English education and to reforms. Like other westernized Muslim leaders, he gave encouragement to the spirit of exclusiveness.²⁷

Delwar Hossain Ahmed was a radical thinker and was more secular in his thoughts and activities than Abdul Latif. He may rightly be called a theoretician who himself seriously wrote keeping in view the welfare of the Muslim community.

As a critic, it may be said that Delwar Hossain Ahmed graduated with a sound knowledge and proficiency in English language and literature. The European thought and ideology got a strong movement in his mind.

²⁶Salik, *Muslim Modernism in Bengal*, 1980, p. 7.

²⁷Lahiri, *Bengali Muslim Thought*, *op cit.*, p. 53.

When he was advocating against the laws of inheritance or succession, marriage and divorce, seclusion of women slavery and concubinage, improvident habits, impractical business norms and immutability of Quranic laws, it was usual that his annual confidential reports would be very favourable. As the Britishers were not Muslims, anything focussing against the tradition and beliefs of Islam - its laws and practices - whatever it might be, were favourable to get their support and help. Delwar Hossain was thus obtaining favour from the British administration and got rapid promotion and appointments.²⁸ But it is also true that he had a careful mind for the Bengali Muslims. Due to his limitation for the cause of government service, he could not participate in the active politics of the day. He used to write pseudonyms. Not only this, after his retirement from government service [1894], he was a regular contributor to the leading news papers of Calcutta. He is the first Muslim thinker in India who clearly and bravely expressed his honest feeling that worldly laws should be separated from the religious laws, if we want the progress of Muslim community at all.²⁹

However, Muslim society was far backward than the member of the other communities, especially of Hindus. For this estimation, one Shila Sen may be quoted. She writes :

in the nineteenth century the Muslim in Bengal was economically, socially and politically backward in relation to the minority community. This generated feeling among the Muslims that they were economically exploited, culturally subjugated and politically dominated by Hindus.³⁰

²⁸appointed as Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector in 1861 (2nd grade), promoted to the 1st grade and confirmed, vide appointment file no. 2D-11 [1-47]; held the post of Inspector General of Registration and act as Registrar General of Births and Deaths, Marriages and Divorces, file nos. 1R-2 [1-3] and 6c-16 [1-6]. Acted as a Member of Bengal Legislative Council, vide file no. 18L-20 [1-13], Proceedings of the Bengal Government, 1872-1899.

²⁹See for Bengali, Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh : Jattiyatabad Shadhinata Canatantra* [Bangladesh : Nationalism, Freedom and democracy], Dhaka : Agami Prakashani, 1993, p. 54.

³⁰Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal 1937-1947* [New Delhi : Impex India, 1976], p.1.

This deteriorating situation will be more clear if we look to Delwar Hossain Ahmed's own views. Having compared the position of the backward Muslims with the Christians, he wrote:

The foremost nations of Christianity are almost every year adding to the general stock of knowledge, while the nations that profess Islamism are probably much more ignorant than during the days of Haroon Rasheed or Mamoon³¹

Regarding present status of the Muslims Delwar Hossain Ahmed wrote : "We have lost our social rank that we are now unable to acquire a liberal education; it is because we have lost our social position that we are now losing our political importance. The acquisition of higher education will no doubt react upon our society."³²

Delwar Hossain Ahmed used to write on several matters even with scientific faith and truths. Regarding the 'Theory of Relativity' and the 'Theory of Change' he expressed his opinion that Muslims could not establish their faith in these two theories which are universally accepted. He wrote :

It is absurd to suppose that the ordinances and institutions of Islam are not subject to the laws of evolution : nothing in this world is exempt from the operation of the laws of nature - nothing can therefore be exempt from the laws of evolution.³³

Delwar Hossain Ahmed did not remain silent by writing up these only; he also offered suggestions as solutions for the Muslims to escape themselves from the miserable ills. He wrote, "There will be no advance until we dissociate our civil polity from our creed, - until we believe that our laws and institutions need modification until we are perfectly free to legislate and reform".³⁴

³¹Both of them ruled Baghdad from 786-809 and 813-833 respectively. They were the most brilliant rulers in the medieval Muslim history of the Caliphate of Baghdad. Salik, *Muslim Modernism in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 26. Also, Islam, "Adhunik Bishwa O Islam", op. cit., p. 6.

³²Salik, op. cit., P. 1.

³³Quoted in Islam, op. cit.

³⁴*Ibid.*

In those days Muslims of Bengal were suffering by many unnecessary social and religious customs and traditions like polygamy, parda etc. This moment Delwar Hossain Ahmed was advocating against the laws of inheritance or succession, marriage and divorce, seclusion of women slavery and concubinage, improvident habits, impractical norms and immutability of the Quranic laws. He believed that all these laws are changeable with the changing circumstances. He strongly felt that without the change of bad customs, the progress of Muslim community would be impossible.

In fact, Delwar Hossain Ahmed, who was a firm advocate of secularism, believed that the union of religion with state had done great harm to Muslim civilization. According to him, Muslims had failed to make substantial contribution to modern knowledge because of lack of intellectual freedom in their society. Among the other evils of contemporary Muslim society which, Delwar Hossain believed, had thwarted the progress of the community were as follows :

1. Since the Quran was read only in Arabic, most people were unable to understand its meaning and therefore it had little impact on their lives.
2. Religious sanction against taking interest had discouraged the accumulation of capital and retarded the growth of trade and commerce.
3. Muslim law of inheritance restricted the freedom to dispose of or bequeath property to anybody according to the will of the owner.
4. Extravagance.
5. Seclusion of women.
6. Polygamy.
7. Concubinage.
8. Slavery.

We may here compare Delwar Hossain Ahmed's views on the society with those of Herbert Spencer [1820-1903]. The latter believed that the society is not static; it is a merely

process of evolution. All the social laws, values, norms, customs and traditions are changeable. Similarly the former also believed that the social and religious institutions as practices in Islam, which are not directly connected with purely faith and belief of Muslims, must be changed. According to him, the cause of the decline of the Mohammedan society is the result of its social degeneracy. And for the development of the Muslim community, old customs and traditions should be changed.³⁵

But the views of Delwar Hossain Ahmed were not accepted by Muslims of Bengal. He was rather attacked by the reactionists. As a result, having the credit of being first graduate in this sub-continent and the pioneer of Bengal renaissance, the Muslims did not remember this personality. Many of us today even do not know the name of this man. We are very much ignorant about the philosophy of this revolutionary great Muslim thinker.

If we analyze Delwar Hossain Ahmed's work, his pragmatic thoughts and ideas impartially we must appreciate his views on social problems. According to him, polygamy is an institution which prevails both among the Hindus and the Mohammedans. It enters largely into the composition of the social mechanism of India. Comparing the defects of the religious practices of the Hindus and the Muslims Bengal, he wrote :

The Hindus and the Mohammedans of Bengals though they are now living together as neighbours for several generations, form two different societies, distinguished from each other by various characteristic features. The Hindu women can not be divorced, nor can she be remarried. Cases of adultery may not be unfrequent, but cases of enticement or seduction are rare, because there is no possibility of ever legalizing it by a marriage. The Mohammedan women is easily divorced and easily remarried, and the hope of finishing the affair by a marriage makes enticement and reduction, a most frequent practice... by social rules or class feelings by the considerations of economy or by domestic happiness.³⁶

³⁵See for details, D.H. Ahmed, *Essays on Mohammedan Social Reforms*, *op cit*.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 3.

Delwar Hossain Ahmed was advocating against the so-called social and religious laws and believing that all these laws are changeable with the changing circumstances. He believed that the decline of the Mohammedan society is due to the Mohammedan laws of succession and inheritance and to the customs of plurality of wives. Polygamy prevents the development of property, and the compulsory sub-division of a mehaal or ta'alluka after the death of the owner prevents the growth of a hereditary and territorial gentry.³⁷

Delwar Hossain Ahmed was in support of self-dependence. He felt that instead of depending wholly on government support, the Muslims should try to improve their lot through self-help. They should try to improve their destiny by their own efforts. He said :

They must learn that no class or community has never acquired a high position in the social scale which does not depend for its progress or improvement on its own efforts ... They must try to understand the necessity of altering their laws and institutions, and making them comfortable to the exigencies of our own position and its environments. They must learn to acquire the spirit of self-reliance and self-responsibility without which every seeming progress must be illusory and every apparent advance must be delusive.³⁸

Let us now devote ourselves to see which institutions and practices of Islam Delwar Hossain Ahmed sought to bring about a change. He believed that the economic backwardness of the Muslims was due to their extravagant habits, indolence and belief in predestination. According to him, the Islamic prohibition on taking interest has also prevented the accumulation of capital.

³⁷D. H. Ahmed, *Essays on Mohammedan Social Reforms*, op cit., p. 21.

³⁸Quoted in Ahmed, "Trends in ... nineteenth century", op cit., p. 122.

Similarly, the Muslim law of inheritance was not conducive to the economic development of the Muslim community. As he observed:

When we see how the business of banking facilitates commerce and how it renders possible the creation of new trades and industries, it becomes apparent how amongst Mohammedans, the connection of religion purely so-called with subjects altogether foreign to it- with criminal law, civil law, laws of inheritance, laws of property, laws of contract, laws of requests- has acted most injuriously on material interests... We have suffered mantally as well as in worldly point of view from connection of our religion with law.³⁹

Anyway, in nineteenth century, fearness among the Bengali Muslims about western knowledge was created exclusively by the so-called moulvies. In practice what do we see? It was observed that in our country, the so-called moulvies use to send their sons to the Medical and the Engineering Colleges; and the Universities for higher studies. But they often express their conservative and orthodox views to the general masses merely for their personal or sectional benefit. As a result, socio-political development of the Muslim community was largely hampered.

In conclusion, it may be said that Delwar Hossain Ahmed brought about a change in our social institutions. According to him, social institutions should be freed from our so-called religious beliefs and practices; and the progress of the Muslim community would then be possible. The day may come in near future when we will be above these superstitions and march on to the path of socio-ethico-political development in its true sense.

³⁹Ahmed, "Trends in ... Nineteenth Century", *op cit.*, pp. 122-23.

MUSLIM STUDENT POLITICS IN PRE-PARTITION BENGAL

Md. Abul Kashem^{*}

Introduction

The decade of 1930 witnessed the growth of student politics in Bengal as well as in India. for during this decade student organizations of various denominations were launched and they headed towards maturity through ups and downs, through rift and unity. The All India Student Federation (AISF) and its Bengal branch were set up at this time. The All India Muslim Student Federation (AIMSF) followed suit to represent the Muslim League in the student world. Its Bengal branch, the All Bengal Muslim Student League (ABMSL) which virtually provided the "army of workers"¹ to the Muslim League for carrying out its policy and programme, was also established in the decade of thirties. This article seeks to trace the development of Muslim student politics in Bengal and determine its relation with various political issues and events up to 1947.

Growth of Muslim Student Politics and Establishment of the All Bengal Muslim Student Association (ABMSA)

Despite the fact that the Muslim League was established in 1906, its policy, during the initial years, was of co-operation with, and conciliation to, the British. So it was handicapped to launch any anti-British movement. Further, the late growth of Muslim Intellectual class was also responsible for the timidity shown by Muslim students of India and Bengal. Moreover, at first, the Muslim League held great apathy against dragging students into politics. Only a few Muslim students were found to take part in the proceedings of the Anti-Circular Society in

^{*}Dr. M. A. Kashem is an Associate Professor, Department of History, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh

November 1906.² Even as late as 1928, only one or two Muslim students associated themselves with the All Bengal Student Association (ABSA).³

In the wake of the Khilafat movement, particularly the Aligarh-based Muslim students joined the fray of agitation. Barring these minor exceptions, Muslim students of Bengal and India remained away from political activities to the end of the 1920s. But at the beginning of the next decade, they began to organize themselves briskly⁴ and this process culminated in the establishment of the All Bengal Muslim Student Association (ABMSA) on December 13, 1933, bringing together a number of district Muslim Student Associations.⁵ Office-bearers of the central organization, elected for the year 1933-34, were : Khan Bahadur Asaduzzaman M.A.B.L. President; Mr F.S. Muiyedzeda, M.A., S. Husain, B.A., S. Huda, B.A. and Ershad Ali, B.A. Vice-Presidents; A. Washeque, B.A. Secretary; Luthfur Rahman Khan, B.A. and S.A.Y.M. Yakub Joint Secretaries; Abul Fazal Chowdhury, Karimuddin Ahmed, Abdul Bari Akhanji and Akhtaruddin Chowdhury Assistant Secretaries and Maulavi Mujibur Rahman Treasurer.⁶ The ideology of the newly formed organization was not clear. But it was evident that a number of non-student and members of the adult generation were included in the executive body.

Although the ABMSA was established as early as 1933, it could count neither support nor even attention from Muslim politicians of the country including the leaders of the Muslim League. In fact, Muslim politics in general, and the Muslim League in particular, were facing serious crisis in Bengal. A number of groups and factions were active right before the provincial election of 1937. Muslim political leaders of the time belonged either to landed aristocracy or to the religious leaders or to the anglicized intellectual class who were totally out of contact with the masses and naturally fell in with coterie interests. The one partial exception was A.K. Fazlul Huq who had always been an advocate of peasant upliftment. Thus in the absence of any mass based political party, efforts were on to unite the existing political groups. The result was the formation of the two parties, namely the Bengal Provincial Muslim League

and the *Krishak Proja* party. In this situation, just before the holding of the provincial election, the ABMSA earnestly appealed to the Muslim leader of various parties to resolve their cleavages. As a result, Muslims could emerge as a coherent and strong majority party in the forthcoming Provincial Assembly. The ABMSA held a meeting, discussed the matter and constituted a students' committee to put pressure on the leaders in this regard. A. Washeque, secretary of the ABMSA was the committee's convenor and its other members included Wahiduzzaman, Abul Hashim Chowdhury, M.A. Barakat, Syed Azizul Huq, Mostofa Asaduzzaman Affendi, Syed Masood Roomi, Moulana Abdur Rouf, Shamsur Rahman, Moulana Md. Moltaze, A.K.M. Abdul Ali, Meheruddaula, Nurul Huda and Emaduddin Chowdhury.⁸ Subsequently, the students were satisfied that their policy led to the formation of the *Krishak Proja* Party and Muslim League coalition ministry in Bengal under the leadership of A.K. Fazlul Huq.⁹ Thus, organized political activities of Muslim students in Bengal started from the time of the provincial election of 1937.

All India Muslim Student Federation (AIMSF) and Its Bengal Branch - All Bengal Muslim Student League (ABMSL)

The Muslim League politics in general and the Muslim student politics in particular, took a new dimension in Bengal and India following the provincial election in 1937. In fact, M.A. Jinnah had been trying hard to consolidate the position of the Muslim League. And he was successful when he enlisted the support of A.K. Fazlul Huq of the *Krishak Proja* Party in Bengal and Sikander Hayat Khan of the Unionist Party in the Punjab for the Muslim League. Needless to say, these two leaders became Chief Ministers of their respective provinces after 1937 election. Thus, when the Muslim League was consolidated, Jinnah stepped up his separatist politics. In this context the All India Muslim Student Federation (AIMSF) was established as against the All India Student Federation (AISF) which had been established under the presidentship of Jinnah. Already in December 1936 and in January 1937, Muslim students attempted to launch an organization of their own on an all Indian

scale. But on both occasions the efforts for the formation of a separate organization for the Muslim students could not gain ground. However, in the Lucknow conference a section of the students "decided to form an All India Muslim Students' League to hold its first session at Calcutta".¹⁰

What U.P. could not afford to do Bengal did. Bengal hosted the first conference of the All India Muslim Students Federation. Bengal Muslim students then received much tribute for launching successfully this organization and also for giving the lead in the matter of active participation in politics and making sacrifices for the cause of Islam.¹¹ The conference was held on December 27 and 28, 1937 under the presidentship of Jinnah. It is interesting to note that at the same time another All India Muslim Student Conference was held in Calcutta with Humayun Kabir in the chair. The latter deprecated the move to launch a separate organization for Muslim students. Humayun Kabir opposed the formation of the AIMS F.¹²

The latter conference was a nationalist one calling for Hindu-Muslim unity. It sought to develop communal fraternity among students. Thus, the conference resolved that "it was detrimental to the interests of Muslim students as well as to the student community in general to organize themselves on communal lines" and that "it was through an all Indian student body, embracing Hindus, Muslims and other communities that the Student Movement could but be conducted".¹³

Even Syed Azizul Huq, ex-Minister of Bihar, who inaugurated the AIMS F conference "doubted the wisdom and necessity of having an organization for Muslim students only and prospect of success of their scheme".¹⁴ But all this was of no avail. Jinnah appeared to be the champion of the Muslim cause and none but he was the leader of Muslim masses and Muslim students of India. At least the subsequent course of events proved this. However, Jinnah in his presidential address pointed out some causes which were too flimsy to form a separate organization of Muslim students. He expressed that as some of the Muslim students were "altogether excluded from being office-bearer" of the AISF "it was difficult for two communities to work

in co-operation, harmony and unity in all matters".¹⁵ Over this conference a substantial section of Muslim students enthused around Jinnah.¹⁶

Thus, the linkage between the student movement and Jinnah and his political vehicle, the Muslim League, was established, at least from the students' point of view. The League papers also came forward to lay stress on the importance of the conference. The *Azad* gave it a special place on its editorial column assessing the importance of the conference. This mouthpiece of the Muslim League compared the conference with the Lucknow conference of the All India Muslim League which was a milestone in the party's history. The daily also observed that Jinnah's connection with the students was a mark of special importance. The paper went so far as to comment that it would be suicidal for the student community to keep themselves aloof from active politics.¹⁷ By advocating this the Bengali mouthpiece of the Muslim League differed with Jinnah who advised the students to follow "current political movements" instead of "taking active part in them".¹⁸ In fact, Jinnah maintained a double standard about student movement. He was the only leader who frequently appeared in the Muslim student conferences and directly talked on political affairs. He wanted to use the students for political purpose but dissuaded them from coming to politics themselves.¹⁹ Again, as late as 1946, Jinnah, on the eve of provincial elections described the student community as the "backbone of electioneering campaign" but at the same time disapproved students' taking active part in politics.²⁰ However, the first conference of the AIMSF may be regarded as the first attempt of divisive act on the part of the students. In spite of this, they expressed their faith in independent united federal India. A resolution was passed in this conference in which the Muslim students declared to stand for "the full independence of India under democratic and federal form of Government, composed of autonomous provinces and states in India and with safeguards for protecting the rights of Muslims and other minority communities".²¹

With the AIMS F being launched, Bengal Muslim student politics fell into disarray and confusion. In other words, the cleavages among Muslim students came to surface, for the division of Muslim students into ABMSA headed by A. Washeque and ABMSF with Shamsur Rahman and A. Majid as President and Secretary respectively came to the notice of the general students. The cleavage was so important that the *Azad* which used to exert much influence on the Muslim public opinion in Bengal since its inception in late 1936, wrote an editorial expressing concern on the issue.²²

In the meantime a process was started to resolve the differences between the two factions, senior Muslim League leaders being active in this regard. In consequence, none of the factions got official blessing, far less any recognition or affiliation. However, Muslim League leaders formed a mediation committee which heard both factions but accepted neither of the names. Instead, they gave a common name acceptable to all. The committee thus announced that the unified Bengal provincial Muslim students' organization would hereafter be called All Bengal Muslim student League (ABMSL).²³ Thus the ABMSL got affiliated to the AIMS F as the Bengal branch of the latter and subsequently became the vanguard in carrying out the policies and programmes of the Muslim League.

The ABMSL immediately embarked upon organizational activities. Its first conference was held at Sirajganj in the district of Pabna on February 19-20, 1938 with Anwarul Azim, a noted Barrister of Chittagong, in the Chair. It was inaugurated by A.K. Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister of Bengal. In this conference, a Working Committee was formed with the following notable office-bearers : President - Abdul Washeque; Vice-Presidents - Abdul Majid, Anwar Chowdhury, Kamaruddin Ahmed (Calcutta) and Sadequr Rahman (Mymensingh); General Secretary - Malik Tahajjudur Rahman; Joint Secretary - Nurul Huda; Assistant Secretaries - Kazi Shamsul Huda and Shamsul Huda Chowdhury.²⁴ The conference adopted as many as 15 resolutions among which 11 were about the interest and feelings of the Muslim community in general and Muslim students in

particular. These included, *inter alia*, ensuring the interests of Muslims and other minorities; establishment of a board to be entrusted with secondary education so that the Muslim students' interests be preserved; introduction of the Arabic language in the curriculum; withdrawal from Bengali Selections of the University curriculum of those literary pieces which were prejudicial to Muslim sentiments; opening of an Employment Bureau; increase in the number of Muslim examiners of Calcutta University and Government Medical Faculty; introduction of free education for Muslim girls; introduction of the B.Sc. and B. Com. courses in the Islamia College, Calcutta; and introduction of Bengali and Urdu in the same college with the status of second language. It also resolved to request the Government to demolish the Holwell monument which always irked the Bangali people as a sign of imperialism.²⁵ Thus, the Muslim students took the line of the Muslim League speaking vocally for the regeneration and upliftment of their own community only. In other words, in the then situation when Muslim society in Bengal consisted of mainly a vast impoverished and illiterate peasantry, the Muslim students took recourse to separatist line following the Muslim League.

Muslim students launched a comprehensive campaign for establishing an organizational network throughout the province even before the formal establishment of the ABMSL patching up the two factions in early 1938. The Muslim students went down to the village level to have established the branches of their organization. In these efforts the school students and, curiously enough, half educated adult members of the community took part and Muslim students coming from urban area posed to be the guardians of Muslim interests, stressing the need for realizing the same. One example of organizational activities of Muslim students in the rural areas may be cited here. As early as November 1937, a Muslim student conference was held at Daudkandi in the Comilla district. This conference adopted, apart from the traditional sectarian demands of the Muslim community, a number of resolutions on the condition of the peasants. Through these resolutions the conference requested the Agriculture Minister to fix the minimum price of jute and

other agricultural products and to evolve a way out to save the vast multitude of the peasants from extinction. The conference established confidence upon the newly formed ministry and expressed a sense of gratitude for introducing peasant oriented legislation, and requested Chief Minister A.K. Fazlul Huq to lower down the rate of land revenue and abolish the certificate system.²⁶ This sympathetic view of the Muslim students to the peasants may lead one to be appreciative of them. But behind their sympathy or concern lies the community bias too. In fact, an overwhelming majority of Bengali peasants, particularly in East Bengal, belonged to the Muslim community and they had been groaning under their overlords who were mostly Hindus. Thus, when Muslim students raised the demands for ameliorating the plight of the peasants, they did so from the standpoint of community interests. Even so, this suggests that the Muslim students, being emboldened by the formation of the Muslim League ministry, went across the educational arena and stepped in the larger field of society in formulating their demands to press for. But most significant is the fact that the students made deep inroad into the rural Muslim folk in general and the growing Muslim student community in particular, setting them on the separatist road. This went a long way to bring about the partition of the country in 1947.

Fazlul Huq-Jinnah Rivalry and the Muslim Students

With the turn of the decade, the Muslim League entered a new phase of its history. In March 1940, it adopted the historic Lahore Resolution for separate homelands for Indian Muslims. But before dwelling further on this matter, we would like to turn our attention to another episode of Muslim League politics. This was the cleavage in the League circle following the Huq-Jinnah rivalry which changed the Bengal political scenario substantially. Fazlul Huq, in the capacity of the Chief Minister of Bengal, joined the Defence Council of the Viceroy. This enraged the central League leaders. While Huq insisted that his joining was as the Premier of Bengal, Jinnah argued that he was selected as the representative of the Muslim community. Jinnah, as empowered by the League Working Committee, expelled Huq from the party.

The clash was not merely between two persons. Rather it was in ideological duel. Fazlul Huq was a liberal leader who was free of the communal bias common to other Muslim League leaders. But the fact which was more important was that he wanted to guard the interests of Bengal Muslims against those who hailed from other provinces. In fact, Bengal had to play an important role in the Muslim League politics for its being a Muslim majority province. This fact was known very much to both Jinnah and Fazlul Huq. So, the latter alleged that the leaders who belonged to the 'Minority Provinces' imperilled the interests of Bengal Muslims.²⁷ On the other hand, with the ouster of Huq, Jinnah could be successful in setting the conservative leadership in Bengal Muslim League. However, coming out of the League, Huq formed the United Progressive League Ministry with the help of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. In the days when the Muslim League's separatist politics was witnessing a quick upswing trend, Huq's association with the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha signalled his political decline in the days to come.

How did the student community react to this battle? In fact, Muslim students had already been dissatisfied with Fazlul Huq since early 1941. They took the opposite side to Huq on the issue of observance of the first anniversary of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1941. The central League leadership directed its branches all over India to observe the occasion. Generally, in such cases student and youth fronts were instrumental to make the programme a success. Accordingly, the ABMSL felt itself to be enthused to observe the "Pakistan Day". The President and the Secretary of this student body, in their statement, asked the branches to take part in this programme. They also stressed the importance of the establishment of Pakistan.²⁸

But Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister and the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League cancelled this programme in apprehension of communal violence. But like the pro-Jinnah elements in the BPML who had to stick to the directive of the League High Command, the ABMSL also observed the 'Pakistan Day'. From this time Muslim students stressed the necessity to

convert the Muslim League into a mass party recruiting its members from amongst the peasants and labouring classes so that the Pakistan movement could be invigorated. What the Muslim student leaders felt in this connection is worth mentioning :

Muslim League should be transformed into a mass organization bringing the poor, unhealthy and illiterate peasants and labourers who constitute 90 per cent of our population into its fold. In the state and society of Pakistan based on Islamic ideology these destitute peasants and labourers would have the economic emancipation. Student community has a larger role to play to set the Muslim League for people's struggle.²⁹

In fact, after 1937, Bengal Provincial Muslim League began to witness a tremendous expansion and Muslim students played a laudable role in it.

From the foregoing discussions it is clear that the Muslim students massively took the side of Jinnah in the Huq-Jinnah feud. Fazlul Huq Government acquiesced in many demands of the Muslim students. These included the one concerning the Secondary Education Bill against much opposition and castigation by the political and social elites belonging to the Hindu community. Despite this, Huq incurred wrath, criticism, condemnation and indignation of Muslim students.

Following the decision of the Bombay session of the Muslim League (1941), the Calcutta branch of ABMSL requested Fazlul Huq to quit the Defence Council in accordance with the directive of the AIML. It further expressed its full confidence in the leadership of Jinnah and pledged to work in harmony with the Muslim League in the "critical juncture of the Muslim nation".³⁰ Further, Muslim students of various educational institutions of Calcutta came out on September 11, 1941 in the street and paraded the city shouting slogans like "Muslim Bengal is the follower of Jinnah"³¹ etc. They also carried anti-Huq placards and showed black flag condemning Fazlul Huq. The procession, reportedly comprising 2500 Muslim students, was followed by a meeting held at the Park Circus Maidan with Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, one of the Joint Secretaries of the AIMS, in the

chair. All the speakers of this meeting were students and they virulently attacked Fazlul Huq with partisan spirit. In fact, they used very fealthy language in castigating Huq and found divisionist move in him, and paid rich tribute to Jinnah. Syed Sadequr Rahman, the General Secretary of the ABMSL, commented in his speech that all the deeds done and honours and reputations achieved by Fazlul Huq had been burried by his attack made on Jinnah. He also accused Huq of creating a rift in the solidarity of the Muslim League.³² Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, one of the leaders of the ABMSL, did not hesitate to speak in the tone of a senior leader. He accused Huq of not having obeyed the discipline of the party with regard to the Defence Council.³³ In his presidential address Fazlul Quader Chowdhury accused Fazlul Huq of doing a misdeed by attacking Jinnah.³⁴

This meeting branded Fazlul Huq as a traitor. The student leaders also refuted the claim of Fazlul Huq that the whole Muslim community was behind him excepting a few Urdu speaking people. The students even dared to go to the residence of the Chief Minister to show black flag after the meeting was over.³⁵ It is, therefore, clear that Muslim students of Bengal adhered to the Urdu speaking and more conservative section of the Muslim political elite as against the Bengali elite. Thus, they contributed a lot to heighten the charisma of Jinnah who was the head of the band of the non-Bengali Muslim business class, feudal landed gentry and religious leaders.

In this was Fazlul Huq was deserted by all. So, he threw himself into the lap of the Congress. The Congressite press stepped up to support the cause of Fazlul Huq publishing the report that students had been in support of him. But Muslim students immediately refuted this claim.³⁶

However, the subsequent course of Bengal politics was full of acrimony between party in power led by Fazlul Huq who recently broke away from the Muslim League and formed the Progressive Assembly Party and the Muslim League which was then in the upswing state of its popularity. Needless to say, in this acrimonious battle Muslim students were to take side with

the latter. Everywhere in Bengal they created blockade, organized opposition and obstruction and showed black flag to Fazlul Huq and his ministerial colleagues. Thereby they made issues and agitated on it which proved to be a very useful method of diminishing the popularity of Fazlul Huq. One point to be noted in this connection is that the administrative authorities of the educational institutions came to the aid of the Government. It did not matter whether they were impartial or not. What mattered most was that these authorities were manned mainly by the Hindus. This was sufficient to irk the general Muslim people against Fazlul Huq.

The Lahore Resolution and Muslim Student Politics in Bengal

In March 1940, the Muslim League adopted a resolution in Lahore supporting the demand for separate homelands for Indian Muslims. Shortly afterwards, this resolution came to be regarded as the Pakistan Resolution. Muslim students were not slow to come forward with their view on the point of separate homelands for the Indian Muslims. The ABMSL convened the first Muslim students' Pakistan conference which was held in Calcutta on September 19, 1941. Syed Sadequr Rahman, General Secretary of the ABMSL and Chairman of the Reception Committee spelled out their support for the state of Pakistan. Regarding the objective of the conference he said :

The cause for convening the Pakistan Conference for the first time in Bengal is that the Muslim youths having realized the necessity for freedom and separate identity, got themselves prepared to face all kinds of sorrow and sufferings. It has become crystal clear before them that freedom of all nationalities of India depends upon the recognition of the Muslims as a separate nation. And the only way to get freedom for Indian Muslims is the establishment of independent states in the Muslim majority areas of North-Western and North-Eastern India.³⁷

Syed Sadequr Rahman tried to invigorate the fellow students on the issue of separate homeland by reminding them the economic sufferings that the Muslims had been facing during the British rule. He further declared that Pakistan conference was

convened to arrange for a mass upsurge so that the Muslims could achieve the independence from the British. When he said this he did not favour the idea of North-West and North-Eastern Muslim majority zones amalgamating into a one Muslim state. It was more clear from the basic principle of the Pakistan plan he declared. The most important principle was that, to quote his own words :

Two separate independent states will have to be formed in the North-West and North-East areas of India where Muslims are numerically majority. And in these two regions Muslims will be enabled to run the administration in accordance with the Islamic principle.³⁸

He recognized the right to independence of the non-Muslim majority areas, safeguards to protect the rights of the minority communities in each state, mutual treaty system between "Hindu state, Muslim state and other states". He also spoke for an international body to be formed comprising these states in the Indian sub-continent so that all bilateral disputes as well as domestic problems could be settled through amicable way instead of force. Thus the Muslim students' partition scheme rested on strong religious fervour and community distinction. Apart from this, the most notable thing was that the Bengali Muslim students designed their homeland free from North-Western and Punjabi Muslim clutches which, of course, did not come to fruition of other reasons.

By the end of the year 1941, the ABMSL consolidated its political position and appeared as a true vanguard of the movement that was launched and being conducted by the Muslim League. Thus, it developed a complementary relationship with the Muslim League. As a political organization, the Muslim League was not so strong despite vast support because masses of the people around whom the Muslim League devolved with its philosophy as well as programme were more ecclesiasticised than politicised. The Muslim students' role was unavoidable in these circumstances.³⁹ In fact, weak political institution and tardy growth of sizable and potent middle class paved the way for the

students, who, broadly speaking, belonged to the middle class whatever might be their origin, to meddle in politics.

