

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES

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Bengali Women in the Medieval Socio-Cultural Milieu

Razia Sultana

Bengal¹ is a land of attractive scenic beauty comprising of green horizons, golden crops and silvery rivers. Its surface is made of an uniform and wide alluvial plain, covering almost the entire land-mass of the country. Rivers and streams in Bengal overflow their banks in the rainy-season and deposit fertile silts on the adjoining fields. Thus the rivers bless the land with fertility and an abundance of crops.

Physical environment exercises great influence on its people. Food habits, working habits, dresses, customs, beliefs and ideas of the people are greatly influenced by its climatic condition. The mild and temperate climate of the country has made the Bengali people temperamentally mild and amiable. The beauty of nature all around the country has made them thinkers and artists with a liberal outlook on life. Destruction and construction—these dual roles of the rivers of Bangladesh have developed in them a 'mystic inclination and indifference to material world'.

It is said that the recorded history of Bengal with a date begins only from 326 B.C with the famous stand made by the warriors of the 'Gangaride', to resist the threatened slaughter of Alexander, who was advancing towards the interior of India. According to Megasthenis, "the Gangarides were the people occupying the delta of the Ganga".²

The next glimpse of political condition of Bengal reveals a number of independent states flourishing at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. The establishment of the Gupta empire marks the end of independent existence of the various states in Bengal. After the downfall of Gupta empire, Bengal passed under the Buddhist Pala Kings (C. 7th—10th century) and Hindu Sena Kings (11th—12th century) respectively. The Muslim settlement in Bengal is generally thought to have started with the conquest of this country by Ikhtiyar-Bin-Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1201

1. The geographical term 'Bengal' denotes the province or Presidency of Bengal in British India, which comprised an area, covering present Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal. Under the Muslim rule (1204—1757 A.D.) this country was known as 'Banglah'.

2. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of Indian People* (Vol. 2) : *The Age of Imperial Unity*, Bombay : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1953, P. 33.

A. D. Since then Bengal remained under Muslim rule for about six centuries. Muslim rule in Bengal came to an end by the great conspiracy of the Battle of Plassey in 1957.

According to historians "It was under the Muslim rule, that the political boundary of Bengal, reached the farthest of its geographical and natural limit and these both corresponded with the linguistic homogeneity of the Bengali speaking people".³

The Muslim rulers thus united the Bengali people, giving rise to a common pattern of life with uniformity in language and culture. The history of Bengali literature actually began from this time. Only a few traces of early Bengali are found in poetical references during Pal and Sen rulers of Bengal.

It was the patronage of the Muslim rulers that stimulated the growth of literature. The Muslim rulers encouraged poetical creation, translation of valuable books of knowledge and religion, whereas the Hindu rulers only patronised Sanskrit. Had there been no Muslim conquest of Bengal, Bengali language and literature would not have improved and flourished. "The present work aims at exploring the life and activities of Bengali women as depicted in Medieval Bengali texts. The period of our study, thus starts from the fourteenth century and extends up to the eighteenth century.

SOURCES USED :

Bengali political works of the medieval Period in the Manuscript form (complete or incomplete) collected up to the present would number more than ten thousand⁴. These Manuscripts are carefully preserved in different libraries of the world.

In older days, before the advent of printing machine, manuscripts were used to be copied by hand. In the process of copying through various generations, the original text got mutilated and corrupted. Old Bengali script, used by the copyists in the past through different centuries, is quite different from modern Bengali script. Hence, very few have access to the old Bengali Manuscripts. Many Manuscripts were edited by different

3. M. A. Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*, Vol. 1, Karachi : Pakistan Historical Society, 1963, P, 1.