Ideological Differences Developed in Bengal Muslim Student Politics

An unequivocal feature of student movements in developing countries is the growth of parallel factions in the student front following its parent political party. This feature was very much present in the case of Bengal Muslim League and the ABMSL. Almost with the assumption of the General Secretaryship of the Muslim League by Abul Hashim, the Muslim League leadership in Bengal developed factional strife among themselves. Abul Hashim, the most liberal among the Muslim League leaders with outstanding organizing capacity, was the central figure of this factional fight. Needless to say, Abul Hashim took the lead of the liberal faction as against the conservative faction headed by Moulana Akram Khan and Khawaja Nazimuddin. He was joined by H.S. Suhrawardy who preceded Hashim as the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League. These two factions soon entered into an ideological battle. Similarly, the existence of opposite factions in the ABMSL was also discernible. It is already pointed out that the division of the Bengal Muslim students had been patched up to form the ABMSL. But the arrangement could not satisfy everybody. During the anti-Holwell monument movement in 1940, though the Muslim students joined this from community considerations,^{39a} anti-imperialist and more liberal elements could be traceable. Nurul Huda, the Joint Secretary of the ABMSL who led the organization in this movement, seemed to develop more liberal and anti-imperialist stand. Another Muslim student leader of anti-imperialist and progressive ideal was Maruf Hossain who was reportedly a communist student worker.⁴⁰ He wrote an article in the *Azad* depicting the weakness of the Muslim student movement. Maruf Hossain was practically an example of progressive and anti-imperialist forces within the framework of Muslim student politics in Bengal.⁴¹

In addition to this, there was also resentment and dissatisfaction against the leadership centered in Calcutta. The Muslim students of Dhaka also held very critical view of, and

hostile attitude to, the ABMSL. This factional cleavage was so acute that the leadership could not hold any annual conference since its inception. So, the AIMS F, the affiliating body of the ABMSL, appointed an election sub-committee consisting of senior Muslim League leaders⁴² to facilitate the holding of the conference. The leaders of the ABMSL also were in consultation with Muslim political leaders and Muslim elites for solving the crisis into which the organization had plunged.⁴³ Even the AIMS F dissolved the committee of the ABMSL and appointed an *ad-hoc* committee instead with Moulana Akram Khan as the chairman. Thus, senior Muslim League Leaders got involved in the student politics. The crisis that developed into this body gave rise to concern and apprehension in their members. What H.S. Suhrawardy, the Bengal League Secretary, said in a statement in this connection is very important to note :

I am earnestly appealing to the Muslim students of Bengal to build up an organization of their own and resolve their differences. I would never forget the contribution they rendered to the Muslim League during its critical days. I firmly believe that they would remain under the banner of an integrated organization and they would be able to serve the Muslim League ten times more and their moral courage would heighten so that they would surely stand in the struggle for existence.⁴⁴

However, the rank and file of the ABMSL, out of this dissension and differences, came to take the form of two factions and they had taken their stand after the liberal and conservative factions of the Bengal Muslim League. After the conference of 1944, the differences between them got prominent though the conservative faction seemed to dominate the ABMSL. Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and Shah Azizur Rahman, both belonging to the conservative faction became the President and the General Secretary respectively. Abul Hashim has vividly described these two factions in his autobiography and gave a list of the youth and student workers working in both Dhaka and Calcutta. At the same time he also made it clear that the reactionary faction of the ABMSL supported the Akram Khan - Nazimuddin coterie.⁴⁵

The Anti-Imperialist Mass Upsurge, 1945-1946 and the Muslims Students

In spite of the fact that the conservative faction predominated, the ABMSL took part in the anti-imperialist movement that reached its height in late 1945 and early 1946. As elsewhere in the colonial world, with the end of the war, in India also freedom movement was becoming more and more militant and the mass organizations got involved increasingly in this movement. Wartime crisis like price-hike, food scarcity, inflation, acute unemployment and rampant corruption agitated the students' minds in Bengal.⁴⁶ They, however, burst into revolt when the British Government commenced the trial of the members of the Indian National Army (INA) formed by Subhas Chandra Bose to liberate the country with the help of the Axis powers. This pro-Axis leader held a hero's charisma among the people in general and the students in particular. Consequently the INA members were almost worshiped as anti-imperialist patriotic heroes. In the first week of November, 1945 the trial of three INA officers who happened to belong to three different communities began.⁴⁷ This caused a wave of vehement protest and agitation all over India among students as well as the people irrespective of community differences. Calcutta students also observed strike, boycotted their classes and held a mass meeting at the Wellington Square on November 21 marking the day as the 'INA Day'. The BPSF, the Student Congress and the ABMSL aligned to the CPI, the Congress and the Muslim league respectively forged into unison and, after holding meeting, moved in procession toward the Dalhousie Square which had been closed by the authorities for holding meeting. The police opened fire on the procession and two persons, named Ramkumar Banerjee and Kadam Rasul, belonging to the Hindu and Muslim communities respectively, were killed. Ramkumar Banerjee was a student while Kadam Rasul was identified as a worker. Thus, the Hindu-Muslim united movement disillusioned the British authorities whose foul-play of 'divide and rule' policy did not work at least on this occasion.

Police firing increased the people's anti-imperialist sentiment horizontally. Students all over India observed strike, boycotted

classes and showed demonstrations in protest of the death of their brethren in Calcutta. But to the utter dismay of all concerned, political leaders failed to react to this unprovoked firing on young.

The movement of 1945 ended only to be renewed in February 1946. This February movement has been described by one authority who had "living experience" as "the almost revolution".⁴⁸ If by this phrase the same authority means 'something close to revolution', then it is not correct because of the non-participation and lack of sympathy and cooperation on the part of the politicians. But if he wants to mean 'almost like a revolution' then the logic can be conceded to some extent. Despite its limitations it was the highest peak of an anti-imperialist movement that Bengal ever witnessed. Its most interesting feature was that the ABMSL took the lead in this movement.

Captain Abdur Rashid, an INA officer, was sentenced to 7 years rigorous imprisonment in the second stage of the INA trial. Muslim students got enraged at this. In fact, though an anti-imperialist movement soon engulfed Calcutta, Muslim students started this movement out of the partisan spirit to their own community to which Abdur Rashid also belonged. They might have regarded Captain Rashid as the champion of their community as Rashid made it clear in his statement in the court that :

In order to safeguard the interests of my community I decided like most of the other Muslims to join the INA in order to arm myself and thus be in a position to safeguard the interest of my community.⁴⁹

The Muslim League also regarded the conviction of Captain Rashid, as Government secret report reveals, as a direct insult to it and, therefore, "there was a considerable feeling among Muslims that there has been discrimination by Government against the Muslim League".⁵⁰ So, Muslim students took the initiative to launch a movement on this issue. The news of Captain Rashid's imprisonment was received by Muslims with "resentment and dismay" and on February 5, Muslim students

boycotted their classes. Contemporary Muslim press described the day's activities of the Muslim students.⁵¹

The Government secret report enumerated the processionists as "about 500 Muslim students" but did say nothing about the holding of the meeting. However, this act of protest did not remain confined to the Muslim students alone. They appealed to all political organizations irrespective of faith and denomination urging them to join the demonstrations against this act of the Government. The students of all educational institutions were called to join the strike and a meeting was also scheduled to be held in the Wellington Square at the end of the strike.⁵² However, this programme was abandoned "on the advice of Muslim League leaders". Whatever might be the case it is better to say that the programme was postponed till February 11 only to be observed in a concerted way taking all the political and student organizations into one platform. The Government secret report on the movement and the elements involved therein of February 11, 1946 is as follows :

The situation in Calcutta has deteriorated considerably and at the moment it is grave. It appears that the Muslim League are sponsoring the agitation and the student groups of all political denominations, have combined under the auspices of their parent political organizations, i.e., all political parties are united. The persons who actually started the agitation yesterday (11.2.46) were the communist-controlled Students' Federation and the Muslim League Muslim students are taking a bigger part than anybody else and the situation is serious at the moment.⁵³

Thus, at the call of the ABMSL supported by the Calcutta branch of the AISF a strike was observed on the day and a meeting was held at the Wellington Square which was addressed by Annandasankar Bhattacharya of the AISF and Shah Azizur Rahman, the General Secretary of the ABMSL. Thereafter followed a procession which was lathicharged by the police. The notable result of this was that two opposite slogans *Jai Hind* and *Allah-hu-Akbar* mingled with each other signifying Hindu-Muslim unity. The flags of the Congress, the Muslim League and the Communist Party were tied up together signifying, again, solidarity against the common enemy, viz. the British

imperialism. The following day also witnessed an impregnable unity of the political parties in general and their student fronts in particular. A meeting was held and its President H.S. Suhrawardy of the Muslim League emphatically declared that "no power on earth would be able to stop them, if they continued to move forward in this manner with one aim and one idea". He, therefore, urged the Congress and the League to settle their differences and fight together the battle of freedom.⁵⁴ The meeting was addressed by Congress, League and Communist Party leaders such as Satish Chandra Das Gupta, Nani Bhattacharya, Gunada Majumber, Somnath Lahiri and Moazzem Hossain. In the face of the impregnable unity, the administration almost collapsed. Young fighters engaged in fierce battle with the law enforcing agencies and the army. Vehicular traffic within the city stopped. Everything, Governmental and European, became the target of the students' attack. Anti-white feeling grew among the people who boycotted European goods. Even they went so far as to prevent the sale of food to the Europeans. The mill workers in the suburbs of Calcutta were also rocked by the movement. The death toll and cases of injury in these battles between the strikers and police and military were quite numerous.⁵⁵

But this upheaval could not bring about anything revolutionary. The leaders of the political parties like the Congress and the Muslim League despite their limited support soon developed apathy for agitational politics. Even Sarat Chandra Bose, the provincial Congress leader, flatly refused to uphold the cause the students were struggling for. The Congress leadership most probably at this time were for a negotiated settlement with the British who in the post-war situation were likely to go the same way. This process was only expedited by the mass upheaval of 1945-46.⁵⁶ As regards the Muslim League, it was preoccupied with electoral politics keeping the forthcoming election in sight. Their involvement through a person of no less stature than Suhrawardy who shortly afterwards became the Premier of Bengal may be interpreted as the endeavour to strengthen the contact with the people. They specially exploited the situation to the fullest extent, for their student front initiated the movement against the victimization of the Muslims.⁵⁷ Last but not the least, the bourgeois political parties, e.g. Congress

and the League might have been fearful of the possible prospect of the Communist Party to widen its support base by this agitational political movement. However, the anti-imperialist mass movement came to a standstill. This also proved the student's incompetence to be an independent force.

Muslim Students and the Provincial Election of 1946

Muslim students soon switched to the election affairs. Even as the anti-imperialist movement was going on, a meeting of the executive committee of the ABMSL adopted a host of resolutions of which some bore importance in connection with its relation to the Muslim League. Held under the presidentship of Mainul Huq, Secretary of the AIMS, the meeting expressed its resentment and dissatisfaction over the acts of the Provincial League Parliamentary Board. The student leaders appeared as the pressure group in connection with the nomination to some of the constituencies in the forthcoming provincial election. They criticized the autocratic leadership of the provincial Muslim League which did not want to honour the Student League. They even regarded it as their prestige issue. They formally called for the reconsideration of a number of nominations "in the broader interest of the nation and for Pakistan". The meeting also constituted a committee to confer with the League leadership on this matter. This committee consisted of Shah Mohammad Azizur Rahman (Leader of the Committee) Mohiuddin Ahmed (Secretary, Barisal District Muslim student League), Nizamuddin Haider (Member of the Working Committee), Begum Hazera Khatun (Lady Secretary), Rafiqul Hossain (ABMSL) and Mosharraf Hossain (Calcutta). The meeting expressed that very soon the "All Bengal Muslim Student League Election Board" would be constituted for wide-spread campaign for the Muslim League candidates.⁵⁸ The central as well as the Bengal Provincial League leadership called upon the student community to work for the election. The Muslim students honoured this as directive. The General Secretary of the ABMSL directed the student workers to deploy themselves to bring the message of the Muslim League to the doors of general masses. The League papers were actively instrumental in making the students aware about their duty in this regard. The newly founded Bengali weekly the *Millat* played a

remarkable role. In the very first issue, the weekly published an article entitled "*Agami Nirbachane Muslim Chhatra Samaj*" (The student community in the forthcoming election).⁵⁹

The weekly made its appearance as the mouthpiece of the liberal faction of the Muslim League headed by Abul Hashim. So, on the one hand, the weekly cautioned the people in general and the students in particular against the "congressite conspiracy against Pakistan" and preached liberalism and progressive ideal as far as possible within the Muslim League framework as against the Akram Khan-Nazimuddin faction on the other. It also stressed that the students realized the importance of the election in the political, social, economic and moral life. The article concludes wooing as well as reminding the students of their future duty.⁶⁰

The Muslim students took the 1946 election as a means to establishing Pakistan with a crusadic zeal. Muslim students might have seen Pakistan as a medium to flourish themselves by escaping competition with the more advanced Hindu community. So, their zeal, ardour, spirit, promptitude and devotion in Pakistan Movement knew no bounds.⁶¹

However, the Muslim students established the network of campaign with increasing vigour throughout the province. The Muslim League source revealed that two hundred Muslim Student League workers were sent to Barisal, another two hundred to Bagerhat and one hundred and fifty were sent to Narail from Calcutta to work for the election.⁶² It can be fairly presumed that the strength was in addition to the local students. According to another source, "twenty thousand students from Post Graduate to Middle English School and Junior Madrasah were carrying on whirlwind campaigns on an unprecedented scale in this election battle for Indian Muslims' eastern homeland"⁶³ It was due to the participation of the students to popularise the Muslim League at the grassroot level in the province that the party achieved a landslide victory in the election. It bagged though not cent per cent, as expected in the League circle, but 93 per cent of Muslim seats.⁶⁴

However, in this way the 'anti-imperialist unity' forged in late 1945 and early 1946 was shattered even in students' quarter. This was further aggravated when the greatest catastrophe, the "Great Calcutta Killing" occurred in connection with the Muslim League's programme of Direct Action Day in August, 1946.⁶⁵ This was the highest watermark of communalism that convinced the political leaders that there was no alternative to partition.

Proposal for Sovereign Independent Bengal and the Muslim Students

Immediately before the partition, the "concept of a sovereign independent Bengal" developed and remained a very sensitive issue of discussion in the political circle of Bengal for a short while.⁶⁶ A very small section of the Bengal Congress, headed by Sarat Chandra Bose, came to an understanding with a small liberal section of the Bengal Muslim League on retaining the boundary of Bengal with sovereign status. Consequently, a six-point programme was formulated and the Basu-Hashim agreement was signed. The scheme and endeavour for this was very sound and highly eulogizing. But it was very weak from the stand-point of the support base. Only a few Calcutta-based urban higher middle class and middle class political elites were involved in this new anti-partition move. As regards the Muslim League visionaries H.S. Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier, and Abul Hashim, the provincial Secretary of the Muslim League, advanced their support. But the irony was that throughout the last one decade, these two persons had been serving the League as General Secretaries and had practised the separatist politics supporting the idea of separate homeland(s) for the Muslims. Ten years' rule of the Muslim League, its overwhelming victory in the 1946 elections and the "Great Calcutta Killing" convinced the Hindus of the necessity of Partition. Reputed intellectuals, including historians belonging to the Hindu community, were seen to work for the partition of Bengal and constitution of a separate province of West Bengal for the Hindus. The Hindu Mahasabha was instrumental in making the Hindu community

conscious of eternal subjugation to Muslim rule if Bengal was not partitioned.

The initiative on the part of Abul Hashim and Suhrawardy might have also been the result of their factional politics. Naturally, the pro-Hashim-Suhrawardy faction of the All Bengal Muslim Student League supported this move. And specially notable is the fact that all those who supported it belonged to the second grade leadership of this Muslim student body. On the other hand, the conservative faction continued to lend their support to the Muslim League. Mazharul Quddus, a student of the liberal faction of the ABMSL, and Moazzem Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary of the Calcutta branch of the Muslim Student League, came forward to lend their support to the idea of sovereign independent Bengal. They supported the idea of equal sharing of jobs between Hindu and Muslim communities and the joint electorate system as propounded by Hashim in the proposed independent Bengal. The students held meetings on this issue and discussed the matter among themselves. After the British Government formalized the partition scheme in their June 3 declaration, Muslim students held a meeting with Moulana Gofran, the Joint Secretary of the Calcutta branch of the Muslim Student League, in the chair. In this meeting, Zahiruddin, Nuruddin Ahmed and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman opposed the Partition and called upon all to resist it. For example, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman recorded his dissatisfaction with the partition plan of the British Government inspite of the fact that he belonged to East Bengal because "he was quite aware of the economic condition of East Bengal".⁶⁷

However, the anti-partition Muslim students were very few in number and too feeble to influence the course of events. Their dream could never come to light as the whole scheme became shattered with the Partition. Even then, the differences between the two factions of the ABMSL further widened. The comparatively liberal faction played the role of a harbinger of the democratic movements in East Bengal, the eastern province of Pakistan.

Notes and References

1. Abul Hashim, *In Retrospection* (Dhaka, 1974), p. 44.
2. Anti Circular Society was formed by the anti-partition students of Bengal in 1905. For its first annual report see *The Bengalee*, November 7-10, 1906.
3. Amarendra Nath Roy, *Students Fight for Freedom* (Calcutta, 1967). This book is the history of the All Bengal Student Association (ABSA).
4. Bazlur Rahman Khan, *Politics in Bengal 1927-1936* (Dhaka, 1987), pp. 122-123.
5. Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh* (Dhaka, 1987), p. 44.
6. *Star of India*, December 26, 1933.
7. Harun-or-Rashid, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
8. *Azad*, February 7, 1937.
9. M.N. Safa, "Dacca University Its Role in Freedom Movement" in *A History of the Freedom Movement 1707-1947*, vol. IV, edited by a Board of Editors, Pakistan Historical Society, Indian Reprint 1984, pp. 325-326.
10. N.N. Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register* (henceforth cited as IAR) (Calcutta, 1937, vol. I), p. 416.
11. *Ibid.*, 1942, vol. I, p. 326.
12. *Ibid.*, 1937, vol. II, p. 465.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 466.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
16. *Azad*, December 23, 1937.
17. *Ibid.*, December 15, 1937.
18. *Star of India*, August 24, 1936.
19. IAR, 1941, vol. II, p. 406.

20. *Star of India*, February 5, 1946.
21. *IAR*, 1937, vol. II, p. 465.
22. *Azad*, December 15, 1937.
23. *Ibid.*, January 26, 1938.
24. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1938.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, November 24, 1937.
27. Hasan Hafizur Rahman (ed.) *Bangladesher Swadhinata Yuddha : Dalilpatra* (Bangladesh War of Independence : Documents) (Dhaka, 1982, vol. I), pp. 5-7. For Huq-Jinnah rivalry see Amalendu De, *Islam in Modern India* (Calcutta, 1982), pp. 146-161.
28. *Azad*, March 20, 1941.
29. *Ibid.*, September 11, 1941.
30. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1941.
31. *Ibid.*, September 12, 1941.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1941.
37. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1941.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Talukdar Moniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath* (Dhaka, 1980), p. 52.
- 39a. For details see Md. Abul Kashem, *History of the Student Movement in East Bengal and East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh), 1947-1969: An Analytical Study*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), (Jadavpur University), 1992, pp. 32-34.

40. Gautam Chattopaddhya, *Swadhiuata - Sangrame Banglar Chhatra Samaj (Students of Bengal in the Freedom Struggle)* (Calcutta, 1980), p. 51.
41. Maruf Hossain, "Bartaman Muslim Chhatra Andolon" (Present Muslim Student Movement), *Azad*, February 14, 1941.
42. *Ibid.*, October 6, 1943.
43. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1943. See also Muktar Zaman, *Students' Role in the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi, 1978), pp. 90-91.
44. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1943.
45. Abul Hashim, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.
46. Keka Bose, *Political Upsurges in Undivided India (1945-46)*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis) (Jadavpur University, 1988), p. 10.
47. These three officers were Major General Shah Nawaz Khan (Muslim), Lt. Col. P.K. Segal (Hindu) and Lt. Col. G.S. Dhillon (Shikh).
48. Gautam Chattopaddhya, "The Almost Revolution : A Case Study of India in February 1946" in Barun De et.al. (ed.), *Essays in Honour of Prof. S.C. Sarkar* (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 427-450. For more discussion on the student movement of 1945-46 see his article "Bengal Student in Revolt Against the Raj, 1945-46" in Amit Kumar Gupta (ed.), *Myth and Reality : The Struggle for Freedom in India*, (New Delhi, 1987), pp. 152-171.
49. *Star of India*, January 26, 1946.
50. Amalendu De, *Dharmyo Moulobad O Dharmanirapekshata (Religious Fundamentalism and Secularism)*, (Calcutta, 1992), pp. 125-126, 130-133, ns. 50 and 63.
51. *Star of India*, February 6, 1946.
52. *Ibid.*, February 7, 1946; *Azad*, February 7, 1946.
53. Amalendu De; *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127, n. 52.
54. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, February 13, 1946.

55. The number of the persons shot dead and injured were 84 and 300 respectively. Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947* (Delhi, 1991), p. 163.
56. Sumit Sarkar, *A Critique of Colonial India* (Calcutta, 1985), pp. 116-128.
57. For a brief analysis of the role of the Muslim League and Suhrawardy see Amalendu De, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-140.
58. *Azad*, February 11, 1946.
59. *Millat*, 1st year, No. 1, November 16, 1945.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 1st year, No. 3, November 11, 1945.
62. *Ibid.*, 1st year, No. 15, March 15, 1946.
63. *Star of India*, March 3, 1946.
64. Suranjan Das, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
65. For a scholarly discussion on this see *Ibid.*, pp. 161-206.
66. For details see Amalendu De, *Swadhin Bangabhumii Gathaner Parikalpana : Prayash O Parinati* (Independent Bengal : The Design and its Fate) (Calcutta, 1975); Harun-or-Rashid *op. cit.*, pp. 271-340.
67. *Millat*, 2nd year, No. 25, June 28, 1947.

EMIGRATION, REMITTANCES AND SOCIAL CLASS IN A BANGLADESH VILLAGE

Kamal Ahmed Chowdhury*

ABSTRACT

This study describes the process of class formation as a consequence of emigration and remittances in one of the villages of eastern Bangladesh. The data were collected through a combination of different instruments such as structured questionnaire, interview guide, participant observation, key informants and secondary sources. The study concludes that, although the objective conditions, in the context of Marxian theory of class analysis, prevail in the sample area, the subjective conditions are not manifested either in the remittance receiving or in the non-receiving household to the extent of forming a class.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Bangladesh has been experiencing a spectacular growth of both the outflow of migrants, and the inflow of remittances. The gross documented outflow of Bangladeshi workers from 1976 to 1992 was 1,163,000 (Table 1). The vast majority of whom went to the Middle East. Saudi Arabia alone attracted over 41 percent of the total exported manpower. The other important receiving countries are Kuwait, Oman, and United Arab Emirates. The annual average flow of labor migrants for 1991 and 1992 was 167, 627 (Asian Migrants 1993 : 4-5).

Emigration generates remittances as the emigrants remit home a part of their income. As Table 2 shows the volume of remittances has been continuously increasing from 1975-76 to 1991-92 periods except for a negative growth in financial years 1983-84 and 1984-85. In 1991-92 Bangladesh received more than US \$ 840 in remittances.

Remittances as a ratio of export earnings shot up from 21.4 percent during 1975-1980 to an impressive 59.7 percent during 1986-1990. Similarly remittances as a percent of total foreign

*Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Rajshahi University & former M.Phil. Fellow of IBS.

exchange earnings grew from 14.4 percent to 31.6 percent during this period (Asian Migrants 1993 : 5).

This huge exodus of manpower helps ease the precarious condition of unemployment in Bangladesh on the one hand and the foreign exchange earnings from the migrants helps improve the unfavorable balance of payment on the other. However, beyond these economic consequences are other pressing social consequences which need to be duly examined. There is a widespread but still untested assumption that the migration of labor has had a considerable impact on income distribution between remittance receiving and non-receiving population and consequently, on the prevailing social stratification and relationships (Gunatilleke 1986 : 1). "There is hardly any doubt", Osmani (1986 : 57) asserts, "that emigration has the ability to create a new elite class by causing the migrants' families to jump several rungs on the income ladder at once." Arcinas *et al.* (1986) have also observed that emigration leads to the proletarianization of the worker in the host country and the bourgeoisification of the members of his family. This paper touches on this issue specifically the effect of emigration on class formation in the rural social structure.

The main objective of this study is to describe the process of class formation as a consequence of emigration and remittances. In delineating the elements of class formation, the Marxist theory of class analysis has broadly been followed.

It was Karl Marx who first developed the concept of "social class". A social class in Marx's terms is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production (Bendix and Lipset 1967). The function in the organization of production no doubt plays a determining role in providing a necessary (objective condition), but not a sufficient, basis for the formation of social classes. To this Marx added some new subjective variables, the most salient one being class consciousness.

Marx theory of class analysis has often been criticized. A major criticism is that Marx ignored as insignificant the intermediate stages in between the two major classes. The historical role of these stages, however, according to Marx (Dahrendorf 1965 : 19-20), is much less important than the two major classes, and at the time of class polarization, these intermediate stages will either join the proletariat or will be engaged in an ultimately useless battle against relegation to the proletariat ranks.

Broadly keeping the Marxian analysis of class in mind, the theoretical framework of the present study presented in Figure I, is formulated. As Figure I shows, both the objective and the subjective variables, which are essential for class formation, are included. Owing to the paucity of time and resources, only the objective conditions and selected subjective conditions, namely the growth of class consciousness and communication of ideas between class members will be considered in detail, with only passing mentions given on the other subjective variables such as, growing dissatisfaction with exploitation and conflict over economic reward between the classes.

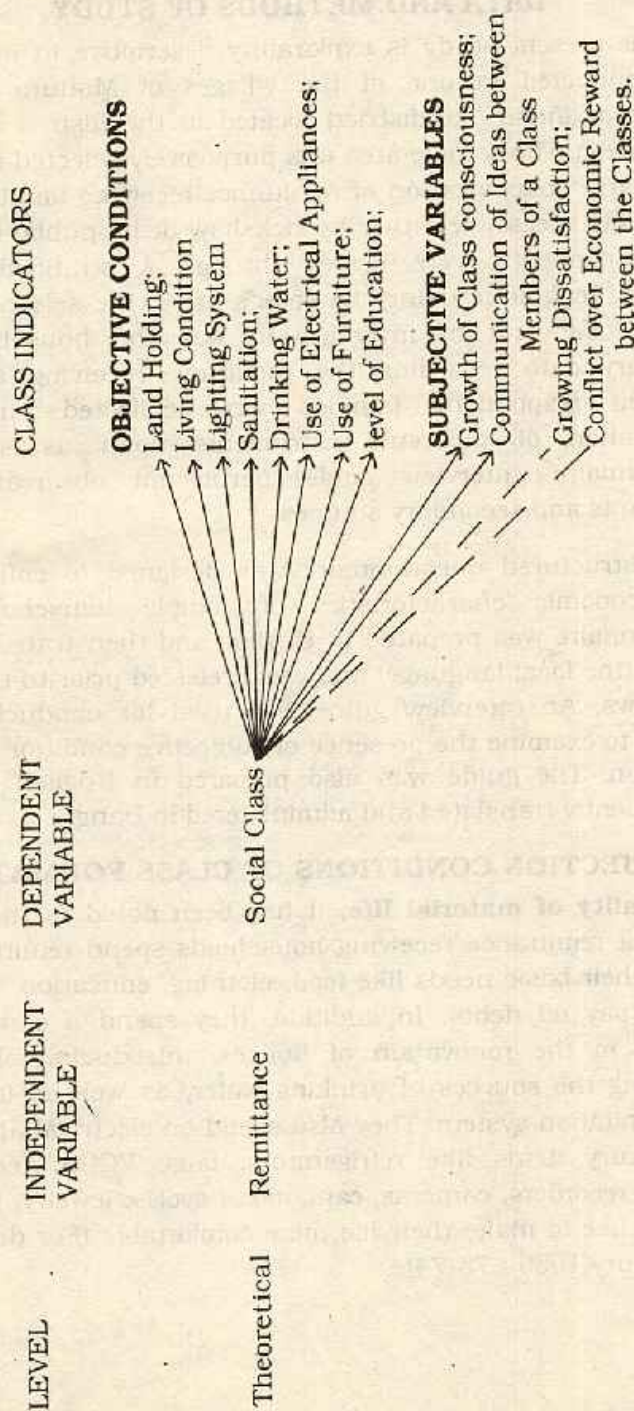
The framework presented in Figure I assumes that emigration is followed by the inflow of foreign remittance which leads to class formation. The main concepts in the framework are, therefore, "emigration", "remittances" and "social class". To operationalize these, the present study will use the word *emigrants* to refer to those who go to work outside Bangladesh, leaving behind their families at home, and return to them after some years of earning and saving. The term also covers those who are staying abroad semi-permanently or permanently but maintaining strong financial and social links with their kin at home. Cash and kind sent by the migrant members to their families are termed as *remittance*. In turn, *social class* can be defined on the basis of the fulfillment of the objective and the subjective conditions. The objective conditions in this study, include these variables : ownership and non-ownership of land and the material quality of life (e.g. housing, lighting facility,

sanitation, drinking water, use of electrical appliances and use of furniture). In turn, the subjective conditions comprise variables like growth of class consciousness, communication of ideas between members of a class, growing dissatisfaction, and the conflict over economic reward between the classes.

Class consciousness is a phenomenon which helps to consolidate class position. It involves the gradual formation of distinctive ideologies and political organizations which have as their object the promotion of particular interests in a general conflict between classes (Bottmore 1965 : 132).

As is seen from these operational definitions, the objective indicators of class position can be identified directly while the subjective indicators are less apparent. In his theory of class analysis, Marx never said that for any point in history or for any individual, there would necessarily have to be a relationship between class position and the attitudes of class members. He did not believe, however, that common conditions of existence create the necessary base for the development of common class attitudes. Marx (Sills 1968) attempted to deal with this point in his history of transitional stages in the development of class. The first of the transitional stages is that in which a class "in-itself" occurs. In this stage, the objective conditions of forming a class are fulfilled, but the class members do not understand their class position, their class enemy, and also their true class interest. In ideal type terms, the opposite of class "in-itself" is a class "for-itself". The class "for-itself" is a conscious class, a large portion of whose members consciously identify with it and can think in terms of class interests.

In the light of this theoretical framework the collected data are analyzed to see the presence of objective conditions of class formation in the sample area, if the objective conditions exist, then the transition from class "in-itself" to class "for-itself" will be examined. The following section describes the data and methods used to address these issues.

FIGURE 1. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF CLASS FORMATION CONSIDERED IN THE STUDY

DATA AND METHODS OF STUDY

The present study is exploratory descriptive in nature and was conducted in one of the villages of Matiura union of Bianibazar *thana* (subdistrict) located in the district of Sylhet, Bangladesh. The sample area was purposively selected because it had a large concentration of remittance receiving families and is also easily accessible either by rickshaw or by public transport. The respondents were drawn through a stratified random sampling technique using the voter's list of the selected village. The specific unit of investigation was the household. The necessary data regarding the remittance-receiving and non-receiving respondent families were collected through a combination of different instruments such as structured questionnaire, interview guide, participant observation, key informants and secondary sources.

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect basic socio-economic characteristics of sample households. The questionnaire was prepared in English and then translated into Bangla (the local language) and was pretested prior to the actual interviews. An interview guide was used for conducting case studies to examine the presence of subjective conditions of class formation. The guide was also prepared in English and was subsequently translated and administered in Bangla.

OBJECTION CONDITIONS OF CLASS FORMATION

Quality of material life, It has been noted in the sample area that remittance receiving households spend remittances to satisfy their basic needs like food, clothing, education, medicine and to pay off debts. In addition, they spend a considerable amount in the renovation of houses, introducing electricity, improving the sources of drinking water, as well as improving their sanitation system. They also spend on electrical appliances and luxury items like refrigerators, fans, VCRS, televisions, cassette recorders, cameras, cars, motor cycles, jewelry, furniture and the like to make their life more comfortable (For details see Chowdhury 1989 : 73-74).

The observations in Bangladesh parallel data obtained from other labor exporting countries in Asia (Demery 1983; Go *et al.* 1983; Khan 1986; Seok 1986; Nair 1986; Chiengkul 1986; Guanatileke 1986; R. Islam 1981; Tilakasiri and De Silva 1981; ILMS 1984; Smart and Reodosio 1983; Chowdhury 1985). Remittances thus significantly change the economic face of the remittance receiving households in the sample area and help enhance their quality of material life.

Land holdings.. Migrants households spend a part of their earnings in the sample area, in purchasing land as a way to keeping remittance money safe, generate income and help elevate social position. They buy mostly cultivable land. Table 3 shows that 62.8 percent of receiving households have bought cultivable land with foreign remittances, 47.1 percent have bought land for the construction of house, and 18.6 percent for commercial purposes. The sellers of land are mostly non-receiving household while all the buyers are receiving households. Table 4 reveals that a large 66.7 percent of non-receiving households disposed of their land compared to only 18.6 percent of receiving households. The difference, statistically significant (X^2 , 1df = 19.84 $P < .001$) and relatively strong ($V = .49$), indicates that those who are landless achieved that status by disposing of their holdings.

Table 3. Use of Foreign Remittances for Purchasing Different Types of Land

Types of land Purchased	Number	Percent (N=70)*
Cultivable Land	44	62.8
Land for the Construction of House	33	47.1
Land of commercial purpose	13	18.6

* The total number of responded are more than the total number of households as many respondents reported that they had purchased land for more than one purposes.

Table 4. Distribution of Receiving And Non-Receiving Respondent Households Selling Land

Sale of Land	Receiving		Non-receiving	
	No.	%	No.	%
No Land Sold	57	81.4	10	33.3
Land Sold	13	18.6	20	66.7
Total	70	100.0	30	100.0

$$V = .45; X^2, 1df = 19.85, p < .001$$

Table 5. Causes of Land Sale by Receiving and Non-Receiving Respondents

Causes	Receiving	Non-receiving	Total
To send Some Family Member Abroad	100	25.0	54.5
Payment of Loan	-	45.0	27.3
To Finance a Daughter's Marriage -	-	30.0	18.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(13)	(20)	(33)

Thus, receiving households purchase land and increase their holdings, while non-receiving households sell their land and become landless.

The causes of landlessness as presented in Table 5 : are (a) repayment of loan; (b) daughter's marriage and (c) to send a family member abroad.