4. This number has been estimated according to the list of Bengali MSS, in *Catalogus Catalogorum of Bengali Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, compiled and edited by Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharjee, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1978, pp. 23—385.

rent scholars. But these would not number more than two hundred.⁵ By editing these manuscripts, the editors brought to light social and economic pictures depicted in the unknown medieval Bengali poetry. The following literary sources have been used for reconstruction of the socio-cultural life of Bengali women during the medieval period :

| | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| Badu Chandidas : <i>Shrikrishna Kirtan</i> —C. 14th century. | " | |
| Vijaygupta : <i>Manasa Mangal</i> — | " | |
| Vipradas Pipilai : <i>Marasa Mangal</i> — | " | 15th century. |
| Daulat Uzir : <i>Laili Majnu</i> — | " | |
| Dwija Madhab : <i>Chandi Kavya</i> — | " | 16th century |
| Kavi Kankan : <i>Chandimangal</i> — | " | |
| Sheikh Faizullah : <i>Goraksha Vijay</i> — | " | |
| Syed Sultan : <i>Nabi Vangsha</i> — | " | |
| Abdul Hakim : <i>Lalmati Saiful Muluk</i> — | " | 17th century. |
| Abdul Hakim : <i>Yousuf Zulekha</i> — | " | |
| Alaul : <i>Padmaavati</i> — | " | |
| Alaul : <i>Sikandar-nama</i> — | " | |
| Daulat Quazi : <i>Sati Maina</i> — | " | |
| Muhammad Akil : <i>Musnana</i> — | " | |
| Mymensing Ballads—C. 17th—18th century. | " | |
| Barat Chandra : <i>Anudamangal</i> — | " | 18th century. |
| Ghanaram : <i>Dharmamangal</i> — | " | |
| Rameshwar Bhattacharya : <i>Shivayan</i> — | " | |
| Shukur Mahmud : <i>Gupichandrer Samnyas</i> — | " | |

The impact of nature on Bengali women is more significant. They are simple, sincere, hospitable and devoted by nature. Natural phenomena like cyclone, drought, etc., have taught the women-folk of this country to cope with all adverse circumstances of life. The preparedness of Bengali women to sacrifice, has been praised through the ages. We can quote here an old aphorism or wise saying of *Dak* (c. 10th Century) which refers to the traditional qualification of a good Bengali housewife :

S. M. A. Dayum, in the appendix of his book on Textual Criticism *Pandulipi path* O Path Samalochana, Mukhdumi & Ahsanullah Library, Dacca, 2nd edn. 1976, gives a list of 162 edited volumes published during the period of 1847—1975

ମିଠି ଶର୍କରା ମଞ୍ଜରୀ କାଟି ।

କେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧିତେ ସବୁ ନା ହୁଁନି ॥

ସାତିରି ମୋହନୀ ଶର ଶର ॥

ତବ ତାସ ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ॥

ବୋଲି କୌତୁହଳ ଶରକ ॥

ସବୁ କାଠି ସବୁଟିକି ସରକ ॥

କାଠି କଳାଶୀ ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ସର ॥

ତେଁ ଶୁଦ୍ଧିତ କାଠିକା ନା ବାସ ॥

କେ ସର ତେ ଶରକ ॥

ସର 'ସର' ଶୁଦ୍ଧିତ କେତେ ॥

"The housewife who cooks sweet dishes and cuts the vegetables very fine, never fails in life. She is eager to serve the guest to her utmost capacity. In sunny days, she uses thorns for cooking and saves the hay and logs for bad days i.e. the rainy seasons. The good housewife goes with a pitcher on her waist to bring water. keeping her eyes to the ground never looking at other,"⁶

Here we see that Bengali women are not only modest and sincere in their behaviour but also devoted to their family, sacrificing everything for its welfare.

To a Bengali woman, the household duties are like holy duties, and she goes to perform her duties in the morning, purifying herself by the morning bath. In a popular Ballad of Mymensingh, *Kajal Rekha* (C. 17th—18th century), we find :

ବେଳେବେଳେ ଚାହିଁବା କଥା ବେଳେବେଳେ ମିଳିବ କରେ,

ଭକ୍ତ ଶାନ୍ତ ସାଥ କଥା ବଞ୍ଚିବାମାନ ସରେ ।

ତବ ହୃଦୟ ବାକ୍ୟ କେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧିତ ସମ ସରେ

ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ସର ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ସର ସର କରେ ।

"Leaving her bed early in the morning, she takes her bath and goes to the kitchen, pure in mind and body. After doing her hair and dressing tightly, she cleans her home with river-water."

6. Pravas Chandra Sen, 'Prachin Vanga Sahitye Bangalir Dainandini Jiban' in *Sahitya Parisahi Patrika*, Vol-No. 27, Part III. B. S. 1327-P. 90.
7. D. C. Sen(ed), *Mainamensingha Gitika*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2, Calcutta; University of Calcutta, 1958, P. 331.

While speaking about the devotion of Bengali women, we shall begin with an interesting story about the nature of an Indian wife's fidelity quoted by A. L. Basham.

"A woman was holding her sleeping husband's head in her lap, as they and their child warmed themselves in winter before a blazing fire. Suddenly the child crawled towards the fire, but the woman made no attempt to save it from the flames, since she would wake her lord. As the baby crawled further into the flames, she prayed to the fire-God 'Agni' not to hurt him. The God, impressed by her obedience, granted her prayer, and the child sat smiling and unharmed in the middle of the fire until the man awoke."⁸ According to Basham, the early Indian mind, prone to exaggeration, perhaps over emphasized the necessity of wifely obedience. Her status, however, was not without honour. In medieval Bengali texts, we find so many references to Bengali wife's fidelity. Poets have composed many aphorisms or wise sayings about the relation between husband and wife, or man and woman, e.g.

(a) "পুত্র অথবা পত্নী বিধি নিষিদ্ধ।

বানী শব্দে জ্ঞান পুত্র অথবা

জীবন-বীজিত অথবা কোল প্রদর্শন ॥

"It is the divine law that the woman is other half of the man. Woman is the body and man is the soul; a body without soul is of no use."⁹

(Alaol—*Padmavati*; 17th Century.)

(b) "পত্নীভব অথবা অথবা বানী।

দুই হলে নৃনিষিত তেজব বানী ॥

পত্নী বা পত্নীভব পুত্র বিধি বা হয়।

পত্নী পুত্র অথবা জীবন নিষিদ্ধ।

"The women is half of man's body (existence). Love is perpetuated by both. A man's life is not meaningful without a woman. A man and woman are one in soul."¹⁰

(Muhammed Akil, *Musavvama*, 17th Century)

8. A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, London: William Clowes and Sons Ltd, 3rd, revised edition, 1969, P. 183.
9. Alaol, *Padmavati*, (ed) Syed Ali Ahsan, Dacca: Student ways, 1964, P. 396.
10. Muhammad Akil, 'Musavvama', (ed) Ahmed Shareef, *Bangla Academy Patrika*, Vol. No. 4, Part-1, B. S. 1367, P. 52-53.

(c) "গৃহস্থের গুরু বলা গৃহস্থের গুরু"

"The virtues of a housewife contribute to the smooth running of the household affairs of the farmer." 11

(Rameshwar Bhattacharya, *Shivayan*, 18th Century.)

While presenting her daughter to the new son-in-law, the mother utters her last minute advice to her daughter :

"গতি বিব্রত গৌরী গাঢ়িত গৃহস্থের গুরু।"

গৌরী গৌরী গুরু গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

কল্যাণের দ্বারা গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

কল্যাণের গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

"To a wife, there is no guardian but her husband and she, who serves the husband, enjoys pleasure and salvation in both the earthly and the eternal life. Do not keep any anger in your mind and love your husband and show respect to him." 12

(Alaol, *Sikandarnama*, 17th Century.)

"বাহ্যে বলায় গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

"Pardon her (my daughter's) if you find any fault in her action, give her clothes (to cover herself upto the knee) and rice to fill the belly, love her as Rama loved Sita." 13

(Rameshwar, *Shivayan*, 17th Century.)

Devotion is the key-note of a Bangladeshi wife's life. So, a devoted wife desires : —

"তোমা গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী গৌরী ॥

"I share with you both pleasures and pains. Give me opportunities to serve you." 14

(Alaol, *Pudmanavati*, 17th Century.)