By significantly improving the quality of material life and establishing full control over the most important means of production in an agrarian society, however, receiving households have recreated the foundation of a new land holding class. On the contrary, by losing their control over that means of production, non-receiving households have enrolled themselves

into the class of landless wage-laborers. It is necessary to mention that persons from among receiving households who sold their land to arrange funds for overseas employments manage to go abroad, thus avoiding the fate of becoming landless laborers. In this way remittance have created economic differentiation in the community and provided a context for class formation. A class in-itself has been established. To see whether this class in-itself has been transformed into a class for-itself, subjective conditions need to be examined. This is the task of the next section.

SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF CLASS FORMATION

This section examines the presence of subjective conditions for class formation in the sample area. These conditions are : (1) growth of class consciousness; (2) communication of ideas between members of a class; (3) growing dissatisfaction and conflict over economic rewards between the classes. Among these, class consciousness is the most salient followed by communication of ideas between members of a class. As mentioned earlier, only these two conditions will be considered in detail while only passing marks will be made on the third condition.

Class consciousness : Class consciousness, as defined earlier, involves the gradual formation of distinctive ideologies and political organizations which have, as their object, the promotion of particular class interests in a general conflict between classes. class consciousness, then has two preconditions (1) the class should have a clear ideology, and (2) there should be a political group for a fulfillment of this ideology.

To consolidate their class interest, active participation in any political organization on the basis of a class ideology is one important indicator. However, this participation is not widespread among the majority of receiving households. On 37.1 percent of the respondents are members of some political party while the rest 62.9 percent are not (see Table 6). Because of intra-party rivalry, as observed in the sample area, party

members are normally unwilling to discuss their party affiliations. Several meetings with them, however, revealed that their affiliation is confined to any of four political groups : the Awami League (46.2 percent), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (26.9 percent), Jamat-e-Islami (19.2 percent) and the Jatiya Samajtatic Dal (7.2 percent).

Table 7 presents the affiliation of the respondents on the basis of land holdings. It shows that only 4 of the receiving respondents, who are members of some party, do not own any land. Their party affiliation further reveals that receiving households sought the membership of a party whose economic program is prolandholding. the *Awami League* for example, is basically a middle class party. Its members are surplus farmers, traders, small industrialists and the lower echelon of the civil service. The *Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)*, in turn, is an organization whose members predominantly belong to urban middle class and rich farmers. *Jamat-e-Islam* is a fundamentalist right wing organization and hence pro-landholding. Only *Jatiya Samajtantric Dal's (JSD)* political program is radical, and its objective is to establish socialism. Two of the landless receiving respondents are members of the JSD. They were formerly active workers of this party but are now inactive. However, intra-party squabbles have split the party in many groups and it has lost its revolutionary character. As expected, none of the landowners is a member of the Communist Party of Bangladesh whose economic plan includes the equitable distribution of wealth and the socialization of the means of production, such as land.

From the point of view of party affiliation, it can be said, that in consonance with their economic interest, the landowning respondents selected a party which is not antagonistic to their economic interest. This does not mean, however, that the members are in a position to distinctively identify their class position and effectively serve their interest. Precisely because of the existence of intra-party conflict and the highly competitive attitude of the members, they cannot identify their class position.

Again, competition and conflict is not conducive to the growth of class affinity. One example drawn from the study's case materials, may help to understand the situation. Mati, a former migrant, expressed his desire to buy a piece of land from a non-receiving household. The moment two other migrants, Takko and Nashu, came to know about Mati's desire they competed with him to buy that particular piece of land. The land was not very precious and fertile; they only wanted to buy because they would not allow Mati to increase his holdings. As expected, the price went up and was eventually bought by Mati at a cost twice its actual value.

Competition is not limited to buying land and spending money, it also takes place in the pursuit of official power. For instance, the two main candidates who fought for the chairmanship for the 1988 *union parishad* (council) election belonged to a receiving household. When one candidate emerged victorious, the other candidate filed a case in the district court to declare the election null and void on grounds that his opponent used unfair means in the polls. In this and other similar litigations, the contesting parties are usually receiving households.

Table 6. Distribution of Receiving and Non-Receiving Households on the Basis of Political Membership

Membership	Receiving		Non-receiving	
	No.	%	No.	%
Member	26	37.1	4	13.3
Non-Member	44	62.9	26	86.7
Total	70	100.0	30	100.0

$$V = .23; X^2, 1df = 5.65, p < .05$$

Table 7. Party Affiliation of the Respondents on the Basis of Landholding

Name of Party	Land Owned	Receiving		Land Owned	Non-receiving	
		No Land Owned	Total		No Land Owned	Total
Awami League	45.5	50	46.2	50	-	50
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	31.8	-	26.9	-	-	-
Jamat-e-Islam	13.6	50	19.2	50.0	-	50
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	9.1	-	7.7	-	-	-
Total (N)	100.0 (22)	100.0 (4)	100.0 (26)	100.0 (4)	-	100.0 (4)

The above discussion suggests that although party consciousness, one of the preconditions for class consciousness, has emerged among a small portion of receiving households, the respondents' involvement in competition and conflict has weakened, as Marx argued, the growth of class consciousness. As long as receiving households do not rid themselves of this competitive attitude, they cannot identify their class enemy and enhance their class interest. As a result, the transformation from class-in-itself to class-for-itself is delayed.

Communication of Ideas between Class Members :

Although receiving families are highly competitive and are involved in periodic conflicts with each other, some of the common problems they share help to develop interaction among themselves through discussion and exchange of ideas. Indeed, they help each other solve problems like remitting money from abroad, refuse to divulge any information regarding the process of migration of other migrants and cooperate among themselves in case a migrants family encounter any problems in the absence

of the overseas worker. Several example help to understand the nature of their cooperation.

There are three ways of channelling foreign remittances : through banks, unofficial channels¹ and through co-workers and relatives who come home. Usually there is no problem in sending money through banks. But problems arise when the migrants rely on friends and relatives to bring home their remittances. One Haji Atar Ali, brother of a migrant, narrated his experience in this regard. His brother send him Tk. 200,000 through a co-worker, another migrant of the village. Though Atar Ali came to know about it from his brothers letter, the other man completely denied that he had brought the money at all. So Atar Ali took the shelter of the *Shalish*². Which is mostly comprised of receiving household members. Eventually the *Shalish* helped him obtain the money from the man. Many incidents of this kind have been successfully handled by the *Shalish* aiding the aggrieved receiving household recover his dues.

The receiving families usually do not disclose any secret regarding the migration of other migrants because they want to "protect" the illegal migrants in the village. If they inform outsiders about these illegal migrants, the lawmakers might create problems for these illegal migrants and the legal migrants might also suffer as a result. British immigration once detected some fraud cases and after that the Immigration office at Dhaka became suspicious about applicants for overseas work and strict in issuing visas which created problems even for the genuine emigrants. It is thus for their interest as a whole that receiving households pretend to know nothing about illegal migrants.

¹A group of people involved in currency business collect migrants' savings illegally in foreign currency through their agents and pay the migrants' nominee at home an equivalent amount in domestic currency at the black market exchange rate.

²Meeting where disputes are settled. The main purpose of this shalish is to help resolve conflicts amicably. Rural elites usually participates in the shalish. Rural elites are individuals who dominate the village scene as leaders, spokesmen and representatives, and who make important decisions about village problems (S.S. Sarma 1979. Chowdhury 1985.)

The unity of receiving families is reflected in other incidents as well. Seven years ago Suratjan Bibi was married to a young man of sample village. Her husband was the only son of his parents. After two years of marriage, the husband left for England and has been staying there since then. The physical and psychological depression caused by this prolonged separation led Suratjan to be involved in an illicit relationship with a young man working in that family. When the affair was exposed, the man was immediately dismissed from his job and debarred from working in the village. A heavy punishment was also inflicted on him by *Shalish* members who concocted a story stating that the man was trying to dishonor Suratjan while she was sleeping in her room. As there was no denial of the story from Suratjan Bibi, the case remained a purely criminal incident. But since the villagers were aware of the fact that the man was not alone at fault, Suratjan was sent to her father's house for a while to avoid the villagers' furor. The fact remains, however, that the man was punished not because of the "sin" he committed but because of his social position.

Other incidents also suggest that the social distance between receiving and non-receiving kins has widened overtime. A key informant narrated one incident : Abdul Karim and Abdur Rahim are two brothers, both of them were marginal farmers. In the 1970s Rahim, the younger one sold his land and went abroad. After coming back, he bought all of his brothers land already mortgaged to him, plus additional pieces of land from other villagers. Now Rahim no longer needs to work in the field; instead he employs wage laborers. One of whom is his own brother. Though Rahim still shows respect to his brother, the relationship between the two families, already cooled down because of their financial inequality, turned into bitter conflict when Rahim found out about his eldest son's love affair with his brother's youngest daughter. Furious, Rahim insulted his brother, sent his son abroad and forced his brother Karim to give his daughter's hand in marriage to a non-receiving bridegroom of another village.

Matrimonial connection between first cousins is very common in rural Bangladesh. But it seems from the above incident that in the sample area, matrimonial relationships even between two brother's families have become impossible when differences in their financial conditions widen.

The data indicate that some kind of fellow feeling is gradually growing among receiving families because of their common interests and the social distance between receiving and non-receiving households is widening even though they involve kins. This situation might help receiving households to consolidate their social position in the local community. But since this fellow feeling is not manifested in an organized way so as to promote the interests of receiving households as a community, they cannot create a class in the Marxian sense. As Marx said while writing about the peasantry in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (quoted by Bottomore 1965 : 64-65) : "Identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them."

On the other hand, participation in party politics among the non-receiving respondents, 86.7 percent do not belong to any political party (See Table 6). As Table 7 shows, only 4 persons reported that they had party memberships of these four persons, two are land owners and members of Awami League, and other two are landless but small businessmen who are members of Jamat-e-Islam. Thus, the majority of non-receiving households stay away from political activities. The situation indicates that the landless non-receiving households, even the wage laborers among them, are not aware of their class position. As a result, class consciousness which can promote their class interest has not grown among them, even on an ideological basis. They cannot identify their class enemies and cannot enter in confrontation with them.

Why then do the landless non-receiving respondents, especially the pure tenants and wage laborers, fail to organize themselves into a class on the basis of an ideology, though class differentiation or the objective conditions of class formation i.e.,

Table 9. Persons who Offered Help* in the Process of Migration

Reasons	Number	Percent
Own initiative	15	13.3
Father	43	38.1
Husband	7	6.2
Paternal Uncle	18	15.9
Maternal Uncle	4	3.5
Brother	166	14.2
Brother in-Law**	10	8.8
Total	113	100

* Sponsoring and processing of paper

** Wife's brother

CONCLUSION

Although the objective conditions, in the context of Marxian theory of class analysis, prevail in the sample area owing to the inflow of foreign remittances, the subjective conditions are not manifested either in the receiving or in the non receiving category to the extent of forming a class. However, from the available data it can safely be concluded that even without the extreme manifestation of class consciousness and class solidarity, some differences have gradually emerged between receiving and non-receiving respondent households in regard to their socio-economic characteristic. Economic differences, in particular, between two categories have sharpened and their social distance widened both of which may be considered as the primary stage of class formation. If receiving households continue to consolidate their position and the differences continue to widen, there may be dissatisfaction among non-receiving households which may lead to class conflict in the sample area.

References

- Arcinas, F.R. "The Philippines". In *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. pp. 259-305. Edited by Godfrey Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- Asian Migrants, Volume VI, No. I. January-March, 1993 pp.4-5.
- Bendix, Reinhard and S.M. Lipset (eds). *Class status and power : Social Stratification in Comparative perspective*. London : Routledge and Kegan Poul Ltd. 1967.
- Bottomore, T.B. *Class in Modern Sociology*. London : George Allan and Unwin Ltd., 1965.
- Chiengkul, Witayakorn. "Thailand". In *Migraition of Asian Workers to the Arab World*, pp. 306-337. Edited by Godfrey Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- Chowdhury, Kamal Ahmed. "Migrants' Remittance and its Impact on Social Structure : A case study of Londonigaon." Unpublished M. Phil. thesis Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, 1985.
- Chowdhury, Kamal Ahmed "Emigration, Remittances and social class in a Bangladesh village". Unpublished M.S. thesis Ateneo de Manila University, The Philippines, 1989.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf. *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*. California : Standard University Press, 1965.
- Demery, L. 1983. "Asian labor migration to the Middle East : An empirical assessment", paper presented at the conference on Asian labor Migration to the Middle East, 19-23 September 1983. East-West population Institute, Honolulu.
- Go, Stella P., Leticia T. Postrado, and Pilar Ramos - Jimenez. *The Effects of International Contract labor* Vol. I. Manila : Integrated Research Center, De La Salle University. 1983.
- Gunatilleke, Godfrey. *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- ILMS. Working Abroad -- The socio-economic consequences of contract Labor Migration in the Philippines. Manila : Institute of Labor Manpower Studies, 1984.

- Islam, Rizwanul. "Export of Manpower from Bangladesh to the Middle East countries : The Impact of Remittance Money on Household Expenditure". In *Labor Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East*. pp. 81-138. World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454. Dhaka 1981.
- Khan, M. Fahim. "Pakistan". In *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. pp. 110-165. Edited by G. Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- Nair, R.P. Gopinathan : "India". In *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. pp. 66-109. Edited by G. Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- Osmani, R.R. "Bangladesh". In *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. pp. 23-65. Edited by G. Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University 1986.
- Seok, Hyunho. "Republic of Korea". In *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*. pp. 214-258. Edited by G. Gunatilleke. Tokyo : The United Nations University, 1986.
- Sills, David L. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* Vol. 15, Mcmillan and Free Press, 1968.
- Sharma, S.S. *Rural Elites in India*. Sterling Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1979.
- Smart, J.E., V.A. Reodosio and C.J. Jimenez. "Skills and Earnings : Issues in the Developmental Impact on the Philippines of Labor exports to the Middle East". In *Asian Labor Migration : Pipeline to the Middle East*. Edited by Fred Arnold and Nasra M. Shah, Boulder, Co. : Westview Press, 1986.
- Tilakasiri, S.L. and Asoka de Silva. "Socio-economic Impact of Employment in the Middle East : A study of Kurunduwatte Village in Ambalangoda". *Economic Review*. April, 1988.

Table 2. Bangladesh : Remittances and Importance to the Economy.

Year	Remittances as (in million US\$)	Remittances as % of Export	Remittances as % Import	Remittances as % of Foreign Aid Disburse	Remittances as % of Total Foreign Exch. Earning	Remittances as % of Oil Imports
1975-76	29.6	7.8	2.3	3.7	6.2	23.3
1976-77	60.6	14.7	7.4	11.3	11.0	43.9
1977-78	113.5	23.0	8.7	13.6	16.1	54.0
1978-79	143.4	23.2	9.7	13.9	16.0	78.1
1979-80	210.3	29.0	8.9	17.2	17.1	58.2
1980-81	379.4	53.4	15.0	33.1	27.8	78.9
1981-82	412.4	25.9	17.6	33.3	32.1	79.1
1982-83	617.3	89.9	26.5	52.4	40.2	150.5
1983-84	596.8	73.6	25.5	47.0	35.4	170.2
1984-85	439.1	45.0	16.4	34.6	26.4	111.7
1985-86	555.1	67.7	23.5	42.5	34.0	179.6
1986-87	696.4	64.8	26.6	43.6	33.7	303.6
1987-88	736.9	59.9	24.7	44.9	32.3	274.3
1988-89	770.8	59.9	22.8	46.2	30.7	277.3
1989-90	780.0	51.4	22.0	43.9	28.9	269.0
1990-91	764.0	46.2	22.2	-	-	227.6
1991-92	848.0	44.6	24.5	-	-	-

Source : External Resources Division, Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh;
 Bangladesh Bank and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training,
 quoted in Asian Migrants, Vol. VI No. I, 1993.

Table 1. Bangladesh : Annual Flow of Migrant Workers by Country of Employment
(in person)

Country	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Saudi Arabia	217	1379	3212	6476	9195	13385	1694	12928	20439
Kuwait	634	1315	2243	2298	3687	5464	7244	10283	5627
UAE	1989	5819	7512	5069	4847	6418	6863	6615	5185
Qatar	1221	2262	1303	1383	1455	2268	6252	7556	2726
Iraq	587	1283	1454	2363	1927	13153	12898	4932	4701
Libya	173	718	2394	1969	2967	4162	2071	2209	3386
Bahrain	335	870	762	827	1351	1392	2037	2473	2300
Oman	113	1492	2877	3777	4745	7351	8248	11110	10448
Malaysia	-	-	23	-	3	-	-	23	-
Singapore	-	-	-	110	385	1083	331	178	718
Others	809	632	1029	223	2	1112	524	913	1224
Total	6087	15725	22809	24495	30573	55788	62762	59220	56754

Continued.

Country	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Saudi Arabia	37133	27235	39292	27662	39949	57086	75606	93132	480580
Kuwait	7384	10286	9559	6524	12402	5957	28754	34377	153867
UAE	8336	8790	9953	13437	15184	8307	8583	12975	135882
Qatar	4751	4847	5089	7390	8462	7672	3772	3251	72460
Iraq	5051	4728	3847	4191	2573	2700	.	.	66343
Libya	1514	3111	2271	2759	1609	871	1124	1617	34934
Bahrain	2965	2597	2055	3268	4830	4563	3480	5804	41909
Oman	9318	6255	440	2213	15429	13980	23087	25825	146608
Malaysia	.	530	.	2	401	1385	1628	10537	14532
Singapore	792	25	.	.	229	776	642	313	5582
Others	550	254	711	715	656	517	635	293	10799
Total	77694	68658	74017	68121	101724	103814	147131	188124	1163496

Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, quoted in Asian Migrants, vol. VI No. I, 1993.

POWER IN INFORMAL CREDIT RELATIONS : A CASE STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN BANGLADESH

Md. Anwar Hussain*

ABSTRACT

The survival in extreme poverty depends not only on one's own efforts but also on co-operation and assistance from others. The complex interaction of these ties shape various forms of economic transactions. The variety of relations emerged out of these transactions may be termed as informal credit relations. The system of informal credit, therefore, contributes to mould certain types of relations between actors of both equal and unequal status and social positions. And these relations are not always evenly balanced. Unequal dependencies result in an imbalanced exchange relation which creates a power advantage for the less dependent member of the relation.

Rural society is based on a network of interdependent relationships, and this dependency and reciprocity are the key elements in a social system. A great majority of the village people in Bangladesh are living at or below subsistence level; the survival in extreme poverty usually turns out to be series of improvisations, day to day adjustments to perpetual insecurity. The survival under such circumstances, depends not only on own efforts but also on the co-operation and assistance from others. Since most villagers are economically, politically and socially dependent, they enter in to complex arrangements and social relations for survival.

Individuals are never independent in relation to other fellow villagers and the community in which they live. Villagers "must establish families and relate to kinsmen in ways that pre-suppose mutual obligations and expectations, they must get along with fellow villagers well enough to be able to call on them

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Rajshahi University & former M.Phil. Fellow of IBS.

for economic, social and ritual aid in time of need" (Diaz and Potter 1967 : 54). Rights and obligations of neighbours, kins, fellow villagers, faction and formal leaders form the bases of social relationship.

Mutuality and interdependence do not mean interactions and exchanges occur on equal basis and are evenly balanced. The major questions are : who needs whom, who is dependent on whom, and what resources do the parties have for exchange (Biesanz and 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 1976 : 54). As Jahangir has pointed out, villagers in Bangladesh "live their life and operate in different structures enmeshed in a variety of ties. These ties and relations facilitates or accentuate his accessibility to resources and means of livelihood" (Jahangir 1982 : 84).

In each village, there are two or three well-to-do families and the rest are poor peasants, day labourers, village craftsmen and petty traders. These two classes depend on each other and often enter into an unstable relationships of mutual dependence. The poor families expect help and support from their wealthy neighbour who, in turn, employ and borrow services of the poor. The idea of mutual cooperation between the rich and the poor suggests the existence of a positive integrating social bond. But such cooperation is often based on unequal power and dependency. The limited alternatives available to the disadvantaged often make the exchange relationship exploitative, even oppressive. The village affluent (mainly large landowners) are the source of employment, land for sharecropping, loan and assistance in times of distress and of protection in a coercive authoritarian social system. Much of the villager's submission to exploitation by the village rich and the influential stems from fear of what may happen to them if they do not "co-operate". The poor seldom take the risk of offending or antagonising a prospective village patron or influential *matbar*. Thus, the "immobilization of

the rural masses is achieved through coercion : political and economic (Jahangir 1982 : 144).

Another form of social organization relevant for informal credit facilities is the village factions. Every village is divided into factions, and each faction is headed by a dominant family (Zaidi 1970 : 73-78). Factionalism is a part of village politics and factional rivalries make faction leader and followers a mutually dependent informal group (Wood 1976 : 34-36). Factional loyalties depend on mutual interest. The faction leader depends on a core of supporters most of whom are his poor kinsmen and economically dependent who, in turn, expect help, guidance and advice intimes of difficulty and distress.

The importance of faction leader tends to increase because of his political power in controlling local institutions including local government institutions and cooperatives which are increasingly being used by the government to allocate resources. The faction leaders vie with each other and enter into alliances with other faction leaders in an attempt to control local institutions and public resources (relief, loans, subsidies) which are exchanged as favour to supporters, often to buy votes and loyalty. In a highly unequal, exploitative system of village life, the under-privileged learn from their experience of day-to-day struggle for survival that the convenient way to secure protection, support and material patronages is to return loyalty in exchange for the benefits received. Similarly, in most cases, generosity becomes a form of investment, a means of obtaining power and influence by building up a network of personal obligations, economic dependence and socio-political dominance (Jahangir 1982 : 91).

The types of relationships which exist at the village level are characterised by multiple ties. The complex interaction of these ties shape various forms of economic transactions. The variety of relations emerged out of these transactions may be termed as informal credit relations. It will be an oversimplification to reduce these multiple bonds to a single purpose creditor-debtor relationship (Donald 1976 : 54-55). The systems of informal credit, therefore, contributes to mould certain types of relations between actors of both equal and unequal status and social positions. And these relations are not always evenly balanced. Unequal dependencies result in an imbalanced exchange

relation. Thus, informal credit relations should be examined, and analysed in the broader context of the social structure and the power process of the rural society.

Sociologists have traditionally regarded the structure of social relations as a major explanatory variable in sociological theorizing. It might, therefore, be expected that a major insight of a sociological theory of exchange would have to do with the structure of exchange relationships.¹ A number of earlier writers from Aristotle to Mauss, conceived social relations as rooted in exchange transactions. The recent theorists on exchange processes however directly influenced by the ideas of Simmel (Simmel 1908 : 438-447), specially his analysis of gratitude. The works of Homans (1961, 1974), Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1976, 1978) have made important contributions to micro and macro level analysis of exchange processes. Among the modern works Emerson has demonstrated the utility of explicitly analyzing the structure of social exchanges, most notably in his extension of power dependence theory (Emerson 1976; Cook and Emerson 1978).

Emerson's power dependence theory provides both the stimulus and the backdrop for this study. The "power monopoly" type of exchange network as operationalized by Emerson reveals that if two persons are unequally dependent on one another for "valued outcomes", the less dependent person has a power advantage over the other, and such a relation is said to be of power imbalanced. Power imbalance is predicted to lead to an imbalance in exchange with the more dependent person giving more than he or she receives.²

None of the studies on informal credit system in Bangladesh specially dealt with the nature of power in informal credit relations. However, there are a fair number of village studies in Bangladesh (e.g. Bertocci, 1970; Wood, 1976; Arens & Van Beurden, 1977; Thorp, 1978; Westergaard, 1978; Chowdhury, 1978; Karim, 1990) where some attention on power process was given to understand the rural life.

This paper is based on empirical study³ and attempts to examine the various forms of informal credit relations among the

actors of unequal status in credit transactions. Sociological theory of exchange lays the foundation for analysis of the study.

Methodology of the study

The data presented in this study were collected during 1986-87 in Daksin Charkumaria village. The study village is situated in the remote south eastern alluvial plains of Sariatpur district. The thana headquarter, Goshairhat is about eight miles away from the village. The village Daksin Charkumaria is not a typical one in Bangladesh context. However, the village in many respects, has the general economic and socio-cultural features of South Eastern region of Bangladesh. At the time of the field work for the study it had 163 households comprising 927 persons of whom 498 (54%) were male.⁴ The data for the study were obtained principally on the basis of participant-observation, structured interviews and case illustrations.

Nature of informal credit relations in the study village

Daksin Charkumaria, like other villages in Bangladesh, was characterised by a network of socio-economic relationships. The village was stratified on the basis of income, size of landholding and life style. Each social stratum was dependent on others. This mutual dependency among and with the strata resulted in transaction of goods and services between villagers.⁵ Some of these relationships (e.g., master-servant, landowner-tenant, creditor-debtor relationships) may be collectively termed as patron-client relationships (Srinivas 1955 : 26). Besides these, there were other relationships in the village, such as shop-keeper-customer, doctor-patient, and so on. All these relationships among and within different strata brought them in frequent contact with one another. These relationships could occur between a rich and a poor, between individuals of different status groups and between individuals belonging to the same socio-economic status. These relationships between donor and the recipient, between the creditor and the debtor, and various types of patron-client relationship in the village were regulated by traditional norms, usages and sanctions. Some of the transactions were made on the basis of verbal assurances of the

parties involved and some others required collateral and written contractual documents.

Creditor-debtor relationship

The most common form of exchange in the village was short-term loan in cash or grains. In such a creditor-debtor relationship, the debtor had to remain obliged to the creditor. Hence, the exchange practices of cash or grains had profound influence on the nature of social relationships among the villagers. There were two types of lending : money lending and grains lending. The latter was more common in the village. The major sources of both the loans were the rich farmers. There were, however, several households of moderate means who occasionally lent to close relatives or neighbours when they were in distress.

Most of the lenders in Daksin Charkumaria preferred a client of similar or lower status. If the client belonged to higher social status, he could not exercise much influence to recover the loan from the recalcitrant debtor. Some times, a creditor might lose even the principal if he had less influence in the village. He might not even seek the proper arbitration for the loss. Thus, such a lender could get the repayment only on the basis of mutual obligation and understanding.

An illustration : Nazir Bepari, a small farmer of the village, was asked by Nurul Huq Bepari, his influential neighbour, for a loan of Tk. 100 which he promised to repay within a week. Nazir Bepari could not refuse the loan because, his neighbour was one of the witnesses to the sale deed of his cow. He was also afraid that he might lose much more in future if he refused the loan. At the time of interview, the loan was six months overdue. But he was contented with the fact that his debtor never denied about the loan whenever he asked for its repayment. He further said, "I do not want to lose both my money and my friend just by pressing for the repayment."

The majority of the debtors in the village were agricultural labourers and tenants. Though they did not have collateral, yet the lenders gave them loans. It was a common practice among the well-to-do landowners to retain as many persons as they could by extending patronages in cash or kind. In return, they would have a group of loyal and bonded labourers who would be

willing to work for them at minimum wages. The tenants had to take loans for various purposes. If they were small landowners, they had to borrow for seeds and other expenses to cultivate their land as well as for consumption. During the lean season, their stock of foodgrains ran short and during sowing season, they needed cash to pay for seeds, ploughing and weeding. Often, they continued to borrow till the harvest. In this way, a form of exploitative relationship would develop out of the informal credit practices.

Master-servant relationship

There were regular domestic servants and servants employed on contractual basis. The big landowners usually employed sons, daughters or widow of their *rayots*⁶ as domestic servants. The main work of the domestic servants were to wash dishes and other household utensils, sweep houses and courtyard, keep children, husk paddy, bear the marketing bag, look after the livestock, etc. They were also engaged in various activities during social and religious ceremonies. Domestic servants were supplied with food and clothings, and occasionally, a nominal remuneration. But during the harvesting season, they were given some quantity of paddy. Even though the amount of remuneration and the quantity of food grains given to *rayot* cum-servant families largely depended on the sweet will of the master, the master and the servant, were bound in a sort of familial relationship. These servant-families were also given loans in cash or kind for meeting their family-needs when their earnings were extremely inadequate to cope with their necessity. In this way, they fall in heavy debts to their master, and the master-servant relationship was further reinforced. The servants not only work but also support their master in village politics and conflicts.

The labourers doing the external duties rather than the household duties on the basis of an annual contract were viewed as contractual servants or *kamlas*. In Dakshin Charkumaria, this type of verbal contracts with rich landowners varied from six months to a year. But the tenure, could be extended on the basis of the good performance of a *kamla*. A *kamla* might be paid an advance at the time of first contract. Sometimes, an efficient *kamla* would be enticed away from another master by paying off

his outstanding debts to his master. The mode and amount of payment and the attendance of the servant were recorded on a paper, and sometimes the master took the thumb impression of the *kamla* as a record of the payments made. Usually, the advance payment to a *Kamla* was interest-free and was used as a means of retaining his service. The advance (*agreem*) and loan paid to a *kamla* was deducted from his annual remuneration. We found that some *kamlas* were in employment with a particular master for years together. This happened when the master-servant relationship was very good or when a *kamla* was in perpetual debt to the master. The latter was more frequent. We found that a significant number of the *kamlas* were a sort of bonded labourers, and in most cases, masters kept them under constant pressure and obtained undue privileges by making them work in land with lower than prevailing rate of wages or give *begar* (free labour) for domestic work.

Landowner-tenant relationship

Most of the families were directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture and related activities. Land was not only the most important productive asset but was also the most important means of acquiring status, power and security in the village. Naturally, the landholding pattern and the tenurial system profoundly influenced social relations, transactions and exchange. The most important form of collateral for informal credit was land-mortgage.⁷

About 17 percent of the households in the village owned no land at all, and about 40 percent of the households were landless or near landless (owning less than one acre of land). The landownership pattern was highly unequal and about 75 percent of the households owned only 11 percent of the land, while 5 percent owned more than 65 percent of the land in the village. Large land owners not only owned the major portion of the land, they also dominated the village life, economically socially and politically. About 70 percent of the households were wholly or partly dependent on large landowners for land for sharecropping, employment, and for other patronages. As a strategy for survival, the landless and the land poor had to enter into an exploitative patron-client relationship with large landowners.

One form of such relationship was known as *rayotee* system. The landlords provided their *rayots* employment and/or land for sharecropping, loans (cash or grains) and "protection" against social oppression by others. In return the *rayots* would provide occasional *begar*, would not work for others without the consent of their landlords, and would remain socially and politically loyal to their landlords.

The landless (owning homestead) and the land-poor depended on large landowners for land under the *barga* system and/or employment as *kamlas*. Under the *barga* system, the usual ratio of crop-sharing was fifty-fifty. In case the landlords provided seeds and fertilizers, they received three-fifths of the produce. The sharecroppers not only ploughed the land but also provided all labour during sowing, weeding and harvesting.

Rich landowner not only advanced land for share-cropping to their *rayots* and tenants but also extended loans in cash or kind to them. In this way landowner-tenant relationship was reinforced. According to our estimate, 16 percent of the total informal loans came from rich landowners. In most cases, these loans were considered as advance (*agreem*) and were not reported as loans. Occasionally, grain-loans were given by them to attract followers, to strengthen their local political or factional power. No interest was charged and no security was required for such patronages. But in this way, they created a group of bonded labourers who were not free to accept employment from others even if the wages were higher than those paid by the landlord. Only a few respondents reported loans that were not advances (*agreem*). It was found that about 33 percent of the loans from rich-landowners were cash loans. These were advanced to *rayot*-sharecroppers and their tenants and was to be repaid in the form of grain from the produce of the share-cropped land.

Implications of informal credit relations

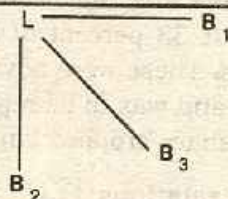
The manifold relationships such as creditor-debtor, master-servant and landowner-tenant may be viewed as the 'patron-client' relationship. In these credit relations the well-to-do people would increase their influence and authority by extending credit, patronages and gifts to their dependents and followers; poor kinsfolks, neighbours and faction members. By lending money or

grains, by leasing land and by supporting followers in village arbitration, they sustained a group of followers to serve and support them in village politics and disputes. The faction leader had to distribute patronages and provide security from oppression by rival factions in order to have a group of followers. The village power structure was however not monolithic but factional. The rivalry among landlords, intense desire to dominate the village politics and to acquire social status and prestige induced them to find different means of attracting obliged supporters. One of the major means of attracting follower was to extend informal credit. Thus, as Sengupta pointed out, a rich man in a village is a "queen-bee in the hive of economic network of the village round whom many obliged persons move" (Sengupta 1973 : 117).

As stated above it could be discerned that there was a link between power and position in a network of informal credit relations. Cook and Emerson (1978) also demonstrated similar findings in their empirical test of power-dependence in the network of exchange relations.

Actors occupying position L i.e. the lender in the network of informal credit relations had a decided power advantage over the occupants of position B i.e. the borrowers (Fig. I). The basis for L's greater power derived from the fact that resources were much more available to actor L than to B_1 given that L had multiple alternative sources of valued resources.

Fig. I Power-Imbalanced Exchange Network



Notes : Each line in the network represents a potential exchange relation in that actors connected by a line have communicative access to one another and are presumed to have a resource valuable to the other. Letters indicate position in the network; subscripts indicate occupants of positions. Arrows indicate the direction of resource flow.