11. Rameshwar, *Shivayan*, (ed.) Jogilal Halder, Calcutta; University of Calcutta, 1957, p. 215.

12. Alaol, *Sikandarnama*, (ed.) Ahmed Shareef, Dacca; Bangla Academy, 1977, p. 140.

13. Rameshwar, *Op. Cit.*, p. 52.

14. Alaol—*Pudmanavati*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 396.

Most of the Bengali poets of the medieval Bengal were delighted to draw pictures of loving wives. In most cases, the wives had no other way to show their love to their husbands than by cooking and serving food with great pleasure. 'Kamala' a heroine of a Mymensingh ballad (17th-18th Century), serves her husband with specially prepared sweet curd and pop-corns and remains standing beside him.¹⁵

“গাছা বাক্য নই করি যতন গাছিয়া

উলিয়া খুই দিয়া খাওয়াইয়া যাকৈ হইয়া ॥

We even find a wife cooking all the time for her husband who has gone abroad, so that she can entertain him whenever he returns.

আইল বাক্য তালিয়া ফিঁচি কইল বাক্য খুই ।
ছাকরত তালিয়া বাক্য গাছিয়া বাক্য নই ॥

আইল বাক্য তিঁচি কত যতন করিয়া

তালিতে তইয়া বাক্য ছাকরত তালিয়া ।

এই যতন বাক্য কত যতন বাক্য ॥

বাক্যের খাওয়াইয়া বাক্য ফিঁচি বাক্য ।

তালি তালি বাক্য বাক্য বাক্যের বাক্য ।

আইল আইল বাক্য বাক্য বাক্য ॥

“To-day she prepares palm-cakes, to-morrow she will prepare pop-corns, sometimes she keeps sweet-curd in ‘Sikka’ (pot-hanger made of ropes). She also keeps the pot in ‘Sikka’ full of ‘Chira’ (flattened rice). In this way she prepares so many snacks but, alas, her dear husband does not come back. Hoping her beloved’s return, she cooks delicious curries of fishes and chickens to-day.¹⁶”

(*Devana Modina*, 17th—18th Century).
In return for her devotion and fidelity, a wife’s meagre expectation is nothing but her husband’s love and fidelity. If disappointed, she shows her emotion of ‘*Mana*’ (মান/মোহন) — ‘an untranslatable word implying a mixture of anger, wounded and jealousy.¹⁷

When ‘*mana*’ fails, a wife takes the help of magic to get her beloved’s love. It is said that “the use of charms by women to exercise control over

15. D. C. Sen, *Purba Vanga Gritika*, Vol. II, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1958—P.147.

16. *Ibid*, Vol. No. II, P.377.

17. A. L. Basham, *Op. Cit.*, P. 181.

their husbands was very popular in the 15th and 16th centuries of Bengal.¹⁸ But, even in the 18th century, we find the wife of Bhabananda Mazumdar in *Annamangal*—(Bharatchandra : 18th cent.), tries all her skills and magical charms to win her husband's heart :—

“স্বামী তুমি তত্ত্বোত্তম, গরিব চরণে পতি

পতিয়া ফলন লভে নিশা ।

পতি লেখ য়েই য়ি, পতি ফল লেখ য়ি ।

পতি য়েই য়ি, য়েই পতিয়া ॥

“She ties her hair-buns promptly, wears a fine ‘Saree’ and adorns her eyes with *Kajal* (eye salve, collyrium). She rubs magic-oil on her face and puts magic flowers in her hair and decorates the parting-line of her hair with magic Vermilion.”¹⁹

A husband stands for everything in a Bengali woman's life, even after his death or in his absence, she remains faithful to her in-law's family. Malua, a heroine of *Mymensingh Ballad* (C. 17th—18th century) while deserted by her husband, decided to stay in father-in-law's house because it was her place of pilgrimage like *Gaya Kashi*, and *Vrindaban*.²⁰

যেই য়ি পতিয়া পতি ফলি য়ি ।

যেই পতিয়া পতি ফলি য়ি ॥

Such is the picture of a devoted Bengali house-wife.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

With a plenty of alluvial soil and industrious people, Bengal was one of the richest countries in the East. There was an abundance of agricultural and manufactured products in the pre-Muslim period. The introduction of Muslim rule contributed to a substantial advance in its economic life. During the reign of Vijayasen (12th Century) rich women in the cities used to wear gold, silver and jewels, whereas the village-girls had no opportunity even to see such things. They used to wear indigenous ornaments.

18. T. C. D. Gupta, *Aspects of Bengali Society*, Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1935, P. 7.

19. Bharat Chandra, *Mansingha Bhabananda Upakhyayan*, ed., M. A. Hai and Anwar Pasha, Dacca : Student Ways, 1967, P. 87.

20. D. C. Sen, *Maimansingh Gitika*, Vol. 1, Pt 2, Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1958, P. 83.

ments, made of different seeds, weeds, palm-leaves, beads and flowers. In cities, life was, on the contrary, full of pomp and luxury. In *Charvapada* (9th—12th century), the early specimen of Bengali literature, one can find a vivid picture of urban life. People indulged in luxury. They had singers, dancers and prostitutes to entertain them and polygamy (poem no. 10)²¹ was in vogue too. Even the morality of the housewives was bad. We see (poem no. 2) that a daughter-in-law, who is afraid of the crow in the day-time, goes out at night to meet an amorous friend (দুখাইয়ে ফুটে উঠে ছায়া/রাতি উঠিলে ফাড়াইয়া যাবে²²). In one poem, we find the paradox of life "I have no rice in the pot, but I go out to entertain others (ক'টি ত-ভাত মাটি লাগে লাগে²³)". Poem No. 23²³.

In contemporary Sanskrit literature of the pre-Muslim period, we find so many descriptions of poverty and austerity in village life. In his *Arya Saptaśati*, Gobardhan Acharya (12th century) describes how a village woman having no winter clothes, made a fire and kept it lit for the whole night, in spite of ashes covering her tender skin and in spite of tears caused by smoke (poem no. 304)²⁴. In another poem by an anonymous poet, we see the husband of a village girl feeling sorry at seeing his wife begging to an unwilling neighbour for a needle to sew her only torn cloth.²⁵ During muslim rule, a remarkable degree of prosperity could be observed. Gold and silver coins were abundantly in circulation. In average people were better off. An examination of the contemporary Bengali literature will reveal a glorious picture of that period. Rich and well-to-do people used to keep many servants and attendants. The *Manasamangal* of Vipradas (15th century) gives us this picture :

করীয়া তাম্বুল খায়, কতুয়া চন্দন খায়,
করু ফলে খোজিয়ায়, কোল কোরক চায় চন্দন।

"The servant often prepares sweet-scented betel-leaf (*Pan*) and applies perfumes of musks and Sandals on her body. One attendant massages

21. Muhammad Shahidullah—*Buddhist Mystic Songs*, Dacca, Bangla Academy, 1966, 2nd edn. P. 30.

22. *Ibid*, P. 4.

23. *Ibid*, P. 93.

24. Ahmad Sharif, *Madhyajuger Sahitye Samaj O Sangskritir Rup*, Dacca, Muk-tadhara, April 1977, P. 45. 46.

25. Sukumar Sen, *Prachin Bangla O Bangali*, Calcutta, Vishvabharati Grantha-laya, 1353, B. S., P. 57.

her legs, the other indulges in flatteries and another is engaged in waving the fan to give her relief in hot summer days.²⁶"

(Vipradas, *Manasamangal*, (17th century)
In aristocratic societies, the lady of the house did not herself cook. She used to keep many helpers and cooks. In *Chandimangal* (16th century), of Mukundaram, there is reference to a rich lady busy in tasting the curries, while the slave-girl cooks ('*নি গৃহীতী খাদ্য চাষ*')—In entertaining guests, people were generous. In one text²⁷, we find that about fifty curries were prepared for few persons '*একটি বাতায় এক গজা*'. People spent extravagantly in marriage ceremonies too. Those people who spent unnecessarily in the marriage ceremony of a daughter or a son were condemned in *Chaitanya Bhagavat*²⁸ ('*এক নই এক কাম, গৃহীত চাষ*').