Assuming that the value of the resources were not markedly different and the actors used their structurally provided power, the outcomes of L-B₁ exchanges would change increasingly in L's favour overtime. This was considered to be an imbalanced exchange. According to Emerson's power dependency theory any imbalanced exchange leads to an imbalance in power in the exchange network. Thus, informal credit relation, here, should said to be power imbalanced. It was also discerned from the study that actors of unequal positions in the informal credit relations, through the "exchange connection", would coalesce together to form relatively enduring social group such as, village factions. And thus two or more social relations were connected in the village to form the larger social structure which is very much alike to Emerson's idea of linking dyad with the larger groups.

Conclusion

As we have noted above, the ability to acquire and sustain power and influence in a village depended very much on ability of landlords to retain a group of loyal followers to support and serve them in village dispute, politics as well as in cultivation of their land. A well-to-do villager could show his wealth by exercising economic power and by creating a group of loyal followers. The most effective way of creating followers in the village was to rent land on sharecropping, to extend credit (in cash or kind) and to become a "protector" in village disputes and in dealing government officials.

The *Union Parishad* was the formal power structure in the village. Its election process was profoundly influenced by various factors like kinship, factional loyalty and tenancy. In Daksin Charkumaria its election was determined by a coalition of different factions. Large landowners kept a number of *rayots* and dependent *kamlas* to serve their various socio-economic and political interests. They were considered to be secured voters, who would support blindly the candidature of their landlord or any other candidate supported by him. They not only voted for him but also actively participated in the election campaign.

Thus, extension of informal credit and other patronages prevented development of independent public opinion which could influence the local election. When voters are not "free and independent", the election results usually went in favour of the well-to-do villagers who could obtain the support of the faction leaders. An independent opinion, if it emerged at all, was suppressed by intimidation and coercion. This type of village politics is not unique in Daksin Charkumaria. This was also found in the other areas of Bangladesh (Karim 1990 : 136). As Karim, noted,

"Patronage dispensation in the form of sharecropping, mortgage giving, advancing loans and providing employment is the crucial element in wielding power with in Dhononjoypara and Gopalhati. By so doing traditional leaders command loyalty and obedience from their fellow villagers."

The economic inequality and their resultant rural social structure in under developed countries can't but produce similar political process. As Alavi pointed out,

"where the voter is an economic dependent of a landlord or other figure, his vertical alignment to this figure is likely to take precedence over his horizontal alignments of kinship or caste in determining his vote. The horizontal alignment of voters as in instance of lineage solidarity, is by contrast, the strongest among voters who have some economic dependence" (Alavi 1971 : 128).

The voting in favour of landlord also influenced the post election distribution of patronages in the form of relief-card, support in village arbitration work in rural works programme (RWP) or any other patronages and benefits under the control of the *Union Parishad*. This was found to be a common feature of the local elections in other developing countries. Thus, Ahmed concluded,

"The followers affiliation with factional leaders is based in most cases upon economic dependency and real or perceived economic and political benefits rather than kinship or caste" (Ahmed 1977 : 104)

Our observation of this study shows that after gaining a victory in the local election, the landlord gave his loyal supporters various forms of economic and political benefits. This leads to widespread misuse and irregularities in the distribution of relief materials, foodgrains distributed through the Rural Works Programme and Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme. Thus, we may conclude with Bertocci (1979 : 43-60) that the wealthier sections of the peasantry (surplus farmers), by virtue of their predominance in land control and related activities, not only dominate social, political and religious groups but also the administrative - politico institutions whereby the government intends to penetrate the rural areas.

Notes :

1. The concept, exchange relation, as Emerson notes (1972 : 60), "focuses attention on the relatively enduring interaction between specified actors with behaviour variable both in kind and in magnitude across the 'life time' of the relation."
2. In this extremely power-imbalanced networks, power dependence theory also predicts that a coalition of all these less powerful network members will power-balance the network because such a coalition reduces the availability of resources to less dependent actor and thereby help eroding his structurally provided power advantage.
3. This paper is a part of my M.Phil dissertation, *Informal Credit Market in a Traditional Society : A case study of a village in Bangladesh* ; Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 1988.
4. The numerical information provided here are taken from my M.Phil dissertation.
5. The study revealed that about 52 percent of the households in the village were indebted to various informal sources. Friends, relatives, kinsmen, rich landowners, moneylenders and shopkeepers were the most important sources of informal credit.

6. The totally landless households who built their homestead on the land of big landowners with an informal (but socially obligatory) understanding that they (along with their family members) would provide occasional free domestic services to landlords, that they would not work for others without the consent of the landlords, and that they would remain socially and politically loyal to their landlords. The landlords, in return, provided employment and/or land for sharecropping, assistance in the form of loan, cash and grains, and also protection against social oppression by other villagers. These families were locally called *rayots*. This *rayotee* system is a remnant of the feudalistic past.

In the study, 34 percent of the total number of loans were found to be contracted against different types of landmortgage.

References

- Ahmed, Sagir. (1977) *Class and Power in a Punjab village*, Monthly Review Press, London.
- Alavi, Hamja, (1971) "The Politics of Dependence : A Village in West Punjab", *South Asian Review*, 4, No. 2, January, pp. 111-128.
- Arens, J. (1977) *Jhagrapur : Poor Peasants and Women in a village in Bangladesh*, Amsterdam/ & Van Beurden, J. Birmingham, Third World Publications.
- Bertocci, P.J., (1970) *Elusive Villages : Social Structure and Community Organization in Rural East Pakistan*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University.
- (1979) "Structural Fragmentation and Peasant Classes in Bangladesh", *Journal of Social Studies*, No. 5, October, pp. 43-60.
- Biesanz, Mavis, H. & Biesanz, John, (1978) *Introduction to Sociology*, Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Blau, P.M. (1964) *Exchange and Power in Social life*. Newyork : John Wiley.
- Chowdhury, A., (1978) *A Bangladesh village : A study of social stratification*; Centre for Social Studies, University of Dhaka.
- Cook, K.S. (1978) "Power, equity, and Commitment in Exchange networks". *American Sociological Review* 43 : 721-739. & Emerson, R.M.,
- Diaz, Nancy, N., (1967) "The Social Life of Peasants", in Potter, Diaz & Foster (eds.), *Peasant Society : A Reader*; Little Brown & Company, Boston.
- Potter, Jack, M.,

- Donald, Gordon, (1976) *Credit for Small Farmers in Developing Countries*, West View Press, Inc., Boulder, Colorado.
- Emerson, R.M. (1962) "Power-dependence Relations", *American Sociological Review* 27 : 31-41.
- (1972) "Exchange Theory, Part II : Exchange Relations and Networks", pp. 58-87, in J. Berger, M. Zelditch and B. Anderson (eds) *Sociological Theories in Progress* (Vol. 2) Boston : Houghton - Mifflin.
- (1976) "Social Exchange Theory", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2 : 335-362.
- Homans, G.C., (1961) *Social Behavior : Its Elementary Forms*. New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- (1974) *Social Behavior : Its Elementary Forms* (2nd. ed.) New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Jahangir, B.K. (1982) *Rural Society, Power Structure and Class Practice*, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka University, 1982.
- Karim, Zehadul. A.H.M. (1990) *The Pattern of Rural Leadership in an Agrarian Society : A case study of the Changing Power Structure in Bangladesh*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi.
- Sengupta, Symalkanti (1973) *The Social System in a Bengal Village*, Editions Indian, Calcutta, India.
- Simmel, G. (1908) *The Philosophy of Money*, Boston : Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Srinivas, M.N. (1955) "The Social System in a Mysore village", in Marriot, McKins (ed.), *Village in India*, University of Chicago Press.

- Thorp, J.P. (1978) *Power Among the Farmers of Daripalla : A Bangladesh Village Study*, Caritas, Dhaka.
- Westergaard, K. (1980) *Boringram : An Economic and Social Analysis of a Village in Bangladesh*, Rural Development Academy, Bogra.
- Wood, G.D., (1976) "The Political Process in Bangladesh" in M. Ameerul Huq (ed.), *Exploitation of the Rural Poor*, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, Comilla.
- Zaidi, S.M. Hafeez (1970) *The Village Culture in Transition : A study of East Pakistan Rural Society*. East-West Centre Press, Honolulu, Hawaii.

PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN BANGLADESH

M. Zainul Abedin*

1. Introduction

The banks are required to ensure an elastic supply of credit flow in the economy with a view to helping growth of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The supply of credit is the means through which certain macro-economic objectives, like attainment of internal stability and external balance are to be achieved. The Banks jointly constitute important economic agents for mobilizing resources as well as for efficient deployment of those resources in the productive ventures in the economy. So, the role of the banks in building up a national economy is of paramount significance.

The history of banking in most parts of the world is a history of private banking. Bangladesh is no exception. She has a long history of private banking beginning from 1846 with the establishment of the 'Dacca Bank'. So until 1971 this country had the long experience of private banking of a period of nearly one and a half centuries. Private banking remained suspended in this country for more than a decade, then it was resumed in early 1980's.

Now a days, banks either in public or in private sector have to bear some public responsibilities in addition to the satisfaction of private interest. They are to meet these public obligations by perusing the stated macro economic goals of the country. These goals include the achievement of target growth rates of different sectors of the economy, balanced growth of

*Dr. Abedin is an Associate Professor of Economics at IBS, & a former Ph.D. Fellow of the Institute.

various regions of a country, reduction in the concentration of income and wealth (income inequality) etc. The banks are expected to act on these lines of action. Now naturally the questions arise : do the private banks take care of social objectives stated in broad macro economic framework of the Government or do they serve the interest of their owners ? Or do they deviate from those objectives ? If so, what remedies can be applied and why ? An attempt is made in the following sections to answer the above questions.

2. (a) Objectives of the Study

This study has the following specific objectives :

- (1) To watch the growth of branches of private banks in Bangladesh regions over the centuries.
- (2) To evaluate the performance of these banks in attaining macro economic goals of maintaining regional and sectoral balances in the economy.
- (3) To calculate the profitability of the private banks in recent years.
- (4) To measure the productivity trend of the private banks in recent years.
- (5) To identify the causes of low profiles of the private banks in Bangladesh and to suggest measures to bring about improvement in the situation.

(b) Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used for conducting this study. Secondary sources include published materials of the Bangladesh Bank, the Government of Bangladesh and other organisations. Primary source include the annual reports of different private banks and discussions of the author with banks' executives.

Standard statistical techniques including, indexing, rates, ratios, percentages and tabular forms are used in this study for analysing the data and drawing conclusions from those. The location quotient method is employed for measuring

sectoral imbalances in the deployment of private banks' advances.

The study has been confined to randomly selected seven private banks namely Pubali Bank Limited, Uttara Bank Limited, National Bank Limited, International Finance Investment and Commerce Bank Limited (IFIC) and United Commercial Bank Limited. However, while analysing branch expansion, profitability, performance, regional and sectoral imbalances, all private banks have been taken into account.

3. Findings

3.1 Growth of Private Banks Over the Centuries

Table 1 displays the growth of modern British styled private commercial banks of Bangladesh during the last one and a half centuries. Though private banking started in 1846, its growth was very slow during the whole of the second half of the 19th century and in the first quarter of the 20th century. This was because of the fact that the native traditional indigenous bankers did not totally accept British styled banking during that period. It was not known how many native banks were operating in Bangladesh at that time; but from a reliable source (1) we understand that only in Dhaka City about five hundred native banks were operating at the beginning of the 19th century. W.W. Hunter reported that many of those native banks were operating during 1872-75.

Bangladesh regions experienced a rapid growth of private banking during the period of 1921-1946. Some economic historians argue that the excess income earned by the Bangladeshi business communities during the World War I and World War II led them to invest in the banking industry, since at that time it was difficult for them to invest in other industries.

Table 1. Growth Trend of Private Banks' Branches in Bangladesh (1846-1993).

Year	No. of branches	Year	No. of branches
1846	1	1960	160
1865	2	1965	545
1875	6	1970	1042
1885	13	1971	1089
1895	21	1983	30
1901	25	1984	628
1911	45	1985	653
1921	149	1988	771
1931	359	1990	865
1941	565	1991	902
1946	668	1992	922
1950	148	1993	942

Source : M. Zainul Abedin, *Commercial Banking in Bangladesh*, Dhaka : NILG, 1990 and BB, *Economic Trend*, August, 1994.

With the partition of India in 1947 into two independent countries, most of the non-Muslim bank owners of erstwhile East Pakistan closed their offices here and migrated to India. As a result the number of bank branches went down from 668 in 1946 to only 148 in 1950. The next decade experienced a very slow growth of banking here. However, by 1960, the number of bank branches rose to 160. A rapid growth of bank branches took place in the Bangladesh regions during the decade of 1961-70. In 1971 the number of bank branches jumped to 1089.

Just after independence, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh nationalised all private banks except the foreign ones. So, during the decade of 1972-1982, there was no native private bank in the country. The new

privatisation policy of the Government allowed the operation of native private banks since late 1982 and early 1983, when a new private sector banking started functioning with only 30 branches. Meanwhile, the Government denationalised Uttara and Pubali Banks raising the number of private bank branches to 628 in 1984. The number increased further to 942 in 1993.

By the end of 1991, the private banks owned a market share of over 26 per cent of the banking business in Bangladesh in terms of deposit mobilisation. At the same time these banks deployed about one fourth of the total bank advances of Bangladesh. These banks operated nearly 16 per cent (902) of total bank branches (5683) and employed 18 per cent (17486) of all bank employees (1040691) working in the banking sector of our country. These data confirm that the private banks hold an important position in the economy of Bangladesh and their operations considerably influence the macro economic policies of the Government.

3.2 Regional Disparities in the Distribution of Private Banks' Facilities

Three variables are included here to assess private Banking facilities. These are bank branches, deposits and credits. All these variables directly or indirectly help to achieve the macro economic objectives of the Government. Let us first consider the distribution of bank branches.

In December, 1991 total number of private banks' branches was 902. Of these 66 per cent (597) was located in urban areas while the rest 34 per cent (305) was situated in rural areas. This indicates that the major operations of the private banks' are still in urban areas.

Table 2 exhibits the urban rural distribution of private banks' credit, deposit, credit deposit ratios, their index and index of variations. Credit deposit ratio has different meaning to different persons. To a bank owner it means how best the bank executives were able to utilise their deposits mobilized in income earning risky assets. So to him the higher the ratio, the better is for him. But it has certain limitations set by regulatory authority in the form of statutory reserve requirements as well

as by the day-to-day cash requirements in the operating branches.

Table 2. Regionwise Distribution of Credit Deposit Ratios of Private Commercial Banks, Disparity Index and Index of Variation (as on 31.12.1991).

(In million Taka)					
Region (1)	Credit (2)	Deposit (3)	Credit Deposit Ratios (%) (4)	Disparity Index (5)	Index of variation (6)
Chittagong Division					
Urban	10232	16542	62	78	(-)22
Rural	615	3557	17	22	(-)78
Total	10847	20099	54	68	(-)32
Dhaka Division					
Urban	35422	35896	99	125	(+)25
Rural	750	1595	47	60	(-)40
Total	36172	37491	96	121	(+)21
Khulna Division					
Urban	2916	3832	76	96	(-)4
Rural	196	365	54	68	(-)32
Total	3112	4197	74	94	(-)6
Rajshahi Division					
Urban	1280	3308	39	49	(-)51
Rural	104	385	27	34	(-)66
Total	1384	3693	37	47	(-)53
Bangladesh					
Urban	49850	59578	84	106	(+)6
Rural	1665	5902	28	35	(-)65
Total	51515	65480	79	100	0

Source : BB, Scheduled Banks Statistics, 1991, pp. 16-18.

The citizens of a certain locality look upon the credit deposit ratio as an indication of what share of deposits is advanced as credit in the same locality. Access to this information is a right of the citizens. Because, this information enables them to know the extent of deposits drained out from the locality. Table 2 makes it clear that credit deposit ratios in rural areas of all the four divisions of Bangladesh were very low with the rural areas of Chittagong Division having had the lowest (17) of them. So the variation between the lowest (-22) and the highest indices (-78) were assigned to the rural areas of

Chittagong Division. These low credit deposit ratios of these areas indicate that the deposits of these areas were drained out to the urban areas where credit deposit ratios were very high. The deposits mobilised in different divisions of the country were largely deployed in the urban areas of Dhaka Division where the disparity index was the highest (125), the index of variation having been (+)25. It explains that the private banks helped the concentration of resources in the urban pockets.

If we make a comparison among the divisions, it is observed that the position of Rajshahi Division was the lowest with credit deposit ratio (CDR) of 37 and disparity index of 47 only. The position of Chittagong Division with CDR of 54 and disparity index of 68 was slightly better. Khulna Division was relatively in a better position with CDR of 74 (which is near to national average 79) and Dhaka Division tops the list with CDR of 96 (which is far above the national average 79).

3.3 Sectoral Imbalances in the Distribution of Private Banks' Advances

A sector's contribution to GDP generally determines its position in the economy. However, a strategic sector with minor contribution to GDP (like our industry) may also receive much importance in the economy. Sectoral credit and sectoral GDP ratios indicate the extent of credit injected into the sector on the strength of its contribution to GDP. The location quotient (L.Q.), which can be derived by dividing the sectoral credit/sectoral GDP ratio by the total credit/total GDP ratio, confirms a sector's position in relation to the position of the economy as a whole or to that of any other sector.

Table 3 shows the L.Qs for various sectors of Bangladesh Economy on the 31st December, 1991. It explains that the private banks' credits were mostly concentrated in trade sector with L.Q. of 6.90 and disparity index of 690. Industry sector had the second position with L.Q. of 2.85 and disparity index of 285. These two sectors received more attentions of the private banks than the other sectors of the economy. This is because, excepting the construction sector, all other sectors had L.Qs. less than 1.00 in that year.

Table 3. Sectoral Imbalances in the Distribution of Private Commercial Banks' Advances (as on 31.12.91).

(In million Taka)					
Sector	Cs	GDPs	Cs/ GDPs	L.Q. = Cs/GDPs C/GDP	Disparity Index
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
1. Agriculture	1528	300596	0.0051	0.0827	8
2. Industry	12840	72913	0.1761	2.8541	285
3. Construction	3042	47261	0.0644	1.0438	104
4. Power, gas, water & sanitary services	04	11201	0.0004	0.0065	6
5. Transport, storage & communication	968	97697	0.0099	0.1605	16
6. Trade and commerce	29059	68279	0.4256	6.8979	690
7. Housing services	1707	73867	0.0231	0.3744	37
8. Banking and insurance	0	16299	0.0000	0.0000	0
9. Public Administration	0	38191	0.0000	0.0000	0
10. Miscellaneous services	2368	108088	0.0219	0.3549	35
Total	51516	834392	-	1.0000	100

Note : Cs = Credit to the Sector, GDPs = Sectoral Contribution to GDP,

L.Q. = Location Quotient.

Source: BB, *Scheduled Banks Statistics*, 1991, pp. 100-103 & *Economic Trend*, October, 1992, pp. 30-31.

3.4 Advances Classified by Size of Accounts

Private banks' advances classified by size of accounts display a picture not favourable for the small borrowers. On the 31st December, 1991, the small borrowers (receiving loan upto Taka one lac) received only less than 4 per cent of total loan disbursed by the private banks. The middle group of borrowers (receiving loan between Taka one lac and ten lac) obtained about 18 per cent of total advances of the private banks. The rest 78 per cent of private banks' advances went to only 5 per cent (8672) of the total borrowers (169549) receiving loans above Taka ten lac.

3.5 Trend of Profitability of Private Commercial Banks (PCBs)

Profit has been calculated here by deducting total bank expenditure and tax provisions from the total bank income. In the initial years (1984-88) the PCBs showed satisfactory 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 went down to 24 in 1991. It was negative in 1992 and in 1993. Net profits per employee as well as per branch also showed declining trend. In 1992 and 1993 it was even negative. 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. Both these ratios were negative in 1992 and in 1993. This alarming situation, if not checked in time, may invite serious mishappenings in near future.

Table 4. Recent Trend of Profitability of Private Commercial Banks of Bangladesh (1983-93)

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
1984	084	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	142	169	9	172	0.002	0.08
1990	113	135	7	131	0.001	0.06
1991	020	24	1	22	0.0002	0.009
1992	(-)114	(-)112	(-)6	(-)123	(-)0.0008	(-)0.04
1993	(-)76	(-)90	(-)4	(-)80	(-)0.050	(-)0.027

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table - 1.

The profitability of private commercial banks largely depends on their productivity levels. The higher the productivity, the larger is the volume of private 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.

3.6 Recent Trends of Productivity of Private Commercial Banks

In the industries productivity is usually expressed as the ratio of output value over input value in a particular unit. In a service industry, like the banks, input and output are hardly homogeneous. 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. The private banks' productivity is measured here as the ratio of the proportionate (or %) change in income to proportionate (or %) change in expenditure. In other words, here productivity is the responsiveness of output measured by the incremental income relative to the incremental expenditure.

Table-5 exhibits recent trends of productivities of private commercial banks of Bangladesh. The productivity of these 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 next year (1989), however, it 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 could 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 taken 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 until it reached 91 in 1993. The performance of the PCBs depicts mixed results. In five out of seven years, their performance was favourable and unfavourable for only two years. But the danger remains due to the fact that the last three years' performance was relatively unfavourable, and if they are not careful about it, they may face crisis in future.

Table 5. Recent Trend of Productivity of Private Commercial Banks of Bangladesh (1983-93)

(Tk. in million)

Year	Total Income (I)	Total Expenditure (E)	Productivity = $\frac{\Delta I}{I} / \frac{\Delta E}{E}$	Index
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
1991	7152	6819	1.21	110
1992	7838	7649	0.75	68
1993	9072	8858	1.00	91

Note : I = Income, E = Expenditure and Δ Delta = Change.

Source : Annual Reports of All Private Commercial Banks.

4. Factors Influencing Private Banks' Productivity

The private commercial banks' overall productivity is influenced by some external as well as by some internal factors. Among the external factors, policy parameters of the Government and the Central Bank, price stability, socio-economic and political stability, movements of the organised labour force, etc. have important influence that influence the productivity of the banks. High officials' directives upon others for giving loans to a person or a group of persons or company may lead to losses of the PCBs. The imposition of interest rates by the central bank on deposits and advances can also have impact on the productivity of the banks. High rates of inflation, socio-political instability and labour unrest are also very crucial factors that influence the productivity of the banks. During the study period (1983-93) all those external factors under the rule of the autocratic regime were not favourable for maintaining a high level of productivity in the banks.

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

Turning back to the internal factors, the most important ones are the growth rates of income and expenditure flows of the private banks. A look over Table 6 reveals that the growth rates of income and expenditure of private banks were the same in 1985, 1990 and 1993. The growth rate of income was higher than the growth rate of expenditure in 1987 and 1991. But the growth rates of income were less than the growth rates of expenditure in all other years. It is observed that higher productivity is related to higher growth rates of income which remain above or equal to the growth rates of expenditure.

Another important internal factor influencing the private banks' productivity, as Table-7 indicates is the changing structure of the components of the private banks' income and expenditure. It is clear from the Table that the private banks' major income flows from the interest on loans and advances and their major expenditure is on account of 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, 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 small changes in the income and expenditure patterns of the private banks over the years. These banks mainly depend on the traditional source of income, i.e., interest income. There are scopes for diversification of their activities which can expand the sources of their income. This, however, requires innovations of earning assets which, again, needs constant research and experiments.

Table 6. Growth Rates of Income and Expenditure of Private Commercial Banks During 1984-1993 (in %).

Income and Expenditure	Year									
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
1. Income	14	43	8	42	11	13	17	17	10	16
2. Expenditure	47	43	45	19	15	25	17	13	12	16

Source : Calculated from Table - 5.

Table 7. Changes in the Structures of Income and Expenditure of Private Commercial Banks During 1983-90 (in %)

Income and Expenditure	Year									
	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990		
1. Total Income	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
a. Interest	86	90	89	88	82	88	87	88		
b. Commission	13	9	9	10	16	9	10	10		
c. Others	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	2		
2. Total Expenditure	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
d. Labour	12	12	12	18	15	14	14	13		
e. Interest	74	73	73	69	72	73	75	76		
f. Others	14	15	15	13	13	13	11	11		

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table - 2.

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

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

We have already identified the factors influencing private banks' productivity. It is clear that the overall productivity levels of the banks are not only low but also gradually declining. The continuation of this trend may lead to some sort of banking crisis in near future. So, serious efforts should be made to increase the profitability and productivity of the Private Banks. With this end in view, the following recommendations are offered to the respective authorities for their considerations.

1. With the introduction 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 private banks can rationally utilise this opportunity, they may be able to increase their profitability and productivity.
2. Every year each private 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 should the growth rate of expenditure be allowed to exceed the growth rate of income of the private banks.
3. It is possible to bring down the growth rates of bank expenditure by effective cost control measures. Non-interest costs of the banks may reasonably be reduced by proper planning and rational programming of various activities. Under the changed circumstances even the interest cost may also be reduced.
4. The productivity of the private banks may be raised by better fund management and portfolio management, improving recycling of funds and developing other income earning business activities of the banks.

5. Research and experiments are necessary for the banks for innovations of new financial instruments which may help mobilisation of loanable funds and profitable deployments of those funds. This will also enable the private banks to diversify their financing.
6. The experts argue that certain degree of mechanisation and computerisation is necessary for the operation of head office activities like maintenance of inter-branch accounts of the private banks. Such mechanisation will release a large number of manpower which may profitably be employed in other income earning activities.
7. The system of strict discipline and accountability has to be established in all private banks. The activities of labour unions are to be rationalised and they should be motivated, trained and guided so that they may play a positive role in increasing these banks' productivity.
8. All efforts have to be made for realising bad, doubtful and stuck-up loans through rescheduling of repayment procedures, the use of business facts 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 private commercial banks should take care of the small depositors as well as the small borrowers for expansion and growth of their future business. They should extend their activities in rural areas and priority sectors of the economy, and help the reduction of resource concentration in urban pockets.
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 private 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 private banks in Bangladesh.

Appendix Table 2. Income and Expenditure Pattern of Private Commercial Banks During 1983-90.

Income and Expenditure	Year									
	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	(in millions taka)	
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		

Source : Annual Reports of all Private Banks.

Appendix Table 1. Growth of Profits, Assets, Capital, Employees and Branches of Private Commercial Banks (1983-93)

(Tk. in million)

Year	Net profit	Assets	Capital	Employees	Branches
1983	-	18766	381	-	-
1984	84	52017	763	11562	628
1985	139	63812	859	11813	653
1986	159	77679	1207	12218	693
1987	219	72084	1480	13550	715
1988	250	90717	1779	14810	771
1989	142	95139	1779	16107	824
1990	113	93306	1867	16921	865
1991	20	120789	2295	16916	902
1992	(-114	151234	2823	17486	922
1993	113	152493	2823	18034	942

Source : Bangladesh Bank, *Bulletin, Economic Trend*, June, 1991, March, 1993 and August, 1994.

Bibliography

1. Abedin, M. Zainul. *Commercial Banking in Bangladesh*. Dhaka : NILG, 1990.
2. *Annual Reports of all Private Commercial Banks (1983-93)*.
3. Abedin, M. Zainul, *et al.* "Measurement of Productivity in Commercial Banks of Bangladesh 1972-88". Dhaka : Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), 1990.
4. Angadi, V.B. "Some Issues Relating to Productivity of Indian scheduled Commercial Banks" in *Journal of the Institute of Bankers*, Vol. 58, No. 4.
5. Bangladesh Bank. *Economic Trends*, various issues.
6. _____. *Bulletin*, December, 1991. *Scheduled Banks Statistics*, 1991.
7. Godse, V.T. "Productivity in Banks : Concept and Measurement". *The Banker*, 1987.
8. Kandrick, J.W. *Productivity Trends in the United States*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1961.
9. Ojha, J. "Productivity and Profitability of Public Sector Banks in India : An International Comparison". *State Bank of India Monthly Review*, Vol. XXVI, 1987.
10. Sinkey, Joseph, Jr. *Commercial Bank Financial Management*. New York : Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983.
11. Taheruddin, M. "Manpower Productivity Situation in Nationalised Commercial Banks in Bangladesh" in *Bank Parikrama*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 3 & 4, 1989.

PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT THROUGH COTTAGE INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH

M. Mahbubur Rahman*

ABSTRACT

Bangladesh is a country characterized by the pressure of population and scarcity of capital resources. There exist widespread unemployment and poverty. At the moment, about 0.9 million people are adding to the present pool of 12 million unemployed labour force every year. In recent years cottage industries including the handloom have provided the employment of about 2.34 million people. Excluding handloom these industries are providing 35% of rural non-farm employment in the country. Cottage sector provides huge employment to the landless and women. Among the workers engaged in cottage industries, more than 23% are of landless group as compared to 10% of small owners and only 2% of the large farmers. On the other hand, among women 59% are engaged in this industry compared to 17% among men. In comparing the efficiency of factor use between small scale and cottage sector, the capital labour ratio in the latter is a small fraction of the former. Value added per worker is low in the cottage sector and the wage as a proportion of the value added is higher for cottage industries, but this has been offset by the absence of pure non-productive worker in the cottage sector. The wage income of a cottage industrial worker is almost the same as it is for a small scale industrial worker which ultimately ensures about 3 times higher family income of a cottage industrial worker as compared to that of a small industrial worker. All these indicate the better efficiency of cottage sector in using productive resources and also ensure a better distribution of wealth in comparison to the other segments of industries and hence in a country like Bangladesh, cottage industries can play an important role in employment generation for the millions of unemployed people.

*Assistant Professor of Economics, Rajshahi University

Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries of the world and suffers from a very high incidence of absolute poverty. More than 85% of the total labour force live in rural areas. Agriculture absorbs more than 50% of the total labour force of the country and many of them are under-employed of various degrees (World Bank, 1983). More than 80% of the people live far below the poverty line and 60% of them are in a very critical position (RISP, 1981). The high rate of population growth and the low rate of growth of GDP make this problem more critical. At the moment, more than 12 million persons are unemployed in the country which is about 11% of the total population (A statement of Labour and Human Resource Minister, "The daily Sangbad" 4th July, 1994, p. 8) while a good number of micro studies suggest it to be around 45%.

The proximate cause of poverty is clearly unemployment and underemployment and the real wages of the persons (who are lucky enough to be employed) are gradually declining. Like many other LDCs the economy of Bangladesh is predominantly agricultural. The ratio of the arable land to the total land area is 0.69 which is significantly higher than the world standard of 0.11 (F.A.O. production year book, 1989). It is expected that the agricultural sector of Bangladesh should provide employment to a significantly large part of its population. At present, the share of the agricultural sector in the total labour employed is 57.3% (BBS, 1991, p. 110). Besides this sector is beset with a magnitude of problems. Per capita availability of arable land is only 0.24 acre which is one of the lowest in the world and only 33% of the world average of 0.71 acre (FAO, year book, 1989). The possibility of employment expansion in the modern industrial sector is also limited. These industries require huge amounts of capital investment involving a large foreign exchange component for the import of foreign machinery and equipment. Therefore it is clear that, the agriculture and modern industries will not be able to gainfully absorb a significant portion of the rapid growing labour force of the country. The expansion of employment in the non-agricultural rural activities should therefore be a major component of any strategy to deal with the

basic problems of unemployment and poverty in this country. Keeping all these in mind, attention is being paid to rural non-farm activities as an important sector to focus on in the strategy of creating productive employment and income earning opportunities for the rural poor and the unemployed.

The 1983 World bank study on employment problem of Bangladesh estimated that the average annual increment to the labour force in the country during 1980-2000 is about 1.2 millions and even a 3.7% rate of growth in crop production, which is ambitious considering the past achievement of the country, can absorb only about 25% of the increase in the labour force. Therefore in the absence of some new factors there will be an annual addition of about 0.9 million people during the rest of the decade to the present pool of 12 million-a daunting outlook.

This study will focus on

- (1) The employment situation in the country and
- (2) The potentiality of cottage industries for the creation of employment opportunities in the country.

The study is mainly based on secondary data. The major sources are :

- (1) The small and cottage industries survey report (which is expected to be published by early 1995) conducted by the small and cottage industries corporation (BSCIC).
- (2) The Rural industries study project (RISP) of 1981, conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of development studies (BIDS) and some special issues of the journal of the institute.
- (3) Census of manufacturing industries (Various issues), published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).
- (4) Various plan documents of Bangladesh Government.
- (5) Bangladesh population census (various issues) and
- (6) A good number of publications of various agencies and their statistical booklets.

The study has certain limitations due to the non-availability of relevant data. It is very much difficult to know the nature and extent of unemployment prevailing in Bangladesh, because the last labour force survey (Which is very useful to identify and analyze the employment situation in the country) was conducted

during 1984-85 and thereafter, probably, no sample survey or any type of systematic and data based research has been initiated by any private or government agency. Another type of difficulty that relates to the study of the potentiality of employment creation through cottage industries is that most of the information on cottage and small scale industries are available only in a combined form though these two categories of industries are not synonymous.

Employment Situation

It is mentioned earlier that in Bangladesh there is a problem of non-availability of necessary data on employment situation. The data available on this aspect are old by a decade. The labour force survey (LFS) of 1984-85 showed that 0.6 million people were unemployed in Bangladesh, which is about 2.0% of the labour force (Table-1).