The economic life of the middle class or the working people was not easy going. For economic security, they used to live in joint families. In *Malua*, a Myrmensingh Ballad, we find five brothers and their wives living a very happy joint-family life²⁹. In *Krishnakirtan*³⁰, the mother-in-law was hostile ('*কর খাতি*') but in *Chandimangal*, both the father-in-law and mother-in-law of Fullara were very loving. Fullara goes to the market herself and sells meat, thus contributing to the earnings of the family³¹. Radha, accompanied by her nurse, used to go to the market to sell milk and milk-products³².

Contemporary literature also show that the cost of living was very low. *Chandikavya* of Dwiza Madhab (16th Century) gives the following account of expenditure incurred in celebrating the marriage of an ordinary person:³³

26. Vipradas, *Manasamangal*, (ed.). Sukamar Sen, Calcutta; Asiatic Society, 1953 P. 66.

27. Jayananda, *Chaitanya Mangal* (ed.), Biman Bihari Majumdar & Sukhamay Mukhopadhyaya. Calcutta; Asiatic Society, 1971, P. 64-65.

28. Vrindaban Das; *Chaitanya Bhagabat*: Pt. by D. C. Sen, Banga-Bhasa O Sahitya. Calcutta; University of Calcutta, 6th. edn. 1927, P. 323.

29. D. C. Sen, *Matimansingha Gitika*, Vol. No. 1. Pt. II, *Op. Cit.* P. 59.

30. Badu Chandidas, *Shri Krishna Kirtan*, (ed.) Basanta Ranjan Roy Vidyadval-lab, Calcutta; Vangiya Sahitya Parishat, 6th edn., B. S. 1364, P. 99.

31. Mukundaram, *Kabikanakan Chandi*, Vol. No. 1, (ed.) Kshudiram Das, Calcutta; B. Chand & Sons, 1977, P. 104.

32. Badu Chandidas, *Shri-Krishna Kirtan, Op. Cit.* P. 13.

33. Dwija Madhab, *Mangal Chandir Geet*, (ed.) Sudhi-Bhushan Bhattacharya, Calcutta; University of Calcutta, 2nd. edn. 1965, P. 42.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 2 pieces of small cloth | — | 20 cowries |
| Pan (betel leaf) | — | 4 " |
| Khayer (katha) | — | 4 " |
| Lime | — | 2 " |
| Vermillion | — | 4 " |
| Khuna (ordinary Saree) | — | 18 " |
| (8,000 cowries amounted to one rupee) | | Total— 52 cowries |

Agriculture was always the principal occupation in Bengal. In old Bengali literature, we not only find the details of cultivation but also so many traditional aphorisms, current through the ages, embodying the agricultural wisdom of people.³⁴

(a) "চাউ খান, ছাউ খান।"

"The paddy thrives in the sun and the betelleaf in the shade (Khana —C. 10th Century)."

(b) "দুই চাউ খান, দুই চাউ খান।"

"দুই চাউ খান, দুই চাউ খান।"

"If the paddy plant gets sun-shine by day and showers by night, it grows rapidly;" (Khana, C. 10th Century).

Women also actively participated in agricultural production, specially in the act of husking rice. *Dhenki* or the rice-husking pedal was once considered as an indispensable domestic implement.

"খানি খানি খানি খানি।"

"খানি খানি খানি খানি।"

"The housewife who has no dhenki in her house is branded as forsaken by luck (Aphorism of 'Dak' C. 10th Century).

Women also took part in producing vegetable and fruits within their compound :

"গোবর্গে গাছ গাছ গাছ।"

"গাছ গাছ গাছ গাছ গাছ।"

34. Aphorism of Khana & Dak; Cf. by T. C. Das Gupta; *Aspects of Bengali Society*. Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1935; P. 222.
35. Sheikh Faizullah, *Goraksha-Vijay*, (ed.) Abdul Karim Sahitya-Visharad, Calcutta; Vangiya Sahitya Parishad, B. S. 1325, P. 264.