In a less developed country like Bangladesh such a low rate of unemployment is very hard to accept. The rate of unemployment depends upon the definition of unemployment accepted by a particular study. In the above survey, the rate of disguised unemployment has not been considered so far. In contrast, the final report of the rural industries study project (RISP) 1981 states that in Bangladesh "unemployment is estimated at a staggering 42% of the labour force (matching man-days worked against man-days available)." (RISP, 1981, p. 1). On the basis of this estimate the present unemployment figure in Bangladesh is above 19.0 million.¹ The Grameen Bank evaluation study of 1983 considers that the rural unemployment in non-farm activities in Bangladesh is of the extent of 43% of the available rural labour force (Table-2).

Table-3 shows that, there is a strong evidence of disguised unemployment in agricultural as well as in non-agricultural sector of Bangladesh. Therefore among all the major economic problems unemployment in Bangladesh is one of the most serious to tackle.

¹Calculated from the World Bank (1983) labour force projection for the year 1995.

Potential for Employment Creation

Present Size of the Sector

The most important factor determining the potential of employment creation through the development of cottage industries is of course the present size of the sector. At the moment, cottage industries provided employment to about 1.33 million people and the total employment generated by all the cottage industries including the handloom sector is about 2.36 million. Table-4 reports the employment provided by cottage industries from 1961 to 1994. Cottage industries not only absorb a significant portion of the total labour force of the country, they also occupy an important position in the rural occupational structure. Table-5 Shows the result of two important studies carried on the occupational patterns of different land holding groups of the rural people. The first study was conducted by the BIDS and the other by Grameen Bank. The RISP survey found that, more than 45% of the rural people were engaged in non-farm activities which were their primary occupations and cottage industries (CI) alone accounted for 38% of the same (CI actually offered employment opportunities to 17% of rural people). When secondary involvement were counted non-farm activities accounted for about 57% of the total employment of the rural people, in it the share of cottage industries was 36% of the non-farm employment, while its share in total rural employment was 20%.

The study area selected in RISP study had a very high concentration of cottage industries and hence the estimates of the share of the cottage industries in employment of the rural people may contain upward bias. The GBP study should be free from such bias, compared to the RISP survey. This study reported that about 44% of the rural people are engaged in the non-farm activities which were their primary occupations and 11% of them were involved in cottage industries alone. The employment in cottage industries is 25% of the total non-farm primary occupations. If secondary involvements are counted, cottage industries are found to employ about 16% of all rural labour force.

Further the role of the cottage industry subsector in the economy of Bangladesh in employment creation can better be understood by looking into the commodity composition as presented in Table-6. All the sources quoted in the table clearly demonstrate that three sectors, namely, (a) Manufacturing of food, beverage and tobacco, (b) Manufacturing of wood and wood products and (c) Textile and leather industries are the most dominant within the cottage industrial sector. Again, these three sub-sectors within the cottage industry sector accounted for about 77% of number of units and about 72% of employment generation. (Table-6, BSCIC, 1994 survey). In Bangladesh economy the two subsectors, viz. the textile and wearing apparel including leather industries, and food, beverage and tobacco together occupy the most significant place from the view point of employment generation. These sectors account for 23% and 26% respectively of the total employment created by the cottage industries. Thus the role of cottage industries in generating employment in rural areas is quite significant. Therefore to absorb about 3%² of the new additions to the rural labour force, cottage industry sector has to grow at a rate of 6% per annum, and that may not be a very ambitious target.

Employment for Rural Poor People

An important argument in favour of the cottage industries in Bangladesh is the scope of employment for the landless and the women. Creation of employment for this class (i.e. poor) of people is very much important from the point of view of poverty alleviation programme of the country. Table-5 shows an inverse relationship between the proportion of workers employed in the cottage industries and the size of landholding of the workers' households. RISP survey report shows that about 24% of the workers of the landless group are employed in cottage industries, compared to 16% of small landowners and 9% of the household having more than 2 acres of land. According to the GBP study report, 23% of the workers are of landless group as compared to 10% of small owners and only 2% of the large farmers.

²The annual growth rate of the rural labour force is 3% (World Bank : *Bangladesh : selected issues in rural employment*, March, 1983. Table. 1. 8. p - 118).

Another study of BIDS shows that among women, 59% of workers are engaged in the rural household industries compared to 17% among men (Mahbub. R; 1990. p. 270). This is due to the engagement of the men in outdoor agricultural occupation. In the existing social system in Bangladesh, women use to keep themselves within their houses and engage in the various cottage industrial activities. Thus the development of cottage industries will not only absorb millions of poor people but will also provide employment for millions of unskilled women without disturbing the existing social system and norms.

Capital Requirement

An important determinant of the potentiality of employment generation is the capital requirement. Table-7 shows the classification of cottage industries according to the size of capital requirement per person. More than 75% of the cottage industries in Bangladesh require low capital per person employed. (Table-7). This indicates the feasibility of the cottage industry sector to play an important role in employment generation in Bangladesh wherein capital is very much scarce. The capital requirement for the establishment of cottage industry is also low. The values of fixed and working capitals used by various cottage industries are shown in Table-8. The fixed capital requirement per enterprise is less than Tk 13,000 for the cottage industries as a whole, and less than Tk 10,000 for 6 out of 9 major cottage industries. Fixed capital includes the capital required for building, machinery, tools, equipments etc. The large component of the value of capital is in fact building. In a study it is found that the value of buildings as a proportion of total capital is 42% for handlooms, 53% for goldsmithy, 65% for dairy products, 85% for carpentry and 64% for tailoring. (Hossain. M. 1983. p. 15). Capital requirement for setting up a new cottage enterprise estimated from the report of the BSCIC survey of cottage industries 1994 (unpublished) is shown in Table-8. The table also gives an estimate of the requirement of working capital for smooth functioning of the enterprise.

The average working capital requirement of all CIs is less than Tk. 10,000 except power driven rice mills as reported in Table-8.

Labour Productivity

Like capital requirement, productivity of labour is also important for the expansion of an industry. It is noted earlier that the amount of capital used in cottage industries is very low and hence the capital productivity is expected to be high. On the other hand the labour productivity as reported in various study is indeed low. RISP survey of 1981 reports that 6 out of 14 industries are generating highly productive employment. These industries are tailoring, jewellery, dairy products, carpentry, gur making and oil pressing. Other two industries namely handloom and black-smithy have fairly high labour productivity. Remaining 6 industries (paddy husking, mat making, bamboo products, fishing nets, rope making and poultry) as reported in the RISP study have very low labour productivity. Even then these industries are running well bre their proprietors. There are mainly three reasons behind this. Firstly, these industries are run entirely by family labourers and as a result they can earn a good amount as family income. Secondly, the proportion of female employment is very high. In Bangladesh, the female workers have very little opportunity cost of labour as they have limited scope of employment out side of their residence.³ Hence families with severe subsistence pressure may employ female workers in these industries as long as additional labour adds something to family income. For this reason, a family enterprise employing a large proportion of family labour may continue production even when labour productivity is very low. This also seems to be the reason of low wage rate in these industries. Thirdly, most of the enterprises of these type operate round the year and can generate employment for the seasonally unemployed people.

It is found that (Table-9), the capital-labour ratio in the large scale sector is 44 times of that of the cottage sector. On the other hand, the value added per worker in the large scale sector is 8 times of that of the cottage sector.

³In Bangladesh, because of orthodoxy and conservatism (socio-religious reasons) women as a rule are not inclined or are often not allowed to do outdoor work.

In comparing the efficiency of factor use between small scale and cottage sector the capital-labour ratio in the latter is 5 times of that of the former and value added per worker is 3 times higher in the small sector than that in the cottage sector. The average size of employment per enterprise in the cottage sector is 3.3 persons (BSCIC Survey Report, 1994) and of them 3.0 persons are of family labourers (Mahbub, R; 1990). On the other hand it is very rare to find more than one person from the same family to be employed in the case of small scale industry (Mahbub, R; 1990). The wages of production workers as a proportion of value added are higher for cottage industries than for large and small industries (Table-9). But this is partly offset by the high employment cost of non-production workers as a proportion of value added in large and small industries. In cottage industries, there is no pure non-production worker. Such workers account for 22% and 14% respectively of all the employment in large and small industries (Hossain, M; 1989). Moreover, the unit cost of non-production workers is higher than of production workers. Thus 32% of the employment cost in the large industries and 26% in small industries are accounted for by the non-production workers (Hossain, M; 1989). Table-9 exhibits almost the same wage rate of the cottage and small scale industrial labourer and it ensures nearly 3 fold family income of the former than that of the latter.

CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing analysis it can be concluded that the cottage industries occupy an important position in the economy of Bangladesh. The potentiality of employment creation of these industries is high because (1) a significant portion of our available labour force is already engaged in this sector (on a full or part-time basis) and (2) the capital requirement for employment creation is low. The other important characteristics of this sector are : (i) they generate employment for women who have few employment opportunities in other sectors, and hence can help to reduce the dependency ratio from the present high level and increase family incomes; (ii) they generate employment on a seasonal basis — often in slack seasons of agricultural

activities and hence can play an important role in reducing the present high rate of disguised unemployment in agriculture. Lastly (iii) the cottage industries generate basically self-employment for the poor people. Thus the equity objective of development has a better chance of realization through the development of cottage industries.

The information compiled in the study brings out some interesting comparisons among the different groups of industries. The capital-labour ratio in the large scale sector is 44 times of that for cottage sector. On the other hand, the value added per worker in the large sector is 8 times of that of cottage sector. The capital per unit of labour in small scale sector is 5 times that for cottage sector and value added per worker is 3 times higher in the small scale sector. Large and small scale sectors have high employment cost for non-production workers and cottage sector has no such non-productive worker. In addition to this cottage industries generate a family income of a labourer which is three times higher than that of a small industrial worker.

On the basis of the above findings it will not be unjustified to say that the development of cottage industries will ensure the benefits of the masses. The generation of employment of the mass rural people will ultimately ensure a better distribution of economic power and wealth. In spite of their recognized importance in our economy cottage industries seem to be far away from the mainstream of development process even at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan. Most of the cottage industries (traditional) are a prey to the vicious circle. The main problems are financial scarcity and technological backwardness and these continue to exist in spite of the emergence of several institutions for solving them. How can we imagine a developed Bangladesh of the 21st century with such a poor condition of an important sector of the economy? Now a *big push* is urgently needed to break the vicious circle to solve the problems and to start a circle of development of cottage industries in the process of preparation for a developed Bangladesh of the 21st century.

Table 1. Unemployed Population (in million)

Year	Total population	Civilian Labour force	Unemployed population	
			Total	percentage
Census-1961	55.2	16.9	0.1	0.59
" -1974	76.4	21.9	0.5	2.30
" -1981	89.9	25.9	0.6	2.31
" -1991	108.0			
Labour force Survey				
1983-84	95.2	28.5	0.6	2.1
1984-85	97.7	29.5	0.6	2.0
World Bank Projection				
1990	109.0	38.7	12.0	31.2
1995	118.1	45.3	14.6	32.2
2000	126.6	52.8	17.2	32.7

Source : (1) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) *Statistical Year Book*. (various issues)

(2) Population Census (Primary Report). 1991.

(3) World Bank. *Bangladesh : Selected Issues in Rural Employment*. March. 1983. P. 10 and P. 118.

Table 2. Unemployment in Rural Non-Farm Activities.

Study	Un-Employment (in %)
Rural Industries Study Project (BIDS) - 1981	46.8
Barisal Area Project (BIDS) - 1980	45.0
Gramscen Bank Evaluation Study - 1983	43.0

Source : Above Study Projects.

Table 3. Rate of Disguised Unemployment Among The Self Employed Rural People. 1980.

Weekly Working Hours	Agricultural		Non-agricultural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Below 20 hours	3.9	42.9	2.9	10.0
20-29	5.8	28.6	2.2	20.0
30-39	13.4	11.9	16.5	30.0
40-49	25.2	16.7	35.2	20.0
50-59	30.5	--	33.4	--
60 and Above	21.2	--	10.1	20.0
Sample Size	1818	42	644	10

Source : Manpower Survey, 1980. pp. 158-159.

Table 4. Number of Units and Employment in Cottage Industries (1961-1994).

Year	Number of Unites (in million)				Employment (in million persons)			% of Cott. & hand- loom to Total
	Cottage	Hand- loom	Total	Total Employed Population	Cottage	Hand- loom	Cottage+ Hand- loom	
1961	0.21 ^a	0.14	0.35	16.83	0.64	0.52	1.16	6.9
1974	0.38	0.20	0.48	21.41	-	0.85	-	-
1981	0.32	0.21 ^c	0.53	22.10	0.92 ^b	0.90	1.81	8.20
1994	0.41 ^d	0.21 ^c	0.62		1.33 ^d	1.03	2.36	-

Source : (1) BSCIC, An Outline of Third Five Year Plan. Mimeo. 1984 : Bakht. Z. (May. 1984). Table-6. p. 40.
Hossain. M : (June. 1984). Table-1. p. 5.

(2) BBS *Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh*. 1986. 1989 (Total Employment data).

(3) BSCIC, *Cottage Industries of Bangladesh - A Survey*. 1983.

(4) BSCIC, *Cottage Industries Survey Report*. 1994 (forthcoming)

(5) BBS *Report on Bangladesh Handloom Census* 1990.

Note : a=> For 1962 and excluding Salt and bidi product.
b=> BSCIC Cottage Industries Survey Report. 1983.
c=> For The Year 1980.
d=> BSCIC Cottage Industries Survey Report. 1994 (forthcoming).

Table 5. Occupational Distribution of Different Land Holding Groups.

Occupation	Percentage of Workers Engaged in Occupation									
	RISP Survey					GB Survey				
	Upto 0.5 acres			0.5 to 2.0 acres		Over 2.0 acres				
	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Total Involvement	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Total Involvement	Primary Involvement	Total Involvement
Cultivation	9.8	12.9	22.7	60.3	24.7	85.0	15.75	73.8	89.63	
Agricultural Wage Labour	33.6	5.8	39.4	6.7	4.9	11.6	0.67	1.0	1.67	
Fishing	0.4	0.6	1.0	1.7	0.7	2.4	-	0.4	0.37	
Cottage Industry	21.7	2.8	24.5	12.6	3.6	16.2	1.11	8.1	9.20	
Trade and Business	16.4	2.7	19.1	11.3	6.9	18.2	13.25	8.1	21.37	
Construction	2.7	1.1	3.8	1.0	3.4	4.4	0.24	1.0	4.28	
Transport	2.4	0.2	2.6	1.7	0.8	2.5	0.24	0.4	0.61	
Services	7.9	0.3	8.4	5.2	0.2	5.4	2.07	6.1	8.17	
Miscellaneous	5.1	0.9	6.0	0.5	5.0	5.5	-	0.6	-	
All Occupations (a)	100.0		127.3			115.2			132.3	

Occupation	RISP Survey					GB Survey				
	Over all Workers			Over all Workers		Over all Workers				
	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Total Involvement	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Primary Involvement	Secondary Involvement	Total Involvement	Primary Involvement	Total Involvement
Cultivation	22.9	68.8	75.7	33.6	16.6	50.2	38.4	7.1	45.5	
Agricultural Wage Labour	35.6	11.1	-	21.1	4.8	25.9	7.9	4.5	22.4	
Fishing	-	-	-	0.7	0.4	1.1	-	-	-	
Cottage Industry	23.3	9.5	2.4	17.1	2.8	19.9	10.7	5.0	15.7	
Trade and Business	20.9	15.3	9.3	13.7	5.5	19.2	11.9	5.4	17.3	
Construction	-	-	-	1.9	0.8	2.7	-	-	-	
Transport	4.5	2.8	0.0	1.9	0.7	2.6	2.0	0.9	2.9	
Services	8.8	12.9	20.1	6.9	0.2	7.1	11.6	1.2	12.8	
Miscellaneous	13.7	7.6	1.9	3.1	0.7	3.8	7.5	0.8	8.3	
All Occupations (a)	129.7	128.0	109.1	100.0		132.5	100.0		124.9	

Source : (1) BIDS : Rural Industries Study Project. P. 40 and P. 46

(2) Hossain. M : Asian Employment Programme Working Paper ARTE. 1984. P. II.

Note : (a) The column total exceeds 100 because of the fact that some workers are engaged in more than one occupation.

Table 6. Employment and Units of Cottage Industries by Broad Industry Groups.

Sectors	RISP Survey, 1981				BSCIC Survey, 1983				BSCIC Survey, 1994			
	Units		Employment		Units		Employment		Units		Employment	
	Number (Thousand)	%	Thousand persons	%	Number (Thousand)	%	Thousand Persons	%	Number (Thousand)	%	Thousand Persons	%
Food and Agricultural Products	9.54	19.18	40.06	21.47	84.75	26.34	232.41	25.35	117.40	28.95	346.60	26.04
Wood, Cane and Bamboo Products	11.12	22.37	26.70	14.31	70.79	22.00	215.45	23.50	91.81	22.64	300.24	22.55
Textiles	25.36	50.98	108.02	57.89	87.90	27.32	229.40	25.02	101.73	25.10	305.43	22.95
Metal Products	1.23	2.48	3.32	1.78	1.36	0.42	5.08	0.55	1.60	0.39	11.27	0.85
Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals	0.31	0.63	1.39	0.74	18.55	5.77	83.14	9.07	21.31	5.25	74.03	5.56
Leather and Rubber Products	0.13	0.26	0.45	0.24	23.19	7.21	60.15	6.56	27.01	6.67	108.32	8.14
Printing and Paper Products	0.09	0.18	0.48	0.26	1.74	0.54	7.58	0.83	2.41	0.59	12.08	0.91
Glass and Ceramics	0.72	1.44	3.31	1.77	33.46	10.40	83.59	9.12	42.20	10.41	173.06	13.00
Miscellaneous Industries and Repairing services	1.23	2.48	2.86	1.54								
Total	49.73	100.00	186.59	100.00	321.74	100.00	916.80	100.00	405.47	100.0	1331.03	100.00

Sectors

Mfg. of Food, Beverage and Tobacco
 Mfg. of Wood and Wood Prod. including furniture
 Textile, wearing App. and Leather Indus.
 Mfg. of Chemicals and Chemicals based on Petroleum and
 Coal and Rubber and Plastic Products.
 Mfg. of non-metal mineral products except petroleum and coal.
 Mfg. of fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment.
 Mfg. of paper and paper products and printing and publishing.
 Other manufacturing industries and Handicraft.

Total

Source : (1) BSCIC : Cottage Industries Survey, 1983 and 1994 (forthcoming)

(2) BIDS : Rural Industries Study Project 1981.

Table 7. Classification of Cottage Industries According to the Size of Capital Requirement Per Person.

# Capital Requirement - per person (in Tk)	No. of Cott. Industries	% of Industries	Category
Below 5000	42	49	Low capital using.
5000-15000	23	27	Moderately low capital using.
15000-30000	14	16	Highly capital using.
30000 and above	7	8	Very high capital using.
Total	86 *	100	

Source : BSCIC - *Cottage Industries Survey of Bangladesh 1994*.
(Unpublished)

Note : * These 86 industries have been selected from the list of 211 cottage industries of Bangladesh given in the BSCIC survey report (unpublished) of cottage industries in 1994 on the basis of the comparatively large share of these industries in the total employment and in the total sale value of production of the cottage sector. (Employment = 96.5% of that of the cottage sector. Sale value of production = 91.6% of the total of that of cottage sector).

$$\# \text{ Capital requirement per person} = \frac{\text{Fixed capital} + \text{Working capital}}{\text{Total person engaged}}$$

Table 8. Capital Requirement for Setting up A New Family-Based Enterprise (Tk. per enterprise)

Industry	Fixed Capital (Average)	Working Capital (Average)	Total Capital
Handloom Weaving (Single-loom unit)	11337	8065	19402
Gur making	8157	3033	11190
Pottery	8455	3914	12369
Carpentry (Wood furniture)	7207	4152	11359
Bamboot Cane Products	5801	1100	6901
Tailoring	3574	3129	6703
Oil pressing (power driven cottage type)	10048	5029	15077
Rice husking			
(a) Traditional (Dhaki)	7473	901	8374
(b) Rice mill (Power driven cottage type)	54186	17995	72181

Source : BBS : *Report on Bangladesh Handloom Censès*. 1990.
Published in 1991.

BSCIC : *Cottage Industries Survey Report* - 1994
(forthcoming).

Table 9. Labour and Capital Productivity in Cottage, Small and Large Scale Industries.

	Cottage	Small	Large
Value Added per worker 1981/82 Market Price (in tk.)	4701	13332	38542
Wage Cost per Worker (in tk.)	3164	3198	9659
Capital (Fixed)/Labour ratio (in tk.)	1790	8509	78438
Value Added/Capital (Fixed) ratio (in tk.)	2.61	1.36	0.37
Family labourer Per unit	3.0	Negligible	None

Sources : (1) BBS. *Bangladesh Census of Manufacturing Industries* 1981/82. Dhaka - 1986.

(2) BSCIC. *Survey Report on Small Industries of Bangladesh*. Dhaka. 1982.

(3) " *Cottage Industries of Bangladesh. A -- Survey*. Dhaka - 1983.

(4) " *Survey Report on Cottage Industries of Bangladesh*. 1994 (forth coming).

(5) BBS. *Report on Bangladesh Handloom Census* 1983/84 and 1990.

(6) Khan. AR and Hossain. M - *The Strategy of Development in Bangladesh*. The Macmillan Press Ltd. 1989.

(7) Mahbub. R : *A Study of the Role of Cottage Industries in the Economic Development of LDCS with Particular Reference to Bangladesh* (Unpublished - Ph.D. thesis). Banaras, 1990.

References

- Ahmed. M.U. *Financing Rural Industries in Bangladesh* BIDS. Vol. 12. No. 1-2. 1984.
- Ahmed. M.U. and Mahmud. W. *Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Industrial Development*; Academic Publishers. Dhaka. 1992.
- Ahmed. Q.K. *Employment Creation in Rural Bangladesh – Policies and Programmes*, BIDS Research Report No. 57. 1987.
- Ahmed. Q.K. *Promotion of Employment and Income through Rural Non-farm Activities in Bangladesh*, BIDS Research Report No. 45. 1986.
- Bakht. Z. *Appropriate Technology in the Rural Industries Sector of Bangladesh*; BIDS Research Report No. 6. 1987.
- Bakht. Z. *Value Added and Employment in Service, Small Scale and Cottage Industries in Bangladesh*; A Critical Review. BIDS Research Report No. 109. 1989.
- BBS. *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh* : various issues. Dhaka : Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
- BBS. *Report on Bangladesh Census of Manufacturing Industries*. various issues. Dhaka : Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
- BIDS. *Rural Industries Study Project (RISP) Final Report*. 1981. Dhaka : Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.
- BSCIC. *Cottage Industries of Bangladesh — A Survey*. Dhaka : Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation. 1983.
- Hossain. M. "Employment and Labour in Bangladesh Rural Industries." *Bangladesh Development Studies*. Vol. 12. No. 1 & 2. 1984.
- Khan. A.R. and Hossain. M. *The Strategy of Development in Bangladesh*. London : The Macmillan Press Ltd. . 1989.

Mahbub. R. *A Study of the Role of Cottage Industries in the Economic Development of Certain LDCs with Particular Reference to Bangladesh*; unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Banaras. 1990.

Pattanaik. S.M. *Development Strategy for Small Industries*. Bombay : Himalaya Publishing House. 1988.

Planning Commission. Various Plan Documents of Bangladesh. The Daily Sangbad. 4th July. 1994.

World Bank. *Bangladesh : Selected Issues in Rural Employment*. 1993.

LAND USE PATTERN IN PANCHAGARH URBAN AREA IN 1962 AND 1991 - A COMPARATIVE STUDY.

Abu Hanif Shaikh*
and
Jafar Reza Khan

ABSTRACT

Land use pattern reflects not only the present space requirements but also the stage and development of activities of any country. Since land use represents the interactions of physico-historic and socio-economic factors, all development/redevelopment must begin from the existing situation. In the present paper, we have tried to find out the change in the pattern of land use in Panchagarh during the period 1962-1991. For this reason, data relating to 1962 was collected from the Tahsil office of Panchagarh and Boda, and for 1991, a plot to plot field work survey was conducted. From the analysis of the data it was found that no remarkable change in the land use pattern occurs during 1962-1991 period and the town till that period was predominantly rural in character. Therefore, there is much scope for planning the town for multitudes of development activities for preserving the congenial environment.

Introduction

Urbanization in its most formal sense merely constitutes the increase of the urban population as compared with the rural one, but it includes and results from the economic transformation (Slater, 1986). One of the world's most critical development problems that has emerged in recent decades is the unprecedented growth of cities in developing countries (Gillert and Gugler, 1982). While the total population in the developing countries is growing rapidly, the urban population is growing twice as fast. Like other developing countries of the world, also in Bangladesh, rapid urban growth and urban population as a percentage of

*Mr. A.H. Hanif is Associate Professor of Geography, University of Rajshahi and Mr. J.R. Khan is Professor in the same department.

total population has increased rapidly between 1961 and 1991 from 5.19 percent to 19.63 percent. If this trend is continued, then it seems that both population growth and urbanization in Bangladesh are expected to remain high in the near future.

This paper has attempted to identify the historical roots of urban development of panchagarh town and to explain the pattern of land use in the period 1962-1991. Land use patterns reflects not only the present space requirements but also the stage and development activities of any country. Since land use represents the interactions of physico-historic and socio-economic factors, all development/redevelopment must begin from the existing situation. Sound planning over the changing interpretation and explanations of the land use phenomena must be based on exact knowledge and understanding of the resources and causes underlying the situation (Chapin, 1969). By comparing the present land use information with those of the previous one for a selected area, it is possible to determine how effectively the potential land in that area is being used. The evaluation of such type may reveal the need and scope for development of the area. In a country like Bangladesh, where the rate of urbanization is negligible, unplanned mushroom growth of urban centres and very undesired and haphazard use of land is seen throughout the country (Nafis, 1963). As a result, congestion and problem of sanitation etc. are polluting the overall social and physical environment of the area. It may be pointed out that under this circumstance, formulation of any programme for further development of cities in Bangladesh is difficult because of the acute scarcity of space (Khan 1962). As a result, to cope with this problem, sound urban land use planning is essential for all the cities of Bangladesh.

Objective of the study

In Bangladesh, planning for the development of urban centres has not been formulated till now and population of all the urban centres of the country have increased tremendously. As a result, land for residential purposes has been declining rapidly. Recently, indiscriminate use of lands in small and medium size towns and cities of Bangladesh for roads and

embankments, various types of offices and construction of houses etc. for government officers and employees are a common phenomena. Beside, during the last two decades, people from small urban centres and villages are migrating everyday to the big cities for jobs and slum clusters are appearing (Hanif, 1976). Therefore, all these phenomena are mainly responsible for decreasing the area of land for residential purposes and have given rise to the various problems in the centre of the cities like housing facilities, congestion, sanitation & over crowding. The objectives of this study are :

- a) to examine the trends and patterns of land use change of Panchagarh Town during the period 1962-1991. and
- b) to assess the forces that are responsible for the development of Panchagarh Town since 1962.

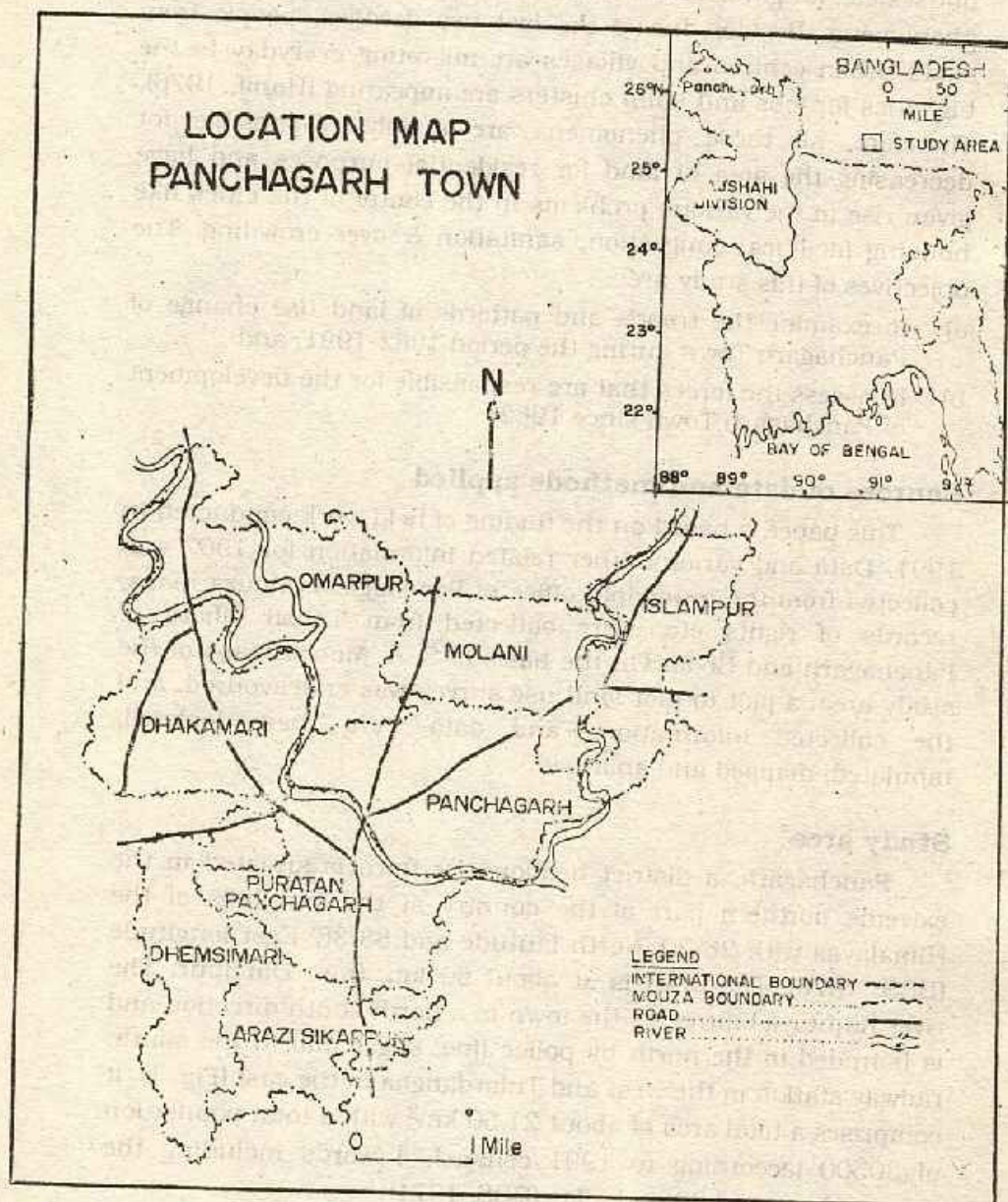
Sources of data and methods applied

This paper is based on the finding of field work conducted in 1991. Data and various other related information for 1962 was collected from the municipal office of Panchagarh. Mouza maps, records of rights etc. were collected from Tahsil offices of Panchagarh and Boda. On the basis of S. A. Mouza maps of the study area, a plot to plot land use survey was endeavoured, and the collected informations and data were then depicted, tabulated, mapped and analysed.

Study area

Panchagarh, a district headquarter town is situated in the extreme northern part of the country at the foot hills of the Himalayas with 26°20' North latitude and 88°38' East longitude (BBS, 1976). The town is at about 90 km. from Dinajpur. The river Karotoya bifurcates the town in a north-south direction and is bounded in the north by police line, sugar mill in the south, railway station in the west and Tulardangha in the east (Fig. 1). It comprises a total area of about 21.50 km² with a total population of 30500 (according to 1991 census), 4 wards including the proposed one and 29 mahallas (BBS, 1974).

Figure Map



In ancient time, Panchagarh was famous for Jute and mollasses production and it came into existence as a thana headquarter in 1909. It was then the abode of deer and wild life. It is said that Panchagarh has derived its present name from Panch (five) Garhs (raised platform with Jungles) such as Meergarh, Bhitargarh, Debengarh, Hussain dighirgarh (Now it is in India) and Rajengarh. In Panchagarh, out of the total population of 30,500, 40% are locals and 60% are migrants, mostly from Mymensingh, Siliguri and Jalpaiguri (BBS, 1991).

Panchagarh became a sub-divisional headquarter town in 1980 and only in 1988 it has been upgraded into a district headquarter town. Municipality in panchagarh has started functioning only in 1985.

The present jurisdiction of the urban area of Panchagarh are included the mouzas of Panchagarh, Puraton Panchagarh, Molani (partly), Omarpur (partly), Dhakkamara (partly) and Dhemshimari (partly) (Fig. 1) Most of the urban areas include agricultural as well as vacant land. Thus, with a vast amount of land with rural character, it was observed that Panchagarh is in its formative stage of growth and development. A proper and sound planning of the urban area may be undertaken particularly, for utilizing the land in a proper way.

Present Land use Pattern

The process of urbanization and development of Panchagarh town, in fact has started with the creation of district headquarter town. But the overall trends towards urbanization and the growth of the population of Panchaggrh town goes back to the construction of sugar mill in 1980 which has given considerable impetus to the present pattern of urbanization. However, the following 10 categories of land use have been identified in Panchagarh Town and a brief discussion is given below; (maps 2 & 3 and Table-1 & 2).

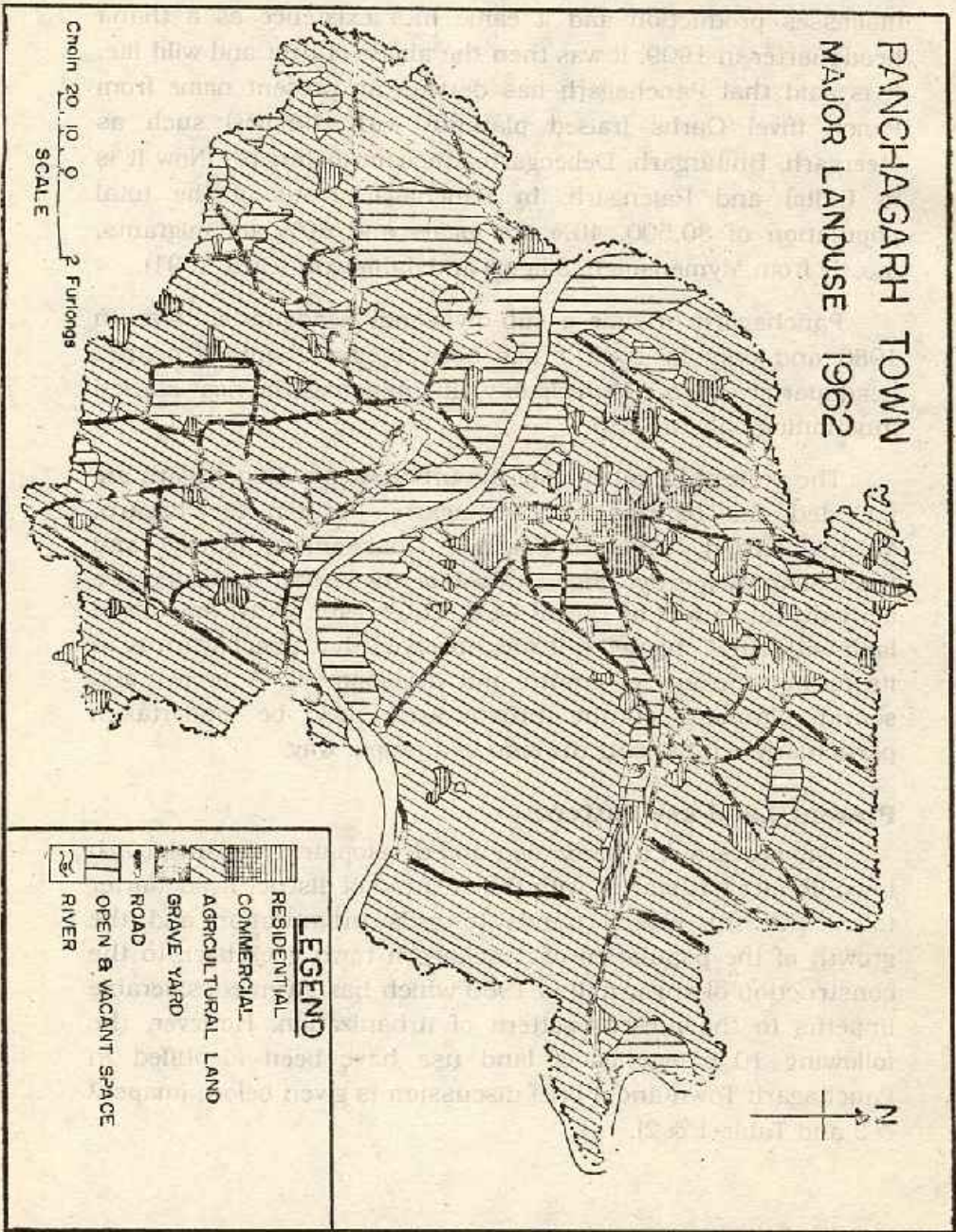
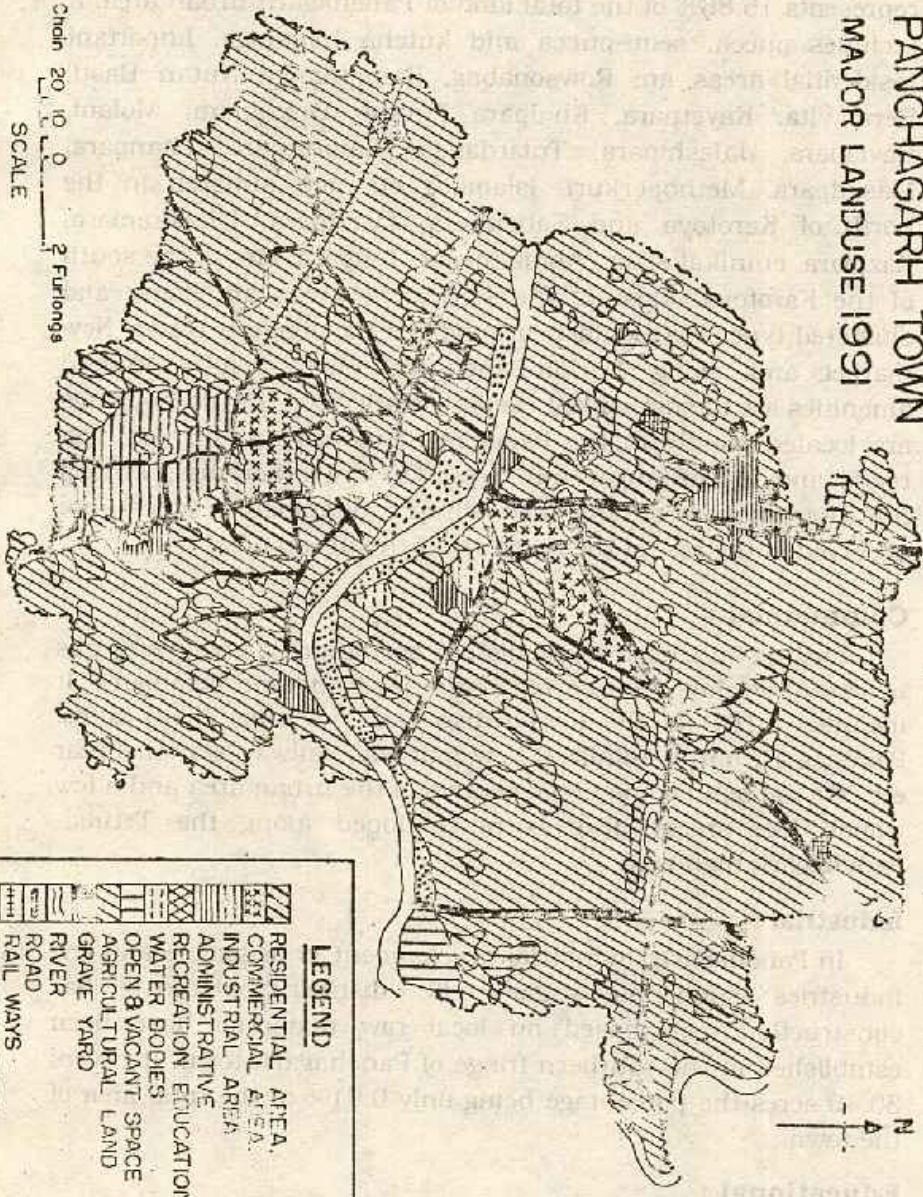


Fig No. 2
2 of 6

PANCHAGARH TOWN
MAJOR LANDUSE 1991



LEGEND

[Diagonal lines]	RESIDENTIAL AREA
[Cross-hatch]	COMMERCIAL AREA
[Horizontal lines]	INDUSTRIAL AREA
[Vertical lines]	ADMINISTRATIVE
[Wavy lines]	RECREATION EDUCATION
[Stippled]	WATER BODIES
[Diagonal lines with dots]	OPEN & VACANT SPACE
[Diagonal lines with dots]	AGRICULTURAL LAND
[Cross-hatch]	GRAVE YARD
[Wavy line]	RIVER
[Double line]	ROAD
[Single line with cross-ticks]	RAILWAYS
[Dashed line]	DIST. BOUNDARY

Chain 20 10 0 2 Furlongs
SCALE

Settlement :

This category covers an area of 331.20 acres which represents 15.86% of the total land of Panchagarh urban area. It includes pucca, semi-pucca and kutchha housings. Important residential areas are Rowsonabag, Ramerdanga Nutan Basti, Bera Vita, Kayetpara, Khalpara Purana Dokrapara, Molani, Baviapara, Jalashipara, Tulardanga, Kamratpara, chanpara, Masjidpara, Methoperkuri, Islambag etc. are situated in the north of Karotoya and Satianpara, Darzipara, Dhakkamara, Kazipara, chinikal elaka, Ahmadnagar, Telipara, etc. in the south of the Karotoya. Most of the settlement areas are linear and clustered types, particularly around the Panchagarh Bazar, New market and along Tetulia-Panchagarh high roads. Modern amenities are almost absent except electric light. Pucca housings are located mostly in the Panchagarh mouza around the high roads and in the sugar mill area. On the otherhand, kutchha housing (mostly of thatched Jhupri dilapidated types) are observed in the rest of the mahallas of the urban area.

Commercial :

Though Panchagarh is a district headquarter town, yet it has not been developed into a big centre for trade and commerce. It includes 2.16% of the total urban land covering 72.40 acres. Panchagarh bazar, minisize New markets, railway station bazar etc. are the main commercial centres of the urban area and a few ribbon like shops have been developed along the Tetulia-Panchagarh high way.

Industrial :

In Panchagarh, industrial development is negligible and few industries such as sugar mill, distillery plants, pillar construction unit based on local raw materials have been established in the southern fringe of Panchagarh town. It covers 30.40 acres-the percentage being only 0.91% of the total area of the town.

Educational :

Total area under educational institutions is about 20.46 acres of land which represents only 0.61% of the total urban

area. No significant development of schools, madrasahs in the jurisdiction of urban area have so far been taken place as in the other sector. There are only few schools and colleges in the area which are providing education facilities to a small percentage of people and most of the educational institutions are centred in the Panchagarh mouza-north of Karotoya.

Administrative functions :

Though panchagarh emerged both as a industrial and a district headquarter town, yet the growth of panchagarh town during 1962-1991 period has been extremely slow. The slow expansion of the town is mainly resulted from the total absence of infrastructural institutions. For this reason, the size of the Population has grown from 6607 in 1962 to 30,500 in 1991. Very recently, with the upgradation as well as setting up of district level offices and other associated functions, the administrative functions got impetus and at present it occupies about 50.50 acres of land which represents 1.5% of the total urban land. Most of the functions are agglomerated in the mouzas of Panchagarh, Molani and Omarpur along the Panchagarh - Tetulia high way in the north of the Karotoya. A small number of offices like municipality, C. & B. is situated in Panchagarh mouza in the south of the karotoya.

Transport :

Though Panchagarh is a newly built town, the transport section comparatively occupies a larger proportion of land. The total area under this category is about 276.80 acres and the percentage being 8.27.

The Tetulia-Panchagarh-Thakurgaon highway is the only metalled road and the main artery of the town with a total length of 5 kms. (Fig. 1) and it is linked with other thanas as well as the railway station of the town. Other roads are kutcha and brick built and all the mahallas of the town are connected by the roads of this nature. In this connection it may be mention that during the rainy seasons, these roads are not suitable for the urban dwellers.

Table - 1. Mouza - wise General Landuse Pattern, Panchagarh Urban Area, 1991

Categories	Panchagarh	Puraton Panchagarh	Molani	Omarpur	Dhemshimari	Dhakkamara	Total
	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	
Settlement	62.48(19.40)	137.68(10.27)	7.40(16.34)	5.21(17.77)	2.86(17.74)	15.57(30.62)	531.20(15.86)
Commercial	63.28(3.39)	5.21(0.39)	-	-	3.91(24.26)	-	72.40(2.16)
Industrial	-	28.65(2.14)	-	-	1.75(10.86)	-	30.40(0.91)
Educational	18.16(0.99)	2.20(0.16)	-	-	-	-	20.46(0.61)
Administrative	47.06(2.52)	1.16(0.08)	-	-	-	2.28(4.48)	50.50(1.51)
Transport	175.86(9.41)	87.34(6.53)	3.05(6.73)	2.10(7.00)	2.78(17.25)	5.67(11.50)	276.80(8.27)
Water bodies	114.20(6.11)	177.68(13.28)	0.28(0.62)	-	-	-	292.16(8.73)
Vacant & area spaces	112.54(6.02)	1.64(0.12)	-	-	1.29(8.00)	0.05(0.10)	115.52(3.45)
Agriculture	968.00(51.82)	894.49(66.85)	33.36(73.66)	22.69(75.63)	3.53(21.90)	27.28(53.65)	1949.36(58.22)
Miscellaneous	6.32(0.34)	1.95(0.15)	1.20(2.05)	-	-	-	9.47(0.28)
Total	1868.00(100.00)	1338.00(100.00)	45.29(100)	30.00(100)	56.12(100)	50.85(100)	3348.26(100)

Source : Plot to Plot Landuse Survey, 1991 (% figures in bracket).

Table - 2. Mouza - wise General Landuse Pattern, Panchagarh Urban Area, 1962

Categories	Panchagarh	Puraton Panchagarh	Molani	Omarpur	Dhemshimari	Dhakkamara	Total
	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	Area in Acres	
Settlement	121.38(6.50)	53.99(4.04)	5.60(7.95)	2.27(47.37)	2.37(14.70)	8.45(16.62)	192.00(5.73)
Commercial	8.77(0.47)	0.83(0.06)	-	-	-	-	9.60(0.29)
Industrial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Educational	1.20(0.06)	-	-	-	-	-	1.20(0.04)
Administrative	2.00(0.11)	-	-	-	-	-	2.00(0.06)
Transport	92.49(4.95)	16.75(1.25)	2.80(6.18)	2.80(9.33)	1.83(11.35)	3.24(6.37)	119.91(3.58)
Water bodies	103.51(5.54)	153.83(11.50)	0.28(0.62)	-	-	-	257.62(7.69)
Vacant & open spaces	235.51(12.61)	152.27(11.38)	-	-	0.75(4.65)	2.47(4.86)	391.00(11.68)
Agriculture	1299.58(69.57)	959.02(71.67)	37.41(82.60)	24.99(83.30)	11.17(69.29)	36.69(72.15)	2368.66(70.75)
Miscellaneous	3.56(0.19)	1.31(0.00)	1.20(2.65)	-	-	-	6.07(0.18)
Total	1868.00(100)	1368.00(100)	45.29(100)	30.00(100)	16.12(100)	50.85(100)	3348.26(100)

Source : S.A. records of rights, Tahsil office, Panchagarh and Boda, 1962 (% figures in bracket).

Water bodies :

Water bodies including the Karotoya river and its sand bars, occupy about 292.16 acres of land representing 8.73% of the total urban land in which the river itself along with its chars occupy most of this area.

Vacant and Open spaces :

Though a large proportion of land remains vacant and open spaces, yet there is no clear cut segregation of this sector. About 115.52 acres of land with a percentage of 3.45 is occupied by this sector. Bridge over the Karotoya river and its banks, play grounds attached to school and college premises, stadium etc. are the important spots used for this purpose.

Agriculture :

A large amount of land goes for agriculture which includes all types of arable land given to various field crops, market gardens etc. The total area under this category is 1949.35 acres representing 58.22% of the total urban land. So this town is surrounded by the green agricultural land & rural homesteads and land in Dhemshimari (mostly), Dhakkamara (mostly), Molani (mostly), Puraton Panchagarh (partly) and Panchagarh (partly) are mostly agricultural.

Miscellaneous :

This category includes graveyards, matials etc occupying an area of 9.47 acres and the percentage being only 0.28 of the total urban land.

Land use Pattern in 1962 and 1991 :

Almost in all the cities of Bangladesh, land use changes in response to the change either in economic development (such as development of industries etc.) or the change in the administrative structure. Then for obvious reason, the process of the development of cities are undertaken by invading lands which eventually lead to the outward expansion of certain land uses, such as residential, institutional and industrial (Gopi, 1978). Like other urban centres of Bangladesh, Panchagarh is characterized by the indiscriminate mixture of land uses. As mentioned, the overall trends towards urbanization and the

growth of population of Panchagarh town goes back to the construction of sugar mill in 1980, which has given impetus to the present pattern of urbanization. Since then the changes in the pattern of land use are occurring, but the change during 1962-1991 period seems to have been very slow. However, the rates of change has been explained in this study and for simplification, the urban functions have been classified into ten categories.

From the table-1, it may be pointed out that in 1991, more than half of the total land of the urban area (58.22) was used for agricultural purposes. The area under residential uses was 15.86% followed by water bodies (includes river and charland), transports (including metalled & non-metalled roads), vacant & open spaces, commercial and various other administrative uses. In 1962, on the otherhand, about three fourths of the total land (70.75) was covered by agricultural purposes (table-2). It was followed by vacant & open spaces, water bodies, residential, transport- the percentages being 11.68, 7.69 and 3.58 respectively. It should be mentioned here that the total area of Panchagarh urban area in 1991 was the same as it was in 1962 (Municipal authority report). This shows that only the change in the pattern of land use during the period 1962-1991 occurred. It has been observed that although changes in the urban development and growth of population began in 1962, the town remained predominantly rural. Indeed it may be said that during the period 1962-1991 the trend the use of the land for residential commercial, administration, educational, water bodies purposes have been increased and land for agriculture, vacant & open spaces have been declined significantly (Tables 1 & 2). In 1962, there was no land for play-ground purposes but in 1991, this sector accounts for 0.31%. Land under the category of education has been increased from 0.04% in 1962 to 0.61% in 1991 a lot i.e. 0.61%. But there has been a positive change in the use of land for residential purposes during the period. The spatial distributional patterns of land uses of the town and the river Karotoya plays a significant rolex, in the development process of the town are shown in figures 2 and 3. It is found that commercial, educational, administrative functions are almost concentrated in the north of the river Karotoya i.e. in the

northern side of the town. On the other hand industrial enterprises, railway station, bus terminal, C. & B and municipal offices are located in the south of the Karotoya i.e. in the southern side of the town. Residential houses are mostly agglomerated in both sides of the Panchagarh-Tetulia highway. Where as the main commercial-educational - residential area was observed in Panchagarh Mouza. Part of Molani, and part of Omarpur is the residential cum administrative areas. On the otherhand, sugar mill, distilley plant, bus terminal, municipal office etc. is concentrated in the mouza of puraton Panchagarh, whereas railway station with food godown is in Dhemshimari. Dhakkamara is the residential cum charland. thus it has been observed that the overall trend towards urbanization from 1962-1991 appears to be almost uniform in all the mouzas and the significant change in the patterns of land use in the secondary and tertiary sectors was high in 1991 than in 1962.

A striking variation of land use was observed from mouza to mouza (Fig. 2 and 3 and tables 1 & 2). It was seen that Panchagarh mouza was more or less built up area in 1991 than that of the other mouzas. Most of the commercial functions, particularly daily and weekly bazars, wholesale services, banks, furniture marts, educational institutions like schools, colleges, madrashas, rickshaw and van services, recreational facilities like cinema halls, photo studios etc. are agglomerated in this locality. On the other hand, a vast amount of land is occupied by river sand bars, agricultural fields, a parcel of land for bus terminal, sugar mill, distillery plants, C.P.C. plant units etc. in puraton Panchagarh and Dhakkamara mouzas.

Conclusions and Suggestions

In Bangladesh, numerous studies on urban phenomena are gaining popularity amongst the geographers and recently, various studies on the changing patterns of urban land use and on many other aspects of urban characteristics have been carried out. As a result, these studies have provided adequate infrastructure for understanding the problems of urban growth and made it possible for us to undertake land use survey of Panchagarh town. However, In this study, we have tried so far, to illuminate some of the factors that are responsible for the change

in the pattern of land use in Panchagarh town between 1962 and 1991. Two phases of urban growth has been observed in Panchagarh town and since independence in 1971, rapid population growth occurred. It is because of such changes and the programme of decentralization of administrations, Panchagarh emerged as a Pivotal point of the administration in this area. Since this area is situated in the extreme northern side of the country, plan must be taken to use the urban lands most efficiently for every purpose. As mentioned although panchagrh is a district headquarter town with a host of many offices, industries, institutions and various types of sociopolitical and cultural activities, the expansion and the development of the town is just in its initial stage. The jurisdiction of Panchagarh urban area covering about 33.26 acres of land of the mouzas of Panchagarh, Puraton Panchagarh, Molani (partly), Omarpur (partly), Dhakkarmara (partly), and Dhenshimari (partly). The most significant change occurred during 1962-1991 in the use of agricultural land and it is found that in 1962, more than 70% of the total land was used for agriculture whereas in 1991, the percentage of agricultural land was declined to 58.22 and the area under residence was increased from 5.73% in 1962 to 15.86% in 1991. In 1962, next to agriculture, vacant & open space accounts for 11.68% of the total land and only about 5.73% is occupied by settlement. A very negligible proportion of land is used for commercial (0.29%), educational (0.04%), and administrative functions (0.06%). On the other hand in 1991, it is found that about 8.73% of the total land is covered by water bodies. A very negligible percent is responsible for commercial, industrial and recreational purposes.

The most interesting aspect of the pattern of land use of Panchagarh town, during 1962-1991, is that the size and the area of the town was the same in 1991 as it was in 1962. Although the town is a district headquarter, it has been lacking sufficient urban facilities and harmless physical environment has not been developed with changing status of the town. Under these prevalent circumstances if urban land use planning are not undertaken, then a time will come when the minimum need of land for the people will not be met.

Since Panchagarh is at the formative stage of development, there is much scope for development. For this reason, some suggestions are recommended so that land may be used systematically :

a) Panchagarh town protection embankment project should be under taken to save the town from river bank erosion;

b) Without the approval of proper planning and design, permission should not be given for the construction of new houses and for purposes needed

c) Modern urban facilities like sanitation, water supply, roads, public health, recreational facilities etc. should be met on a priority basis.

Book References :

1. Ahmed, N. (1963)- The landscape of Dhacca urban Area
Oriental Geographer, vol- VIII, No. 1, pp. 1-18.
2. BBS (1976)- *District Gazetteers*, Dinajpur.
3. BBS (1961, 74 & 81)- *Population census*, Dinajpur.
4. Chapin, L (1969)- *Urban Land use & Planning*.
5. Gilbert, A. and Gugler, J. (1982)- *Cities, poverty and Development*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
6. Gopi, K.N. (1978)- *Process of urban Fringe Development : A Model*, Concept publishing Company, Delhi, India.
7. Khan, F.K. et.al (1962)- "Urban structure of Comilla Town"
Oriental Geographer, vol- VI(2).
8. *Pourashava Records & Documents*.
9. Slater, D. (1986)- *Capitalism and urbanization at the Periphery*, Croom Helm, London.
10. Shaikh, A.H. (1976)- *Some aspects of social structure of Rajshahi Town*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Deptt. of Geography, R.U.
11. *Tahsil office of Panchagarh & Boda*.

MORTALITY DIFFERENTIALS : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO THANAS OF BANGLADESH

Abjad Hossain Chowdhury*
and
Nasreen Islam Khan*

ABSTRACT

Mortality in Bangladesh and the trend in infant mortality has considerable implications for the overall growth rate of the country. It has been found that 15 to 20 per cent or more of the live births die before completing their first age of birth. Both Matlab and Teknaf showed a marked fluctuations of the infant mortality over the period 1966-1985. The study of the levels and changes of mortality is a relevant issue to formulate the short and long term health planning programme. So, the study of the levels and changes including the causes of mortality is one of the crucial tasks in demographic analysis for undertaking short and long term health planning. The purpose of this study in general is to analyse the relationship between the level of mortality associated with the causes of deaths in Bangladesh to investigate what types of diseases are prevalent in Matlab and Teknaf and their contribution to death rate. Further, this study would investigate into the death rate differences with socio-economic and environmental factors.

Primarily, the study is based on secondary data obtained from the statistical Division of International centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) relating to Demographic Surveillance System (DSS). Further published and unpublished materials as secondary source of information to support the field level data were collected. A time series from 1977 to 1983 is used for showing the mortality variations in Matlab and Teknaf. Five age groups such as under 1 year, 1-4, 5-14, 15-44, and 45 above are selected for estimation of age specific mortality rate by diseases. Mortality data by calendar month were also used to show the seasonal variation of deaths between two areas.

*Abjad Hossain Chowdhury is Associate Professor at the Department of Geography, Jahangirnagar University and Miss Nasreen Islam Khan is a Part-Time Researcher in ISPAN, Dhaka.

The data have been analysed and interpreted using different statistical methods. This paper would finally, to some extent, help the national planners to formulate the future health planning and also would act as a guideline to population policy makers.

Introduction

The first population census in the area now Bangladesh counted 23 million people in 1872. In 1901, the population increased to 28 million (Arthur & McNicoll, 1978) showing an increase of 21.74 per cent over 1872. The country shows an intercensal growth rate of 2.22 per cent per annum for the period 1981-1991 (BBS, 1991). Under the moderate decline in fertility and mortality, the country is expected to have a population of 140 million by the year 2000 (BBS, 1984).

During 1921-51, the mortality level was about 40 per thousand, while the period 1951-61 recorded a rapid change in overall mortality level, and the CDR was around 20 per thousand in 1962. Since 1965, a downward trend in mortality has been found to occur. The general improvement in medical technology, availability of health care services and the eradication of malaria and other contagious diseases may be cited as the reasons for low crude death rate. However, the rate has been reversed due to devastating cyclone in November 1970 and the war of independence (1971) which took a heavy toll of lives (United Nations 1981).

The infant and child mortality levels are considerably higher in Bangladesh. 15 to 20 per cent or more of the live births die before reaching age one (UN, 1984). Table-1 represents the trends of infant mortality for Bangladesh from 1976 to 1983 in rural Matlab and Teknaf Demographic Surveillance System (DSS) areas. (Fig-1). Both the areas marked fluctuation of infant mortality rate over the eight year period. Matlab recorded during the same period, on the average, the infant mortality rate of about 111.0 per thousand live births, while at Teknaf the rate was 136, much higher than Matlab. The highest rates at Matlab of 146.6 and 174.3 were found in 1971 and 1975 (Ashrafuddin, 1980) respectively which might be due to the liberation and post liberation war followed by famine, whereas the lowest rates of

103.0 and 105.4 were found in 1980 and 1983 indicating a declining trend in infant mortality. At Teknaf, the highest rate of 153.8 was found to occur in 1983 and the lowest rate of 118.6 in 1982. The rates in both the areas are very much skewed and erratic.

Table 1. Infant Mortality Rates in Rural Matlab and Teknaf DSS area, Bangladesh : 1976-1983.

Year	Infant Mortality	
	Matlab ¹	Teknaf ²
1976	112.0	128.6
1977	113.7	147.3
1978	120.1	133.0
1979	116.2	142.7
1980	103.0	121.8
1981	109.0	139.5
1982	112.0	118.6
1983	105.4	153.8

Sources: 1 Calculated from the Scientific Report Nos. 62, August 1984 : 63, October 1985 : 64, December, 1985, ICDDR, B, Dhaka.

2 Scientific Report No. 66, August 1986, ICDDR, B, Dhaka.

It has been noticed from different studies that mortality levels have been declining which may be explained as a combination of socio-economic and other factors, such as treatment of epidemics, improved communication system, supply of food in deficit areas, improvement of public health and availability of better health care facilities. However, variation in these factors give rise to the regional differences in the mortality pattern in Bangladesh.

Objective of the study

Mortality is one of the principal components of population change. So, the study of the levels and changes including the

causes of mortality is one of the crucial tasks in demographic analysis from the point of view of health planning both for short and long term planning of services (Schkolnik, 1976). The purpose of this study in general is to analyse the relationship between the level of mortality associated with the causes of deaths in Bangladesh. One of the important objectives of the study would be to investigate into the types of diseases prevalent in Matlab and Teknaf and their contribution to death rate as well as to mortality levels. The present study would further focus on the diseases in both the areas.

Methodology

Primarily, the study is based on secondary data obtained from the statistical Division of ICDDR, B relating to Demographic Surveillance System. In some instances references from other sources were made. A total of 29 in Matlab (1977) and 52 in Teknaf (1983) were listed as the specific causes of deaths. However, all the diseases or the causes have been grouped into eight leading diseases such as Diarrhoea, Tetanus, Respiratory, Fever, Heart diseases, Accidents, Birth related, Measles and other diseases such as Cholera, Dropsy, Old age, Venereal diseases, Jaundice, Nutritional deficiency etc. not common to both the areas have been categorised as "other". A time series data from 1977 to 1983 are used for showing the mortality variations in Matlab and Teknaf. To minimise the fluctuations, five age groups such as under 1 year, 1-4, 5-14, 15-44 and 45 above are selected for estimation of the age specific mortality rate by type of diseases. Mortality data by calendar month have been used to show the seasonal variation of deaths between two areas. The data available have been analysed and interpreted using different statistical techniques.

Matlab and Teknaf DSS Areas

The first rural field station established in 1963 in Matlab Thana under Comilla district has been operating a longitudinal Demographic Surveillance System since 1966 to collect reliable data on periodic census basis on births, deaths, migration and other information on demographic and other characteristics of the population and to monitor changes of these characteristics

over time. The Matlab DSS initially started functioning in 1963 in 23 villages with an enumerated population of about 28,000 as part of a field trial of cholera vaccine. In 1966 the census operation was extended and conducted in 132 villages consisting of 112,000 people (DSS-Matlab, 1985 No. 63), with the registration of births, deaths and migrations. The surveillance area was doubled in 1968 with the census of an additional population of 109,000 in 101 villages. Since then the system in Matlab has been operating in 228 villages¹. Since January 1975, the registration of marriages and dissolutions have been included in the entire area (DSS-Matlab, 1978, No. 9). Thus a continuous registration system of vital events started with the idea of procuring complete data.

The Teknaf DSS

In 1974 a second field research station was established in Teknaf Thana of Cox's Bazar District to have a data base for Cholera Research Laboratory (CRL) activities on diarrhoeal diseases, nutrition and other aspects of population. Initially, CRL established this research center to promote field treatment in Teknaf. An initial population of 15,000 had been put under routine surveillance to identify diarrhoeal morbidity, which was later extended to a population of 40,000 in the middle of 1976.

Demographic Characteristics

The population of Matlab and Teknaf in 1961 was 2,72,383 and 58,153 which increased to 3,66,880 and 82,325 respectively in 1974 accounting for an increase of 34.69 per cent and 41.57 percent over 1961 for the two areas and the same population increased to 434,680 and 1,02,650 in 1981 showing an increase of 18.48 per cent and 24.69 per cent over 1974. During 1974-1981, the population of both the areas exhibited a less increase than 1961-74 (Table 2) which might be due to outward migration across the border during border disturbances.

1) Although the population in 233 villages was enumerated in 1968 and 1974, the registration system has been maintained continuously in 228 villages.

Table 2. Population distribution in Matlab and Teknaf, Bangladesh 1961, 1974 and 1981.

Areas	Population			Per cent variation		
	1961	1974	1981	1961-74	1974-81	1961-81
Matlab	272383	366880	434680	34.69	18.48	59.58
Teknaf	58153	82325	102650	41.57	24.69	76.52
Bangladesh	50840235	71479071	87120119	40.59	21.88	71.36

Source : BBS

The general fertility rate at Matlab in 1983 was 163.9 per 1,000 women of 15-49 years of age, while this rate in 1982 was 173.6. Age Specific fertility reached its peak at ages 20-24 for Matlab and at ages 25-29 at Teknaf for 1983 (Appendix-A). The level of general fertility at Teknaf was remarkably high (239.0) in 1983 in comparison to Matlab. Age schedule of fertility indicates that a woman bears on the average 7.5 children during her reproductive life. Net reproduction rate was 1.9 in Matlab (1983), while Teknaf for the same period recorded almost 1.5 times more than that of Matlab.

A wide demographic variation is found to exist between the Matlab and Teknaf DSS population. In Teknaf, fertility and infant mortality as observed to be higher (Appendix-B) and mortality after the first year of life was lower than those in Matlab. Females experienced higher mortality than males in both the areas, but this rate was significant and was much pronounced in Teknaf than in Matlab (DSS-Teknaf, 1986, No. 66).

About 160 females per 1000 females in 1982 in Matlab and 163 in Teknaf were married during the same period and the rates increased to about 164 and 161 during 1983 for two areas respectively showing no significant change in ASFR. 17 per cent of females were married before reaching ages 15 and 20 and more than 90 per cent of female marriages had taken place before their ages of 20 and 30 years (Pop. Control & F. Planning Division, 1978) in Teknaf. A marked variation of marriages is found to occur ranging from 135 to 269 in Matlab and 37 to 205 in Teknaf during 1983 and for the same period, the divorce rate in Matlab

Mortality Differentials

was 153 per 1000 marriages while, in Teknaf the rate was almost double (313 per 1000 marriages) of Matlab against marriage rate of 14 and 15 for Matlab and Teknaf respectively.

Mortality Differentials

The study of levels and changes of mortality is a relevant issue required to formulate the short and long term health planning and to forecast the levels of health of the population. But mortality as the only index for such purpose is quite inadequate because it does not reflect all the dimensions of the health problems and hence need to be supported by morbidity statistics (Schkolnik, 1976). Behm (1983) pointed out the cause specific death rates are the most useful and convenient index as it relates directly to the deaths with a disease or a group of diseases.