"Everybody wears cloth made of Jute-silk. Every roof is decorated with gold-like pumpkins."

(Sheikh Faizullah, 16th Century).²⁵ Every village was self-sufficient. In Mukundaram's *Chandimangal* (16th Century) we find a growing village inhabited by the people of various professions. The village had everything essential for a decent livelihood. The author listed the following professions in his work.

Tanti or *Jola* (weaver), *Tambuli* or *Barui* (Pan or betel-leaf sellers and growers), *Goala* (dairy-producer), *Khatibs* of *Maktab* (teacher of Muslim religious institution), *Tol-Pandi* of *Pathala* (Hindu teachers of primary level), *Mudi* (shop-keeper or grocers), *Malakar* (garland maker), *Kamar* (Blacksmith), *Bene* (Gold & silver-ornament-maker), *Jele* (Fisher-men), *Ganak* (Astrologer & fortune-teller), *Kabiraj* (Physician using herbal medicine or the follower of Ayurvedic System of treatment), *Teli* (oil-seed crushers), *Siali* (maker of molasses from date juice) *Dhoba* (Washer-man), *Mukeri* (The Carter), *Pihari* (the rice-cake maker), *Kabri* (the fish monger), *Tirkhan* (the maker of war-weapons), *Chutar* (the carpenter), *Kagozi* (the paper-maker), *Kalandar* (the conjurer or juggler of animals like tiger and bear), *Maulana* (the performers of marriage functions of Muslim society), *Kamrui* the colour manufacturer or dyers, etc.²⁶ There were some professions in the village in which every member of the family used to take part jointly. Most of the trades and professions were carried on through generations.

It is said that, "by the time Bengal adopted the Aryan culture, numerous castes and sub-castes had been evolved, mainly by the development of different arts, crafts and professions, but partly also for other reasons, and tribal, racial and religious factors were at work in gradually adding to their number."²⁷ *Brihadharma Puran* (c. 13-14th century) classifies the non-Brahmin population described commonly as *Sudras* into 41 castes according to their vocations. In these sections of the Hindu Society, division and distribution of labour were largely practised. The mode of life of women, naturally, depended much upon the caste or class she belonged to.

MARRIAGE

In ancient Bengal, the lover and the beloved had to meet each other secretly, as pre-marital love was not accepted custom in the society. Wo-

was once condemned by the orthodox Hindu society which did not allow inter-caste marriage among them. Chandidas has to suffer expulsion from his own caste. The orthodox Brahmin society, however, advised him to entertain all his neighbours and relatives in a grand feast, spending a lot of money, for his *suddhi* (expiation).⁴²

As a consequence of the caste system, infant marriage became common in old Begali society, especially in that of the Hindus. Kalketu of "Chandimangal" (16th Century) married Fullara at the age of ten.⁴³ When Gupichand attained the age of twelve, his royal father (King Mani-kahandra) thought to settle his son's marriage.

(ସଦ୍‌ମା ଦୁଇଜଣ ସମ୍ଭାଷଣ ବେଳାରେ / ଶିଶୁରୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି)⁴⁴

It was also the custom in the Muslim society to have the boys or girls married at an early age. The father of Majnu, the hero of Daulat Uzir Bahram Khan's *Laili Majnu*, proposed his son's marriage with Laili, even when they have not completed the primary education.⁴⁵ On the average, people were generally monogamous. Mainly, rich husbands tended to be polygamous. We have seen in a popular folk-rhyme, an interesting picture of a polygamous family.⁴⁶

ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି
 ଶିଶୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି
 ଶିଶୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି
 ଶିଶୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି

"Pitapat drops the rain and the river is in flood,
 Shiva Thakur marries three wives,
 One wife cooks and serves, the other only eats,

Whereas the third one angrily goes to her father's home.
 Every woman, however, disliked her rival known as 'Satin'--the other wife or wives of her husband, irrespective of her aristocracy or low birth. When the relation between the co-wives is bitter, one even wishes,

42. D. C. Sen, *Bangla Bhasa O Sahitya, Op. Cit.* P.200.

43. Mukundaram, *Chandimangal*, (ed.) S. K. Sen, New Delhi; Sahitya Academy, 1975, P. 42.

44. Shukur Mahmad, *Gupichandrer Sannyas*, (ed.) A. K. M. Zakaria, Dacca; Bangla Academy, 1974, P. 5.

45. Daulat Uzir Bahram Khan, *Laili Majnu*, (ed.) Ahmad Sharif, Dacca; Bangla Academy, 2nd edn. 1966, P-66.

46. Quoted by Rabindranath Tagore, *Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. VI. Calcutta; Bishva Bharati, B. S. 1347 P. 583-4.

in a traditional folk-rhyme, to dye her feet with the blood of 'Satin' or the other co-wife (*যাও বোম্ব দমক ফা / সতীনা তেউঁ আনতা যাও*) 47
 Sometimes one had to compromise with the situation. Lalmati, in Abdul Hakim's (17th century) *Lalmati o Saiful Mulk* had her own logic. To her husband she said :

তোমা বন্ধুত্ব হৈএ ঘোড়ত্ব বান্ধব ।
 যদি বা সতীনা মরক যেনে ক্ষেপে গাও ॥

Though it hurts me to think of *Satin*.

But, one who is dear to you, must be dear to me. 48
 And she also said to her co-wife (*.Satin*) :

তঁয়া আঁখি হুই গৈয়ে এক বঁশ্যবান ।
 সতীনা যে হুই এক বঁশ্য ফাও ॥

We are but twin flowers in the garden.

God created both of us for only one bee. 49

One of the reasons that lay behind polygamy was abundance in agricultural produce. When a farmer had a big establishment, a wife found it impossible to manage the house-hold activities and the husking, grinding, cleaning and storing of the crops single handed. In order to make all these activities smoothly manageable, a big farmer increased the number of the members of his family by marrying more than once. The latter wives were not generally chosen from such a family as that of the first wife. They belonged to families of a lower class or classes. Their children did not enjoy the same social status as that of the children of the first wife. Kailash Chandra Sinha, the author of '*Rajmala*'⁵⁰ describes such inferior children of the rich's second wife who lived in the districts of Comilla and Noakhali, as *Krishna-Pakha* (of the darker side). The children of the first wife were called *Shukla-Pakha* (of the brighter side). These children, who were not accepted by the society, had to acquire their status and recognition through education and accumulation of property.

The dowry system was in vogue in the past in almost all the parts of Bengal. The dowry or the marriage-Money was called as *Pan* ('পান') in

47. Ashutosh Bhattacharya, *Banglar Lok-Sahitya*, Vol. I, Calcutta ; Calcutta Book House, 3rd edn, 1962, P. 185.
48. Abdul Hakim, *Lalmati Saiful Mulk* (Manuscript), Varendra Research Museum, Collection, No. 18, P. 210.
49. *Ibid*, P. 218.
50. Kailash Chandra Sinha—*Rajmala*, Comilla ; Jogesh chandra Sinha, 1897, P. 473-74.

Bengali. Etymologically, it means⁵¹ price (of the bride or bridegroom). When the recipient was the bride. It was called as *Kanya-Pan* and when the recipient was the bridegroom, it was *bar-pan*. The dowry varied according to the beauty, aristocracy and accomplishment of the bride or the bridegroom. Bargaining was also in practice for reducing the amount of dowry. Here, in the following extract, and we find that the bride receives

“এক বিয়া কবি তৈয়া যাও ঘর

সদায়ায় দিব কাণা আন গিয়া বর ॥

একা আনি ধরকতু করে ছাড়াই ।

বিয়ায় কবিয়া কর কয় লড়াই করি ॥

যেই কেতু বনে