Due to non prevalence of the registration system, the data and the information on morbidity so far available in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific regions are incomplete and the morbidity data are mostly available in the hospitals which represents only a small fraction of the community.

Differentials in cause specific mortality is remarkable among different age groups in the study areas. Allmon et al (1983) mentioned unhygienic environment as an important cause of ill health and premature deaths, particularly of the children which in turn had serious mortality implications. In most developing countries, the major diseases are, generally known but their precise prevalence is unknown. The overall mortality level was moderate with a very high rate of infant mortality. On the whole, 53.5 per cent of all deaths occurred in age group below 5 indicating a high infant mortality, and of all infant deaths, more than 50 per cent occurred in the neonatal period (1st. 4 weeks of life), and the rest in the post-neonatal period. Males experienced more neonatal deaths than females and a reverse trend in child mortality is noticed. Neonatal deaths from obstetrical causes (prematurity, congenital, illness, birth injury etc.) accounted for more than 80 per cent of early neonatal deaths. Respiratory infection, diarrhoeal diseases, nutritional deficiency, tetanus and measles account for more than 75 per cent of post-neonatal deaths. Infant death rates of 118.1 and 147.3 per 1000 live births

(Appendix-B) have been found to occur in Matlab and Teknaf in 1977, while in 1983, the rate was 106.1 and 153.8 respectively. For both the years, Teknaf recorded more infant deaths than that of Matlab. During, 1983 the proportion of infant deaths in Matlab were less than 1977 showing a remarkable fall in infant mortality. This decline might be due to widespread campaign of the immunization of children and controlling some of the diseases through Maternal Child Health Care Centres. But on the other hand, this rate in Teknaf has increased in 1983 in comparison to 1977. The reasons for such increase may be attributed to the non establishment of Maternal Child Health centres and the poor environmental conditions. Infant mortality rates in Teknaf fluctuated over the past 7 year period reaching the highest level in 1983. Titerus was the major killer of infants followed by respiratory, malnutrition, congenital abnormality and delivery complications.

There is a wide variation of child mortality between two regions. During 1977, male child mortality in Matlab registers a rate of 14.5 and the females of 25.2 per 1000 children which increased to 21.9 and 37.0 during 1983, whereas the same in Teknaf was recorded at 10.3 for males and 13.1 for females for the same period which slightly increased to 10.8 and 14.4 for males and females respectively in 1983 (Appendix-C). In both the cases female child mortality is higher than males, but Matlab experiences more than double the rate of Teknaf. Low level of literacy among the mothers and lack of medical care facilities might be cited as the reasons for such increase. Respiratory diseases, malnutrition, diarrhoea and measles were the major causes of childhood (1-4 years) deaths accounting for more than 45 per cent of all deaths in both the regions and the female child mortality is more than males. A lower mortality rate is observed in other age groups than under 1 and 1-4 years age groups. In 1977, age group of 5-14 recorded a death rate of 2.7 (male-2.3, female-3.1) and 3.9 (male-3.1, female-4.7) per 1000 population in Matlab and Teknaf respectively, while the same was recorded at 2.6 (male-2.0, female-3.2) for Matlab and 1.5 (male-1.1, female-1.8) for Teknaf in 1983 indicating a declining trend in areal extent. In this age group also female undergoes a higher mortality rate than males. The age group 15-44 shows a rate of

2.7 (male-2.4, female-3.0) and 5.9 (male-5.0, female-6.9) per 1000 population in 1977, and 2.8 (male-2.8, female-2.8), and 4.0 (male-2.9, female-5.1) in 1983 for Matlab and Teknaf respectively (Appendix-C). It is seen that Teknaf shows a downward trend while the reverse trend is noticed in Matlab. This age group also records higher female mortality. About one third of adult female deaths during reproductive period (15-44 years) are maternity related. Fever, Respiratory and Heart diseases are the main causes of deaths for this age group. However, the mortality at age 45+ has been declining, and males show higher mortality than females in Matlab, while in Teknaf both males and females die at the same rate. For all age groups, it is observed that mortality is negatively correlated with socio-economic status - the higher the levels, the lower the mortality rates.

The poor living conditions, particularly in the rural areas, is one of the important causes of the recent stagnation in mortality level. The chronic malnutritional deficiency, poverty, lack of proper hygienic and health care knowledge and the least availability of health services in the rural areas, accounts for the low status of the health of the major population. Although the health infrastructure and manpower have been extended, but still vast majority of the people in the rural areas did not get the benefit of it. Thus the modern health care is very limited in the rural areas of Bangladesh.

Mortality by Diseases

Diarrhoeal Diseases

A great variation of death rate due to diarrhoeal diseases and other causes is found to occur during 1977 to 1983 in both the areas. Mortality by age and diseases have been represented in Appendix-D. Non-availability of sex data for Teknaf limited the scope of analysis on sex basis. However, on the average, more than 15 per cent of all deaths in Matlab appeared to be related to diarrhoea. It is observed that the diarrhoeal diseases cause largest proportion of deaths but the longitudinal pattern shows a significant decline over time from 1977 to 1981. Deaths caused by diarrhoeal diseases are 16.3 and 10.1 per cent in 1977 and 10.8 and 5.9 in 1981 in Matlab and Teknaf respectively. So, it is found that the deaths due to diarrhoea has been declining since

1977. The rates for both the places have been increasing after 1977 and there was a peak in diarrhoeal mortality in 1983 (22.8%) at Matlab, almost 3 times more than Teknaf, associated with a major country wide epidemics of shigellosis (DSS-Matlab, 1985, No. 64). These findings suggest that further improvement in the control of diarrhoeal diseases in both the areas as well as in the country is needed. In the developing countries it is estimated that about 20 per cent of the 7.5 million deaths among the under 5 year children are associated with diarrhoea (WHO, 1978). At all times, the children aged 1-4 years, particularly the girls recorded the highest diarrhoeal mortality rates. Since 1977, with exception of 2 or 3 years, particularly in Teknaf, the age groups 5-14 and 45+ recorded higher death rates from diarrhoea than 15-44 and under 1 year age groups, but the death rate recorded in the age group 15-44 were about 20 times lower than other age groups. Taking all other age groups together, except infants, at least half of total number of deaths occurred due to diarrhoea in Matlab and Teknaf.

The peak number of diarrhoeal deaths occurred during the winter months of October through January with maximum deaths in November and December which might be due to neonatal deaths and deaths of older people at this time and the minimum in the months of February and June in Matlab during 1983, while for the same period in Teknaf January and December may be mentioned for higher deaths with minimum proportions in April. The higher proportions might be due to the prevalence of Shigellosis in July, malnutrition, fever and birth related events occurring in April. However, the Maternity Child-Health Family Planning (MCH-FP) services available to the people had significant impact on reducing diarrhoeal deaths as well as deaths from other causes.

Tetanus

Infants are mostly affected by this disease. A great variation of infant deaths is observed in both the areas. It has been found that in 1977 about one third of total deaths in Matlab occurred in age group under 1 year with a peak of 54.6 per cent in 1980, while Teknaf for the same age group experiences a less proportion of deaths (17.6) than Matlab which increased to 26.8 per cent in 1983. Since 1977, on the average, Matlab (43.03%)

accounted for almost double the death rate of Teknaf (21.67%) for under 1 year age group. All the groups combined, Matlab (15.4%) has been recording on the average, higher rate than Teknaf (11.1%). Age group 1-4 and 5-14 are less affected by tetanus. It is obvious that both the areas have been showing increasing trends of mortality caused by tetanus during the period 1977-83. Total deaths caused by tetanus in Matlab was 13.3 per cent in 1977 and 11.5 per cent in 1983 and the corresponding rate for Teknaf was 9.1 and 15.7 whereas, the national figure in 1976 was 2.7, (Ministry of Health & Pop. Control, 1977). The increasing trend suggests an immediate action should be taken with possible measures for reducing the tetanus deaths.

Respiratory Diseases

This category includes whooping cough, Pneumonia, Asthma, Tuberculosis, Bronchitis etc. Generally, the age groups 15 years and over are more affected by this disease but even the infants are not spared. Teknaf has been recording higher proportion of deaths than Matlab from 1977 to 1983 with exception of 1981 and 1982. On the average, Matlab recorded 10.1% and Teknaf 15.9% of all deaths. In 1977, Teknaf accounted for less than one-fifth (18.7%) of all deaths caused by this disease while, Matlab recorded only one third (6.5) of this proportion for the same year. Teknaf accounted for 21.0 per cent and Matlab (10.0) about half of this in 1983. It has been observed that both the areas had been showing increasing trend of this disease drawing an attention of the govt. to take positive measures to reduce deaths due to this disease. Respiratory diseases peak highest in cold season, particularly during November through January in both the areas.

Fever

A considerable number of deaths, particularly, 5-14 age group is mainly affected by this disease which is followed by 15-44 age group in both the areas and the former age group at Matlab accounts for 11.6 per cent of all deaths in 1983, while Teknaf records 15.4 per cent. On the other hand, for the same year, 15-44 age group records only 8.2 per cent for Matlab and 9.5 per cent for Teknaf. Of all deaths, 8.9% were recorded in Matlab and 6.6% in Teknaf during 1977 while, during 1983 the proportion became 8.1 and 5.2 for Matlab and Teknaf respectively. Both the

areas have been showing a declining trend since 1977, but the fall is significant in Teknaf.

Heart Disease

Generally, cardiovascular attack, congestive cardiac failure, hypertension, Rheumatism etc. have been included in this category of disease. The period 1977-83. shows an increasing trend in death rate caused by heart disease with an exception of Matlab during 1983 which shows a slight decreasing tendency. The people of age group 15-44 and 45 above have been affected more than other age groups. Matlab recorded in 1977 only 4.1 per cent which increased to 4.6 per cent in 1983 with a peak in 1980 of 5.8 whereas, Teknaf in 1977 and in 1983 accounted for 2.4 and 7.1 per cent respectively. On the average, Matlab reported 4.9 per cent of deaths which was more than Teknaf (3.6%). Rheumatism as the cause of heart failure has contributed 3.8 per cent to the total deaths of 4.9 per cent in Matlab during 1977-83, whereas, Teknaf accounted for only 0.5 per cent for the same period. It is seen that rheumatism is more prominent as the cause of heart diseases in Matlab than Teknaf. It is observed that the mortality from this heart disease has been showing increasing trend since 1977 which may be attributed to the increasing tension of the old people due to economic depression and other social problems, thought to be the major causes of heart disease.

Accidental Deaths

Accidental deaths include deaths out of accidents including drowning can also be cited as one of the major causes of deaths in Matlab and Teknaf. Both the regions on the average, record almost equal proportion of deaths out of accidents. The age group 1-14 shows higher proportion of accidental deaths, followed by 15-44 age group. The former age group, on the average (1977-83), in Matlab recorded 10.5 per cent of deaths, higher than Teknaf (8.4%). Accidental deaths are maximum in July due to increased drowning during monsoon in Matlab and Teknaf because of fishing, the primary economic activities of the people in these two regions.

Birth Related

Matlab recorded 0.6% and 0.4%, while Teknaf 13.8% and 7.3% in 1977 and 1983, whereas on the average, the proportion appeared to be 0.7 and 13.5 for Matlab and Teknaf respectively. It is seen that in both the regions the proportion of death out of this birth associated events has been declining since 1977 due to the extensive services extended to mothers by the DSS programme. Of all age groups, 15-44 recorded maximum proportion of deaths in both the regions due to more deaths of females of reproductive age.

Measles.

This is a viral disease which is spreaded by infection. Generally, the children (0-14), particularly, the infants are highly affected with measles and a great variation is observed within the children group. Boys are affected three times more commonly than girls. It is observed that within the children, 1-4 year age group has undergone more mortality than under 1 year age group, and on the average, more proportion of deaths of 1-4 year age group has been recorded in Matlab (9.4) than Teknaf (9.0). But ages taken together, a remarkable decline from 3.4 per cent (1977) to 0.4 per cent (1983) of deaths has been noticed in Teknaf against the national rate of 3.0 per 1000 population (1976), while the case appears to be reversed in Matlab (0.9% in 1977 & 2.2% in 1983). The peak of 3.8% and 5.4% of all deaths were recorded in 1981 in Matlab and Teknaf respectively. However, the MCH-FP and other services were able to reduce the prevalence of this disease considerably in recent years.

Other Diseases

Cholera, dropsy, malnutrition, old age, suicide, murder etc. have been included in this category. On the whole, Matlab exhibits higher percentage (39.3) of deaths than Teknaf (35.4). The proportion appears to be very high due to inclusion of so many diseases into one category. Of all these diseases, the age group 45 + are mainly affected with old age diseases and has got more contribution than any other disease considered individually. Of the total deaths, in this age group, Matlab and Teknaf account for 11.4 and 4.0 per cent respectively. In both the areas, since 1977, the deaths arising out of old age has been declining.

Seasonal Variation

Due to non-availability of time series data on deaths by age and sex excepting Matlab for 1982 and 1983 on calendar months for both the regions, the discussion is limited on deaths by calendar months only. Seasonal or monthly variation of deaths are evident in most of the world. At recent times, significant proportion of deaths in most of the countries are observed in the winter months, and hence, the monthly patterns in the northern and southern hemispheres are reversed. Respiratory diseases are usually the major component for the increase in the cool season, while diarrhoeal diseases in the summer.

Four months from October to January in 1983 record the highest number of monthly deaths in Matlab (43.3%) and Teknaf (43.7%) against 36.1 and 37.6 for 1982 respectively indicating an increase of deaths during cool season. During this period, the highest number of deaths occurred, which might be due to the accompanying neonatal deaths in these months and partly to the peak of deaths of older people. The neonatal mortality was found to peak in October in both the places. August and September are known to be the months when the nutritional status of these population is lowest. Food stocks are at a minimum during this time (DSS-Matlab, 1978, No. 9). The month of September peaks could be caused by the high death rates among the premature babies whose expected birth days were in October to December (Becker, 1981). No seasonal patterns were found for deaths, but the peak of deaths was found to occur in December and the least in February months.

Test of Spatio-Temporal Variation of Deaths by Diseases

Using the data set of Appendix-D (proportion of total deaths), analysis of variance has been done to test the significance of variation of deaths between two areas (Table-3).

The calculated F- probability (.8829) is greater than tabulated F-Prob. (.0217) indicating an insignificant variation of deaths between the two areas. The reasons for such variation may be explained by the fact that both the areas are rural in character having inadequate medical facilities, low socio-economic status. Moreover, Maternal Child Health Care and Family Planning Programme facilities enjoyed by the rural people are of the same magnitude.

Table : 3 Analysis of variance, Matlab and Teknaf.

Variable : Area

Source	D.F.	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Area	1	4.8174	4.8174	0.0217	0.8829
Within area	558	123774.4044	221.8179		
Total	559	123779.2219			

Variable : Disease

Diseases	7	74388.9492	10626.9927	118.770	0.000
Within diseases	552	49390.2727	89.4751		
Total	559	123779.2219			

Variable : Year

Year	6	18.3144	3.0524	0.0136	1.00
Within Year	553	123760.9075	223.7991		
Total	559	123779.2219			

Variable : Age

Age	4	23.9112	5.9803	0.0268	0.9986
Within Age	555	123755.4006	222.9825		
Total	559	123779.2219			

Further, a significant variation is found to exist between deaths and diseases. The calculated F-Prob. (0.000) is less than tabulated F-Prob. (118.770) indicating a significant variation between deaths and diseases. The occurrence of deaths depends on the socio-economic conditions of the area and on other factors which differ greatly causing these differentials. It has further been observed that the death rates in different year do not vary significantly (cal. F-Prob. is 1.000 and is more than tabulated F-Prob. 0136), as the disease controlling measures are almost same over the years. So, the declining trend is slow. Further, it has been found that there is insignificant variation in the death rates among the different age groups.

Conclusion

Mortality is generally considered to be one of the most important components for population change and subsequently, the spatial mortality differentials by geographical regions also help to frame the national policy for taking preventive and curative measures against the communicable and other diseases to improve the general health conditions of the people.

Infant mortality is found to be very high in the study areas indicating the same trend for the whole of Bangladesh. Mother's less education, poor environmental health, malnutrition etc. may be contributing higher rate of infant mortality. The overall decline in mortality can be only possible if this infant mortality can be reduced drastically through the extension of MCH programmes, raising the living standard, improving the health facilities and making other conditions favourable for such action.

It has further been found that the diarrhoeal and the tetanus diseases cause high mortality. At present, both the areas have been recording a declining trend in mortality in these diseases. So, if the national policy associated with the above parameters are taken up, would lead to further decline of the mortality. One of the reasons for areal differentiation of mortality is the socio-economic structure of the area. Mortality and socio-economic status is inversely related. So, improvements in sanitation, medical care including maternal child health and family planning services, supply of drinking water, hygienic environment should be made effective in the reduction of the diseases to a moderately low level.

References

- Ahmed, Ashrafuddin., 1980 : Recent Trends in Fertility and Mortality in Bangladesh, Proceedings of a National Seminar, edited by Ashrafuddin Ahmed.
- Allmon, J. et al., 1983 : Implementing Selective Primary Health Care in Developing Countries, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Seminar on *Social Policy, Health Policy and Mortality Prospects*, Paris, 28 Feb. to 4 March.
- Arthur W.B. and McNicoll G., 1978 : An Analytical Survey of Population and Development in Bangladesh. *Population and Development Review*. Vol. 4.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 1984 : Bangladesh Population Census, 1981. Analytical Finding and National Tables, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics., 1991 : Supplement No. 1 to the Preliminary Report on Population Census, 1991. June, 1992. Govt. of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
- Becker Stan., 1981 : Seasonality of deaths in Matlab, Bangladesh. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Oxford University Press, U.K.
- Bhem H., 1983 : Infant and Child Mortality in the Third World Intercentre Cooperative Research Programme, Project No. 1. Final Report, Paris.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Teknaf., 1984 : Census, 1975, Vital events and migration, 1976-1978, by Alam N. et al., *Scientific Report*, No. 60. Vol. 1. ICDDR'B.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Teknaf., 1984 : Vital events and migration, 1979-1981, by Alam N. et al., *Scientific Report*, No. 61. Vol. 2. ICDDR'B.

- Demographic Surveillance System-Matlab., 1984 : Vital events and migration - Tables, 1982. *Scientific Report* No. 62, Vol. 12. ICDDR'B.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Matlab., 1985 : Cause of Death Reporting in Matlab. Source Book of Cause Specific Mortality Rates 1975-81, by Zimicki, S. et al. *Scientific Report* No. 63. Vol. 13. ICDDR'B.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Matlab., 1985 : Vital events and migration - Tables, 1983, by Shaikh K. et al, *Scientific Report* No. 64. Vol. 14. ICDDR'B.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Teknaf., 1986 : Vital events and migration, 1982 by Rahman, M et al., *Scientific Report* No. 65. ICDDR'B.
- Demographic Surveillance System-Teknaf., 1986 : Vital events and migration, 1983, by Rahman. M. et al. *Scientific Report* No. 66. ICDDR'B.
- Ministry of Health and Population Control., 1977 : Bangladesh Health Profile, Health Information Unit, Dhaka.
- Population Control & F. Planning Division., 1978 : World Fertility Survey : Bangladesh Fertility Survey, 1975, First Report, Dhaka.
- Schkolnik S., 1976 : Mortality and causes of Death in Child, 1954-1967. Unpublished Thesis. University of London.
- United Nations., 1981 : Population of Bangladesh Country Monograph Series No. 8. U.N Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. U Nations, New York.
- United Nations., 1984 : Mortality and Health Policy, International Conference on Population, New York.
- World Health Organisation., 1978 : Lay Reporting of Health information, Geneva.

APPENDIX - A.

Age specific fertility rates and reproduction indices in Matlab and Teknaf, 1982 and 1983.

Age group	Matlab			Teknaf		
	1982	1983	1983	1982	1983	1983
	No. of live births	ASFR	No. of live births	No. of live births	ASFR	No. of live births
All ages	7638	173.6	7325	2581	245.3	3440
15 - 19*	1357	122.2	1221	660	220.9	847
20 - 24	2541	277.4	2472	540	326.3	835
25 - 29	1582	277.2	1685	587	317.3	768
30 - 34	1166	237.9	959	336	278.1	507
35 - 39	734	154.3	707	298	245.1	325
40 - 44	216	46.2	229	93	127.6	105
45 - 49**	42	11.4	52	67	76.5	53
						48.1

Source : Scientific Report Nos. 62, 1984; 64, 1985; 65 & 66, 1986, ICDDR,B.

Notes : * : Births occurred to mothers below the age of 15 were included in this group.

** Births occurred to mothers above the age of 50 were included in this group.

APPENDIX - B.

Demographic Characteristics, Matlab & Tehnaf, 1977-83.

Events	Area	Rates per 1000 population						
		1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Deaths	Matlab	13.6	13.1	13.8	13.0	13.1	14.2	14.3
	Teknaf	15.8	14.7	15.9	12.8	14.2	13.6	14.7
Inf. Mort.*	Matlab	118.1	127.1	121.2	108.0	114.3	112.5	106.1
	Teknaf	147.3	133.0	142.7	121.8	139.5	118.6	153.8
Child Mortality	Matlab	14.6	16.8	16.1	16.5	16.0	23.4	29.1
	Teknaf	12.2	16.8	16.9	13.7	14.9	10.6	12.3
Birth	Matlab	-	-	-	41.2	-	40.7	38.3
	Taknaf	52.1	45.1	55.6	52.4	51.5	54.2	53.4
Total** Fertility	Matlab	-	-	-	5.9	-	5.6	5.3
	Teknaf	8.1	6.7	8.1	8.1	7.7	7.9	7.5
In-migration	Matlab	-	-	-	29.7	-	24.5	24.6
	Teknaf	28.9	37.4	28.9	30.9	26.3	23.3	24.5
Out-migration	Matlab	-	-	-	36.6	-	26.5	35.8
	Teknaf	29.5	29.9	30.0	31.4	33.3	24.0	21.8
Natural increase(%)	Matlab	-	-	-	2.8	-	2.7	2.4
	Teknaf	3.6	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.1	3.9
Growth(%)	Matlab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teknaf	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.0	4.0	4.2
GFR**	Matlab	-	-	-	0.17	-	0.17	0.16
	Teknaf	0.26	0.22	0.27	0.25	0.24	-	-
NRR**	Matlab	-	-	-	2.2	-	2.0	1.9
	Teknaf	2.9	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.8

Source : Scientific Report No. 66, ICDDR,B

* Per 1000 live births. ** Per woman.

- Data not available.

APPENDIX - C

Distribution of death rates per 1000 population by age and sex, Matlab and Teknaf, 1977-83.

Age groups	Area	1977		1978		1979		1980		1981		1982		1983	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All ages	Matlab	13.2	13.8	12.8	13.5	13.4	14.2	12.0	14.1	12.6	13.7	13.9	14.5	13.6	15.1
	Teknaf	15.3	16.4	15.3	14.1	15.6	16.2	12.3	13.3	14.5	14.0	13.8	12.8	14.6	14.8
(1 year*)	Matlab	113.1	114.5	115.9	123.7	118.4	114.0	90.2	118.5	105.1	118.2	115.8	108.9	100.9	111.5
	Teknaf	150.0	144.4	144.9	120.8	143.8	141.2	125.7	117.7	148.3	130.1	134.0	115.5	166.8	140.5
1-4	Matlab	14.5	25.2	16.8	28.2	16.1	27.6	16.5	28.0	16.0	28.2	15.8	31.7	21.9	37.0
	Teknaf	11.3	13.1	16.0	17.6	15.7	18.2	12.9	14.6	13.5	16.3	10.1	10.8	10.8	14.4
5-14	Matlab	2.3	3.1	2.0	3.5	2.8	3.3	1.9	2.5	1.9	2.6	2.3	3.4	2.0	3.2
	Teknaf	3.1	4.7	3.6	4.0	3.7	4.0	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.7	2.8	2.7	1.1	1.8
15-44	Matlab	2.4	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	3.3	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.8
	Teknaf	5.0	6.9	5.0	5.3	4.2	5.1	1.8	4.9	2.9	4.8	2.8	4.8	2.9	5.1
45+	Matlab	31.5	28.0	30.6	25.9	30.4	28.6	28.5	27.1	29.0	24.8	33.4	28.1	31.5	27.5
	Teknaf	37.3	49.7	42.2	48.3	36.8	38.5	26.5	34.6	30.7	32.3	28.1	24.6	21.5	21.7
Total deaths	Matlab	1811	1829	1116	1159	1187	1239	1091	1249	1161	1237	1319	1342	1312	1417
	Teknaf	-	-	-	-	347	535	285	306	346	333	335	311	473	474
Mid. year population	Matlab	136711	132182	87408	86035	88655	78232	90546	88744	92412	90565	94956	92618	96800	94206
	Teknaf	-	-	-	-	22232	21893	23169	22892	23876	23853	24328	24224	32309	32070

Sources : Scientific Report Nos. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 and 66, ICDDR, B. Dhaka.

Note : * - Rate per 1,000 live births.

- - Data not available

APPENDIX - D

Cause specific deaths by age, Matlab and Teknaf, 1977-1983.

Diseases	Area	1977						1978					
		<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total	<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total
All diseases		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Diarrhoeal ¹	Matlab	03.9	40.0	21.0	10.0	20.0	16.3	06.1	35.9	19.4	07.3	18.0	17.3
	Teknaf	07.9	19.2	14.5	12.0	08.3	10.1	06.7	24.0	14.3	05.4	05.1	09.3
Tetanus	Matlab	32.4	02.0	03.5	01.0	00.2	13.3	50.8	01.8	00.8	03.4	00.1	16.9
	Teknaf	17.6	02.7	03.2	-	-	09.1	24.1	07.7	01.6	-	-	11.1
Respiratory ²	Matlab	06.5	04.2	04.0	07.6	09.3	06.9	04.7	04.7	08.5	11.7	09.2	06.9
	Teknaf	18.7	22.0	20.9	06.0	19.1	17.6	16.7	14.4	04.8	09.8	19.4	15.1
Fever	Matlab	05.4	10.0	23.0	12.5	09.3	08.9	04.3	11.6	-	14.0	09.7	08.2
	Teknaf	03.3	06.8	08.1	11.0	10.8	06.6	00.3	06.7	15.9	10.9	08.0	05.7
Heart ³	Matlab	00.3	01.8	02.5	05.2	10.3	04.1	00.3	01.6	03.9	06.1	09.8	04.4
	Teknaf	-	-	-	02.0	10.2	02.4	-	-	-	02.2	09.2	02.5
Accidents	Matlab	00.9	11.0	10.5	05.2	00.9	03.5	01.2	09.9	14.7	01.2	01.2	03.8
	Teknaf	01.1	05.5	01.6	06.0	02.5	02.5	03.3	07.7	09.5	07.6	02.3	04.8
Birth Related ⁴	Matlab	-	-	-	06.9	00.1	00.6	-	-	-	08.4	00.1	00.7
	Teknaf	24.9	-	-	13.0	-	13.8	26.8	-	-	06.5	00.6	11.9
Measles	Matlab	01.1	02.7	00.5	-	-	00.9	01.4	08.9	09.3	01.1	00.1	03.0
	Teknaf	05.7	04.1	03.2	-	-	03.4	04.3	04.8	04.8	-	-	02.9
Others	Matlab	49.5	28.3	35.0	51.6	49.9	45.5	31.2	25.6	43.4	46.8	51.8	38.8
	Teknaf	20.8	39.7	48.5	50.0	49.1	34.5	17.8	34.7	49.1	57.6	55.4	36.7
Total deaths	Matlab	1419	597	200	289	1138	3643	724	493	129	179	752	2277
	Teknaf	369	73	62	100	157	761	299	104	63	92	175	733

APPENDIX - D. (Continued)

Diseases	Area	1979					1980						
		<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total	<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total
All diseases		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Diarrhoeal ¹	Matlab	04.2	30.4	19.3	07.3	15.5	14.1	04.0	29.2	27.2	05.5	12.5	13.3
	Teknaf	02.6	11.2	03.6	-	06.5	04.3	05.4	15.5	16.1	03.8	07.7	07.8
Tetanus	Matlab	39.5	01.9	06.7	03.7	00.3	14.8	54.6	04.9	04.9	06.6	00.4	19.7
	Teknaf	24.6	-	-	-	-	12.3	23.1	-	-	-	-	11.5
Respiratory ²	Matlab	10.6	07.7	10.0	09.4	14.9	11.3	06.8	06.2	01.9	09.9	13.1	08.9
	Teknaf	21.8	31.5	16.0	06.8	12.2	19.4	14.3	20.2	06.5	01.9	10.0	12.7
Fever	Matlab	03.5	-	12.7	05.2	06.2	04.4	06.3	12.5	11.7	11.1	09.4	09.2
	Teknaf	00.3	05.1	14.3	12.3	05.7	04.3	03.1	11.9	35.5	13.5	05.4	07.4
Heart ³	Matlab	01.3	-	01.3	04.2	09.7	04.7	01.4	00.2	01.9	07.2	13.3	05.8
	Teknaf	-	-	-	05.5	11.4	02.6	-	-	-	01.9	14.6	03.4
Accidents	Matlab	00.6	09.8	11.3	02.6	00.9	03.3	00.7	10.3	07.8	02.3	01.3	03.3
	Teknaf	02.3	11.2	07.1	09.6	04.9	05.1	03.7	10.7	12.9	05.8	02.3	04.9
Birth Related ⁴	Matlab	00.2	-	00.7	13.5	-	01.2	-	-	-	07.7	-	00.6
	Teknaf	29.7	-	-	15.1	-	16.4	28.6	-	-	03.8	-	14.6
Measles	Matlab	01.3	16.7	06.7	00.5	-	03.7	02.0	10.9	05.8	-	00.3	03.3
	Teknaf	03.1	09.2	05.4	-	-	03.3	02.7	21.4	03.2	-	-	04.6
Others	Matlab	38.8	33.5	31.3	53.6	52.5	42.5	24.2	25.8	38.8	49.7	49.7	35.9
	Teknaf	15.6	31.8	53.6	50.7	59.3	32.3	19.1	20.3	25.8	69.3	60.0	33.1
Total deaths	Matlab	836	467	150	192	780	2425	767	487	103	181	802	2340
	Teknaf	350	98	56	73	123	700	294	84	31	52	130	591

APPENDIX - D. (Continued)

Diseases	Area	1981					1982						
		<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total	<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	Total
All diseases		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Diarrhoeal ¹	Matlab Teknaf	03.9 02.9	23.4 11.8	13.6 11.1	04.0 06.1	10.6 07.5	10.8 05.9	08.8 06.8	34.1 17.7	29.8 20.0	08.6 04.2	17.7 10.1	18.1 09.4
Tetanus	Matlab Teknaf	42.9 19.5	03.6 -	01.8 -	04.5 -	00.1 -	15.5 09.9	44.8 16.0	03.9 02.5	02.8 -	03.3 -	00.7 -	15.9 07.9
Respiratory ²	Matlab Teknaf	13.0 14.9	10.3 10.9	10.9 -	12.4 04.5	14.1 04.5	12.6 10.6	14.7 19.5	12.5 20.2	09.9 02.5	11.0 11.1	15.2 14.2	13.9 14.7
Fever	Matlab Teknaf	02.4 04.4	09.1 05.5	- 37.0	08.5 15.2	06.1 03.8	05.4 06.8	05.6 02.6	09.6 08.9	07.8 15.0	09.6 15.3	07.4 05.4	07.4 06.2
Heart ³	Matlab Teknaf	01.8 -	01.3 -	02.7 -	07.3 -	11.2 06.0	05.1 01.2	01.1 00.3	01.5 -	00.7 -	03.8 09.7	13.1 20.9	05.5 06.0
Accidents	Matlab Teknaf	00.4 02.3	10.7 10.0	09.1 14.8	03.4 07.6	00.6 00.8	03.3 04.3	04.1 01.0	08.1 01.3	13.5 05.0	04.8 01.4	00.9 -	03.5 02.2
Birth Related ⁴	Matlab Teknaf	- 28.9	- -	00.9 -	09.0 12.1	00.1 -	00.7 15.8	- 29.2	- 01.3	00.7 -	06.2 04.2	00.1 00.7	00.6 14.6
Measles	Matlab Teknaf	02.0 03.2	12.0 20.0	10.0 14.8	- -	- -	03.8 05.4	01.3 01.0	08.7 02.5	04.3 -	- -	- -	02.4 00.8
Others	Matlab Teknaf	33.6 23.9	29.6 41.8	51.0 22.3	50.9 54.5	57.2 77.4	42.8 40.1	19.6 23.6	21.6 45.6	30.5 57.5	52.7 54.1	44.9 48.7	32.7 38.2
Total deaths	Matlab Teknaf	794 343	525 110	110 27	177 66	792 133	2398 679	859 307	543 079	141 040	209 072	909 148	2661 646

APPENDIX - D. (Continued)

Diseases	Area	1983						Total	Average Rates
		<1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+	100.0		
All diseases		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Diarrhoeal ¹	Matlab	07.5	41.8	26.8	14.0	22.8	22.8	16.1	16.1
	Teknaf	06.6	10.9	19.3	04.8	03.1	07.1	07.7	07.7
Tetanus	Matlab	36.2	02.3	03.6	04.2	00.3	11.5	15.4	15.4
	Teknaf	26.8	00.8	03.8	04.8	-	15.7	11.1	11.1
Respiratory ²	Matlab	09.1	05.1	04.3	10.2	15.1	10.0	10.1	10.1
	Teknaf	20.8	34.4	15.4	10.5	22.0	21.0	15.9	15.9
Fever	Matlab	07.5	10.2	11.6	08.2	06.6	08.1	07.4	07.4
	Teknaf	02.8	09.4	15.4	09.5	05.0	05.2	06.0	06.0
Heart ³	Matlab	01.0	00.9	-	05.7	10.7	04.6	04.9	04.9
	Teknaf	00.2	02.3	03.8	15.2	28.9	07.1	03.6	03.6
Accidents	Matlab	00.4	09.0	10.9	02.6	01.2	03.5	03.8	03.8
	Teknaf	02.1	11.7	07.7	03.8	03.1	03.1	03.5	03.5
Birth Related ⁴	Matlab	-	-	-	05.2	-	00.4	00.7	00.7
	Teknaf	10.8	00.8	-	09.5	-	07.3	13.5	13.5
Measles	Matlab	01.2	05.7	08.0	-	-	02.2	02.8	02.8
	Teknaf	00.4	00.8	03.8	-	-	00.4	03.0	03.0
Others	Matlab	37.1	25.0	34.8	49.9	43.3	36.9	39.3	39.3
	Teknaf	29.5	28.9	30.8	41.9	37.9	33.1	35.4	35.4
Total deaths	Matlab	777	684	138	192	938	2729	2639	2639
	Teknaf	529	128	026	105	159	947	722	722

Sources: ICDDR,B Scientific Report Nos. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 & 66.

Note: 1 : Diarrhoea/dysentery/acute gastroenteritis etc.;

2 : Pneumonia/asthma/whooping cough/bronchitis/bronchopneumonia etc.;

3 : Congestive cardiac failure/hypertension/hypovolaemic shock/shock/rheumatism etc.;

4 : Prematurity/congenital deformity/birth injury;

NOTES & QUERIES

MAGIC, CHARM AND MEDICINE IN BANGLADESH*

Mohammad Abdul Awwal**

Magic is a method used in almost all the countries of the world. The art of magic is as old as human race. In ancient days it flourished in China and Egypt. In course of time it spread throughout the world.

Now what is magic ? It means controlling nature by supernatural means.

The first ever anthropologist who described the art of magic systematically is a British, whose name is Sir James George Frazer. In his book *The golden Bough* first published in 1922 he states thus principles of magic "..... first like produces like or that an effect resembles its cause.... second the thing which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." The former principle is Law of Similarity, latter the Law of Contact. Edward Tylor, another anthropologist, has termed it as a pseudo-science. Later on, Malinowsky has said that magic is neither pseudo-science nor science. The primitive people utilized that art of magic as science for their own purpose. What is the aim of magic ? This question is always there. It is used for achieving something.

However in this paper my aim is not to trace the history of magic or Black art. This term is also coined by some scholars. In early days of human history this art of magic has been practised

* Paper presented at the 13th International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences, Mexico City, August 1993.

** Professor, Department of Bengali, Rajshahi University.

in almost all the continents of the world—Europe, Africa, Asia, America and Australia. But in modern time, the art of magic is practised in Africa and Asia, particularly in Bangladesh and India. This art is used for very many purposes, but here I would like to discuss in brief the use of magic and charm in the treatment of diseases in Bangladesh. I am not going to discuss about the relationships between religion and magic and science.

No doubt, Bangladesh is a developing country and it is one of the less developed country in Asia. Here in Bangladesh the modern medical science is not unknown—particularly in the city or among the educated people. The treatment of heart and kidney diseases are also available in the city. But here I am speaking particularly about ninety percent of the people who live in rural areas. Another interesting point is that when medical science fails to produce the desired effect, the people immediately takes the help of magic or charm or any other method. In this case there is no difference between educated and uneducated or between rich and poor, or between city dwellers and rural people. Sometimes a patient goes to a holy man, a saint - a pir or fakir or a sadhu just for his blessing.

Now I like to mention here the types of diseases or problems (psychological or physical) for the remedy or which the people take the help of magic and charm. These are 1. hysteria 2. snake bites 3. pox and diarrhoeal diseases; and other minor syndrome like fever and hepatitis etc. Hysteria is a disease caused due to mental confusion. But the magicians think that it is caused by the evil spirits. However, Asian people (also most of the people in other parts of the world) believe in the immortality of the souls and regeneration. In rural Bangladesh, the treatment of hysteria is mainly done with the help of Gunin, Ojha, Fakir or Kamal. All these terms are synonymous, but are used by different communities of Bangladesh. A Muslim magician is a Fakir while a Garo magician is called a Kamal and a Hindu magician is an Ojha or Guru.

Evil spirits try to harm people. This is a popular belief in rural Bangladesh. Those who do not obey the general norm or principles of behavior will be punished by the evil spirit. Hysteria

commonly found in women is treated by Gunin or Ojha. Gunin by his Mantra - charm do-away with the evil spirit. The patient is confined in a small room and the room is filled up with smoke and incense. Then the gunin enters the room and utters some Mantras (verses) and he starts talking with evil spirit. sometimes he beats the patient with a stick. His contention is that he is driving away the evil spirit. The Gunin asks the evil spirit to go away, and he also swears in the name of god or goddess. There are other methods too. Sometimes he invites a person who is born during Libra-sign of the Zodiac. The Gunin or Fakir reads some verses from Holy book (Veda or Koran). Then he starts asking question to the person who he selected. The patient also answers the question put by the Gunin and finally the patient is cured. I myself consulted some relations of the patient in my native village a few years back and they admitted that by the magic of the Gunin the patient have been cured.

There are some tribal groups (ethnically very small) living in the frontier district of Bangladesh. They are Chakma, Garo, Kuki, Marna and Santals. The Garo people believes that evil spirits want to enjoy the women's love. It is learnt that the Gunin or Kamal in Garo society sometimes indulges in immoral activities such as having sexual relationship with the patient. In all the cases the patients are confined in a dark room. The Gunin enters the room and stays whole night with the patient. Here he also asks some question to the patient while the relations of the patient wait outside the room and listens to the questions and the answers given by the patient.

It will not out of place to mention here some of the Mantras uttered by the Gunin.

(A Mantra from Jessore district)

Pishachi ball tore sarbanashi
 Dharis tui kata ball
 Charis na keno ei sthall
 Hapner manya jadi rakhibare chas
 Jhatiti karia tumi Kailasete jao
 Kar agge, Kamrup Kamikkhe mayer agge
 Amuker skanda hote shigra shigra ja

Translation :

O thou art witch
 I call you, How strong you are
 why don't you leave this place, if you
 want to sustain your honour and prestige
 Go away quickly to the mountain Kailash (Himalayan or heaven)
 On whose order - Mother god of Kamrup and Kamakhya
 Chandi's order - go away from the shoulder of so and so.

Here there are two places named Kamrup and Kamakhya. These places are in Assam in Eastern India and these places are famous for learning magic. Chandi is Hindu goddess Durga, wife of Shiva. The Muslim Fakir in these cases utters the name of prophet Mohammad (Sm.), his daughter Fatima, and even there is a reference to prophet's son-in-law Ali.

A Muslim fakir (physician) treats cholera with a charm which read like this :

I swear by the name of Ali, by the name of Allah (God) and Mohammad (Sm.) his prophet and by the name of one hundred and twenty four thousand prophets.

When cholera and small pox break out in the form of epidemic the Ojhas, Fakirs spend the sleepless night and recite the verses either composed by themselves or learnt from their masters (Guru or Ustad). However, in recent times these two diseases have been eradicated to a great extent from Bangladesh. But some twenty five years back the situation was different.

Here I may mention one of the verses recited by the Muslim Fakirs :

Illallah Illallah
 Duniar Malik tui Allah
 Dame dame jopo nam
 Lai Laha illallah

Translation :

There is no lord except Allah
 It is He who is the master of life
 So in every puff of breath utter the name of Lord : Lailaha illallah

Here is another Mantira recited to do away with small pox :

Go Sitala (goddess of pox), go away

Go to the North, go to South

Go to mountain of Kamakhya

If you don't go

I swear by the name of

God Mahadev and Parvati

Here we may note that the verses recited by the Hindu Ojha or Muslim Fakir are different. We may point out that society in Bangladesh consists of mainly two religious communities : Muslim and Hindu. There are Buddhists and Christians, there are also ethnically minor communities, who practise either Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity or animism; they are culturally different from Bangladeshi people in many respects. So the Mantras or charm used by these tribal people are different in many cases. However, there are some common elements among the Bangladeshi people and tribal people.

Bangladesh is a riverine country where so many rivers flow across the deltaic land. In the eastern and southern part of Bangladesh, there are many big and small rivers. So the existence of snake in water is abundant. Of course, there are snakes in the land -- particularly in the region near the forest. Normally water snake is non-poisonous and among the other type of snake there are poisonous and non-poisonous too. Every year many people in the riverine districts and in rural areas of Bangladesh die due to snake bites. Though the Zoologists claim that 80% of the snakes in Bangladesh are non-poisonous. It is due to psychological set-back the snake-bitten people die. When a person is bitten by a snake, rural people immediately calls for Ojha. He comes as early as possible and sucks some blood from the wound. Then he utters some Mantras. Here is a sample of a Mantra as found in the district of Rajshahi in Bangladesh :

in the month of Ashar (July- rainy season) on the fifth day of moon Indra, the Lord of heaven - sits on meditation Then comes Boa constrictor by your bite the whole world is

motionless; bone is destroyed flesh is rotten - decomposed -. Lastly the Ojha prays to Vishnu (Hari) for the recovery of the patient. One amazing point here I may mention that when a Mantra is read by an ordinary person (not the Ojha) the desired effect is not produced. An Ojha learns it from his Guru (master) and then he practises it after being permitted by his Guru to do so. Now what the Guru teaches his disciple is a secret and this is the mystery of art of magic and charm.

Now the question may arise how do the Ojhas cure the snake-bitten patients. I personally have asked some of the Ojhas on this point. They first stressed on the power of magic and *mantras*. But they also admitted that they cannot cure cent per cent cases of snake-bite. It is pertinent to note that all kinds of snakes are not poisonous in Bangladesh. Secondly, he Ojhas suck blood from the wound which is a part of their treatment. Thus the venom is removed to some extent. Lastly, the Ojhas use some herbs which have some medicinal qualities. Usually, they use the herbs secretly that is, it is hidden within the palm or between their fingers. Probably these herbs may help in curing the patient.

So far I have mentioned that only in particular diseases or situations or problems the magic and charm have its place in Bangladesh society. These are hysteria, snake-bite, cholera and pox. But in some other situation or problem also the Ojhas or Gunins or Fakirs are called in: such as in case of safe delivery of child, simple cases of fever and arthritis etc. In these cases the Ojhas use materials like water; edible oil; table salt etc. They purify these material by uttering some Mantras -- sometime they blow puff of breath on these materials. Next the patient is advised to use the water or oil or salt. Here let me cite one example of Mantra used for the safe delivery of child :

Chandika devi basi swarga upare alaker jal laiya anandete pare
Devir mantra iha anya kichu
nay sab tuku jal jeno amrita hay etc

Translation :

The goddess Chandika devi is sitting in Paradise. She gladly makes pure heavenly water. It is a charm of goddess nothing else but the water is nectar. She sends it to the earth, the water is purified by the charm, all the saints accepted it..... My guru Narasimha gives this water to the woman concerned who safely gives birth to a child.

Here I like to mention one interesting method of curing Jaundice -- infective hepatitis -- by the Ojhas (also known as Kaviraj) by just putting a ring of creeper on the top of head of the patient. In course of time this ring grows big and bigger and ultimately comes placed on the head in the evening. By the morning the ring passes through the feet and the patient will not be cured. Now what is the trick or mystery or reason of curing jaundice by a ring of creeper. The herb or the creeper used by the Kaviraj or Ojha may be responsible for this. When a Kaviraj is asked about the method of treatment he replies that it is due to the power of Mantras (or Doa) which he utters before the ring. I personally observed a case in the university campus of Rajshahi but I could not get the text.

One interesting point is here to note that Bangladeshi people will not hesitate to apply modern medical method simultaneously with the magical method for the treatment of diseases.

Here in this paper, I have discussed that the Mantras used for the welfare of the people. But there is black side of the application of charm and magic where it is used for evil motives. In villages (some time in towns and cities also) killing of enemy is done by the help of Gunin or Ojha. To kill an enemy they make a small statue of the person concerned and they throw arrows on the statue. Before throwing arrows the Ojha silently reads some verses which he does not disclose normally. It is very difficult to explain this phenomenon. Further I am not sure whether it is successful in every case. Popularly this is known as "ban mara". Perhaps the enemy is extinguished for some other unknown reasons.

To seduce a woman, sometimes, hair nail or piece of cloth worn by that particular woman is procured and the magician utters some verses. However these malpractices now-a-days are rare. But it is learnt that among the tribal groups these are still practised.

Now we may turn to a very pertinent question. Do these magic cure diseases? We may say that the patient is cured due to psychological reasons. The magic or charm produces some effect on the mind of the patient. This effect can cure the patient or help to cure the patient. We can certainly conclude that a woman suffering from hysteria can be cured by just talking with the patient sympathetically. The patient gives vent to her feelings to the magician or a symapathiser and ultimately she may be cured. This is the principle of modern psychotherapy.

Secondly, in some cases the Ojhas use special kind of herbs and plants (sometimes openly or secretly) which surely possess medical properties. An Ojha touches the snake bitten person with some herbs in his palm which may have produced the desired effect.

However, all the cases of application of Mantras in medical field cannot be explained fully. There are certainly cases which remains unexplainable to me or any other researcher. Why the charm produce such effect is yet to be searched and researched.

Lastly, regarding these Mantras (verses composed by Gurus or by the *ojha* themselves) give a picture of folk belief of a particular society. Further, they give a cultural picture of the society. In Bangladesh or elsewhere in India, it is found that there have been cultural borrowing in the mantras. A Hindu *ojha* refers to Muslim prophet or saints, a Muslim *ojha* or *akir* refers to Hindu gods and goddesses. This is acculturation, which in the words of Kroeber comprises the changes produced in a culture by the influence of another which results in an increased similarity of the two.

Table 1. Table showing Rural population availing the different medical care system (Survey was made in the nearby village around the campus of Rajshahi University).

Types of diseases	Magic charm etc.	Herbal medicine	Modern medicine	Both Magics & Medicine	No Medicine at all
1. a) Cold, fever, cough headache, rheumatism pain.	50%	50%	20%	60%	10%
b) diarrheah etc.	50%	40%	50%	40%	5%
2. a) Jaundice, dysentery.	50%	60%	40%	60%	2%
b) Typhoid.	50%	40%	50%	60%	X
3. Hysteria	80-90%	60%	10%	25%	X
4. a) Accident, injury, cut, burn.	70%	80%	30%	30%	20%
b) Snake bite	90%	80%	10%	70%	X

At least ten/patients in each case were interviewed. (During 1993).

Please note:

1. At the moment, the snake bite patients are less found in urban Areas.
2. If the survey is made far away from the District or Thania Hospital the statistics will be different.
3. Pox is declining in Bangladesh, so no survey has been made on pox or Cholera.

Table 2. Table showing Rural population availing the different medical care system (Survey was made in Dhaka & Rajshahi medical college Hospital, and in the city area of Dhaka).

Types of diseases	Magic charm etc.	Herbal medicine	Modern medicine	Both Magics & Medicine	No Medicine at all
1. a) Cold, fever, cough headache, pain.	20%	50%	70%	60%	5%
b) diarrheah.	10%	5%	75%	50%	X
2. a) Jaundice, dysentery.	40%	50%	70%	60%	X
b) Typhoid.	10%	5%	90%	80%	X
3. Hysteria	40%	30%	90%	80%	X
4. a) Accident, injury, cut, burn.	20%	25%	80%	70%	5%
b) Snake bite	40%	60%	80%	75%	X

Please note :

International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research (ICDDR, B) that the situated in DHAKA is carrying research on diarrheah and the discovery of Oral Saline has helped in minimising the death due to diarrheah in urban or rural areas of Bangladesh.

BOOK REVIEW

ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE IN BANGLADESH*

Mobasser Monem**

In ordinary sense, *élite* means the small minorities who seem to exercise an exceptionally important role in political and social affairs—actually they are the decision makers. As observed by J.A. Banks, the term *élite* stands for -

"... the relatively small, adventitiously organised group, which legitimately or not, exercise authority, lays claim to exercise it, or believes it should exercise authority over the other groups with which it maintains a relationship usually of political or cultural nature".

Following this definitional premise the concept of *élite* has been used by the author to refer to administrators both generalists and specialists who occupy offices in the secretarial, attached department, autonomous and field units and who command institutional means of decision making power.

Historically in Bangladesh, administrative *élites* have been the most privileged section of the community. Over the decades, the *élite* have been able to exercise enormous power and grown into a virtual class on its own with a built-in ability to perpetuate its position regardless of the colours of its political master. There are numerous variables which are contributing to the relative strength of administrative *élite*. Administrative *élite* in Bangladesh comprising the higher *échelons* in the civil service are an exclusive group, generally representing the higher strata of society, especially the land owners, emerging business and industrial class and the professionals. In terms of income status

* by M. Shamsur Rahman. New Delhi : Manak Publications Private Ltd., 1991. Rs. 325.

** Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, Rajshahi University.

and power their positions are at the top of the social hierarchy. As a matter of fact, the exclusiveness of the administrative élite is greatly heightened, as Professor M. Shamsur Rahman observes, by their origins in the higher class, but equally significant in this respect is the system of education and indoctrination they receive, the environment they operate in, the privilege they enjoy and the life style they maintain.

The book under review is basically based on dissertation written and accepted for the Ph.D. at the University of Rajasthan, India, which purports, in author professor M. Shamsur Rahman's own words, "to study the attitudes of the administrative élite in Bangladesh towards various issues of development". The author perceives the term development as a "holistic change" by the state directed action which requires the administrative élites to perform an important rôle in the socio-economic and political transformation of the country. Although, in general terms, development means both growth and change which inevitably calls for initiative and adaptation. But the author considers that mere growth is not development, it also implies equitable distribution, particularly in the context of developing countries which abound in disparities.

And it is increasingly recognised that one of the requisites of development in a developing country like Bangladesh is the presence of competent élite having positive attitudes and motivated to bring about socio-economic development.

With a view to outlining the rationale for the present study, the author has rightly stressed the need for proper and adequate knowledge about the attitudes of the administrative élite in order to be able to assess the nature and impact of the rôle played by them in the development process of the country. The main objectives of the study as indicated by professor Rahman are, first, to probe into the nature of developmental attitudes of administrative élite in Bangladesh, secondly, to examine the extent to which these attitudes are being influenced by their socio-economic background, thirdly, to assess the impact of the attitudes of the élite on their development rôle.

Including a long list of selected bibliography for further reading and a very useful index at the end, the book has been organised in ten separate chapters. The first chapter provides a description about the nature of inquiry which includes the definitional aspects of the key concepts like *élite*, administrative *élite*, development, development administration, ecology of administration, attitudes, role etc. and this has been subsequently followed by a rigorous interpretation of the nature and size of the sample used in the present research.

The second chapter of the book presents an elaborate analysis of the constitutional framework and the administrative structure. The main concern of this part of the study is to discuss the administrative structure in Bangladesh in the context of secretariat, attached departments, boards, corporation and field level organisations in order to locate organisational status and the functions of the administrative *élite* in the country. The author identifies that the dichotomy between the secretariat and the attached departments is still continuing in the administration of Bangladesh as a legacy of the past and this in turn impedes or causes the delays the process of policy execution in an effective manner. Commenting on the post of Divisional Commissioner as a redundant one, the author suggests that the functions of the Divisional Commissioner can be effectively exercised and co-ordinated at the district level.

Chapter three of the book deals with the identification of the socio-economic profile of the administrative *élite* in Bangladesh. This part of the study reveals that majority of the administrative *élite* come from urban and rural rich families. In this case, it was assumed that family background, socio-economic status and modernity score should have positive influence on the attitudes of the *élite* and as author points out, in most cases, it has turned out to be true with only a few exceptions.

Training and development training is the subject matter of the next chapter. The author considers training as an effective instrument positively contributes to development as it helps immensely to develop the capacity of an administrator to adopt correct attitude towards deliver of services to intended clientele

groups. Therefore, the author has emphasized the need for and usefulness of training in obtaining administrative knowledge. But as far as the foreign training is concerned, it is argued that the professional training in the cultural setting of highly developed countries of the West is not of much relevance to our need, so, the administrative élite of our country can have the benefit of training in countries which are closer to our socio-economic problems, of which quite a few they have been able to solve satisfactorily.

Chapter five deals in a systematic and rigorous manner with the attitudinal profile of the administrative élite towards socio-cultural development. The concept of socio-cultural development, according to professor Rahman, stands for transformation in terms of basic improvement of life in the realm of health, nutrition, housing, social security, education, recreational, moral and even psychological activities. Instead of studying elite perception of indicators of development from a wholistic perspective the author, in this particular part, has turned to probe into the web of the élite's perceptions distributively on the basis of some well known indicators of development such as modernity, family, educators of development such as modernity, family, education, urbanisation, industrialisation, religion and human relations. The administrative élite have been found quite considerably open to rational influences and very significantly progressive in their responses to the aforementioned issues.

An in-depth analysis of the attitudinal profile of the élite towards economic development is furnished in the chapter six. Economic development, although having different connotations, but in general terms, means a process of change over a long period of time involving quantitative increase in the volume of output or commodities in the national economy through fuller utilisation of its resources by satisfying marginal conditions, hence it includes the process of continuous growth. But the author rejects this very conventional notion of development, on the contrary, he maintains that development must entail something more than growth, raising per capita income is an essential element of development but it is not the *be all and end*

all of it. To professor Rahman, economic development is a process of change which combines growth in economic terms and distribution in the form of social justice.

As economic development has been defined in terms of growth and distribution, the study revealed that a large majority of élite, irrespective of their socio-economic status (SES), were in favour of an economic structure of mixed nature as they believed that it would pave the avenue for competition between public and private sector and ensure stabilisation of prices. Besides, overwhelming majority of the élite favoured the idea of giving top priority to agricultural development rather than industrial development as the country is predominantly agro-based. The study found out that all the élite subscribe to the idea of reducing the dependence on foreign aid by boosting up the mobilisation of domestic resources. More interestingly, as the present study revealed, the process of growth with distributive justice was upheld by majority except élite with low SES who favoured growth before distribution, and all élite recognised the need for efficient land reform measures in order to ensure distributive justice.

Chapter seven of the book focuses on the attitudinal profile of the administrative élite towards rural development. Rural development is defined by the author as the development of rural society as a whole, encompassing socio-cultural, politico-economic, and administrative aspects as opposed to the conventional definition of alleviating the conditions of the weaker sections only. Bangladesh is in search of appropriate strategy of rural development which suits its socio-economic and physical conditions and has been trying out different approaches, although none of the approaches seem to be efficient and successful for the improvement of rural development of the country, yet a large number of the élite upon whom the research is carried opined that integrated approach is the only viable approach in this regard. The élite viewed and accepted that initiatives directed to encourage and ensure mass participation is indispensable for the efficient and meaningful implementation of rural development programmes. Further, they stressed the need

for simultaneous efforts to strengthen the local bodies which is considered as one of the key variables for rural development.

Attitudinal profile of the élite towards political development has been dealt with in a systematic and somewhat detailed manner in chapter eight of the book, and for the purpose of study the author treated political development as the participation of people in the political process. The author moves on to saying that the political development can be attained by means of enhancing participation of the general mass through the political system and political process. The study has revealed that more than half (57%) of the administrative élite who were interviewed favoured the presidential form of government, while 35% of the respondents preferred parliamentary form. The élite favouring presidential form of government, as pointed out by professor Rahman, due to the fact that they thought it would ensure stability in the absence of bi-party system and perhaps, for the sake of development some regimentation was considered necessary, and those who supported parliamentary form of government were of view that it would ensure direct participation of the people. Majority of the administrative élite in their opinions held the political parties responsible for corruption, either wholly or partially, on the other hand, most of the élite believed in the capability of politicians to run the administration effectively. The élites were very in-favour of transparency in administration and having positive attitudes towards the freedom of press.

In chapter nine of the book the author devotes his analysis to study the attitudinal profile of the administrative élite towards administrative development in a pragmatic manner. The term administrative development denotes a pattern of increasing effectiveness in the utilisation of available means to achieve prescribed goals. It therefore, involves both qualitative and quantitative changes in the bureaucratic policies, programmes, organisational structures, staffing pattern, procedures and methods of work. As far as the administration in Bangladesh is concerned, the author found that because of the over centralisation of administration the decision making process is rather slow. A large majority of élite believed that in principle,

there was delegation of authority but in practice there was a tendency of the higher authority quite often to exercise the delegated power. Since September 1980, a unified civil service structure has been introduced, but in this regard a large percentage of elite viewed that the service structure has not been able to reduce the inter bureaucratic feuds rather it has generated new and delicate controversies owing to lack of uniform privileges. The author found that majority of the elite highly sceptical about the integrity of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission in maintaining neutrality in its recruitment procedures. Regarding administrative accountability, most of the elite opined that the rules were adequate enough to hold administrators accountable but this could not be done due to lack of enforcement of rules, which they desired. They recommended the immediate introduction of the office of Ombudsman so as to bring about effective legislative control over administration.

In the last chapter of the book, the author makes an attempt to present the main threads of discussions together in a summarised form with a view to highlight the major findings and emerging trends. The study has brought about two major findings.

First, the administrative elite seem fairly conversant with various socio-economic problems that have either direct or indirect bearing upon the overall development of the country, and the elite, by and large, do possess development attitudes.

Secondly, it is surprising that there exists some gap between attitudes and performance.

It is generally recognised that positive attitudes lead to positive development. Notwithstanding the favourable attitudes of the elite, however, development has not been occurred or accelerated at the desired level in Bangladesh. This surprising trend leads obviously to a question, why is it so? In search of finding an objective answer to this question, the study on a close examination, reveals that in between attitudes and role performance of the elite there are a lot of intervening variables

posing unbreakable barrier to meaningful and desired development. The author has, quite successfully, been able to identify some of these variables. As pointed out by the author, "development is a multi-faceted phenomena rather than a single factor situation. It depends upon a number of key variables like resource availability, soundness of the policy, population control, prevention of natural calamities and hazards and national ethos for motivation to work hard". Attitudes are one of the intervening variables to development. The administrative 'elite continually interact with socio-cultural and political sub-systems in society, and the 'elite do not seem to get adequate support from the ecology in which they work in. Besides, lack of professional commitment due to inadequate incentive structure, failure to ensure administrative accountability of public service, incapacity to mobilise and sustain enough public support on account of authoritarian administrative framework and in the absence of effective representative institutions of the people, and over-centralisation of decision making process, are among the most dominant factors inhibiting socio-economic development, as identified by the author. In order to remove these prevailing constraints and for the overall improvement of administrative milieu the author has ended up prescribing specific practical recommendations, which would be of immense importance to learn about for the policy makers, professionals, practitioners, researchers and inquisitive students in the field of public administration in particular and social scientists in general.

Professor Rahman should be congratulated for a thoroughly researched study which combines theoretical and empirical bases well. The obvious merit of professor Rahman's book is that the attitudes of administrative 'elite towards development have been brought in sharp focus with first hand data and scientific treatment of such data. The style of writing is quite straight forward and analysis penetrating. Therefore, the book written by professor M. Shamsur Rahman, entitled *Administrative elite in Bangladesh*, can obviously, be treated for its originality and revealing character as a remarkably fruitful addition to the social science literature in Bangladesh.

DISSERTATIONS

Following Ph.D. & M.Phil. dissertations have so far been submitted and the Viva - Voce examinations were held since the publication of the brochure, *The Institute of Bangladesh Studies : an introduction* in January 1994 where a full list is available.

Name of Candidate	Title of Thesis	Name of Supervisor (s)	Year of award
Ph.D.			
1. Najma Begum	Portrayal of Women in Mughal Painting : A Study Based on Illustrated Manuscripts and Album Drawings.	Prof. A.B. M. Hosain Deptt. of Is. History, R.U.	1994
2. Abu Taher (Babu)	বাংলাদেশের আধুনিক চিত্রকলা (১৯৪৮-১৯৮৮) এবং তিন জন শিল্পী : জয়নুল আবেদিন, এস.এম. মুলতান ও রশীদ চৌধুরী।	Prof. Mahmud Shah Qureshi. Cult. & Intell. Hist., IBS.	1994
3. Md. Rezaul Karim	কাজী নজরুল ইসলামের রাজনৈতিক চেতনা	Prof. Maziruddin Meah Deptt. of Bengali, R.U. & Dr. P.K. Mitra, a Historiography, IBS.	1995
4. M. Mahfuzul Haque	Ethnic Insurgency and National Integration; A Study of Selected Ethnic Problems in South Asia	Prof. A.N.S. Hoque Deptt. of Pol. Sc. R.U.	1995
5. Abeda Afroza	বাংলাদেশের মহিলা রচিত উপন্যাস বিষয়-বৈচিত্র্য ও জীবন-চিত্র : ১৯৪৭-১৯৮৭	Prof. Mahmud Shah Qureshi. Cult. & Intell. Hist., IBS.	1995
6. Nilkanta Bepari	কবি বিজয় গুপ্ত : জীবন ও সাহিত্যকর্ম।	Prof. Mahmud Shah Qureshi. Cult. & Intell. Hist., IBS.	1995
7. Jafar Ahmad Hanafi	চাকমা সাহিত্যে উপজাতীয় সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতি।	Prof. Mahmud Shah Qureshi. Cult. & Intell. Hist., IBS.	1995
8. Md. Shafiqul Alam	British Utilitarianism and its Influence on Nineteenth Century Muslim Bengal : A Study on Nawab Abdul Latif and Delwar Hossain Ahmed.	Prof. M. A. Hamid Deptt. of Philosophy, R.U.	1995
M.Phil.			
1. Begum Aklima Akhtar	জনসংখ্যা নিয়ন্ত্রন, স্বাস্থ্য এবং পুষ্টি সম্পর্কে পত্নী জনগোষ্ঠীর সচেতনতার উপর পনামাধর্মের প্রভাব : রাজশাহী জেলার একটি সমীক্ষা।	Prof. Md. Afsaruddin Deptt. of Psychology, R.U.	1995
2. Sharmista Ray	আর্থ-সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রেক্ষাপটে গ্রাম-বাংলার নারীশিক্ষা সমস্যা : একটি ধানভিত্তিক সমীক্ষা।	Prof. P.C. Sarkar Deptt. of Social Work, RU.	1995

ENOTATRESD

and some that were stolen from the - SW. The one being the need for the event enotatresh. in P.M. & D.P. given to follow
admission to the hall & the other best value in the distribution of - salary, the distribution to the student and the distribution to the non-student

being to the Y

should to the Y

should to the Y

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

1991 M.B.A. 100
1991 M.B.A. 100

IBS PUBLICATIONS

The IBS, established in 1974, is an advanced interdisciplinary centre for 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 : Two annual journal, seminar volumes, books and monographs to its credit.

PUBLICATIONS

1. *The Journal of the institute of Bangladesh Studies* edited by S.A. Akanda, Vols. I-VI (1976-82); M.S. Qureshi, Vols. VII-XII (1983-89) : S.A. Akanda, Vols. XIII-XV (1990-92); M.S. Qureshi, Vols XVI (1993-).
2. *Reflections on Bengal Renaissance* (seminar volume 1) edited by David Kopf and S. Joarder (1977).
3. *Oitijya, Sangskriti, Shahitya* (seminar volume 3 in Bengali) edited by M.S. Qureshi (1979).
4. *Studies in Modern Bengal* (seminar volume 2) edited by S.A. Akanda (1981).
5. *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam (1905-1911)* by M.K.U. Mollah (1981).
6. *Provincial Autonomy in Bengal (1937-1943)* (seminar volume 7) by Enayetur Rahim (1981).
7. *The District of Rajshahi : Its Past and Present* (seminar volume 4) edited by S.A. Akanda (1983).
8. *Tribal Cultures in Bangladesh* (seminar volume 5) edited by M.S. Qureshi (1984).
9. *Bankim Chandra O Amra* (seminar volume 6) by Amanullah Ahmed (1985).
10. *Bangalir Atmaparichaya* (seminar volume 7) edited by Safar A. Akanda (1991).
11. *Rural Poverty and Development Strategies in Bangladesh* (seminar volume 8) edited by Safar A. Akanda & Anisul Islam (1991).
12. *History of Bengal : Mughal Period*, Vol. I (From the fall of Daud Karrani 1576 to the death of Jahangir 1627) also in Bangla, Vol. 2 ... by Abdul Karim (1992, 1995).
13. *The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, an introduction*, (1994).
14. *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies : An up-to-date Index* by Md. Shahjahan Rarhi, (1994).
15. *IBS Journal* Bangla annual review edited by M.S. Qureshi; 1401:1, 1400:2.

For IBS Publications, please write to :

The Librarian
Institute of Bangladesh Studies
Rajshahi University
Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh

182 PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATIONS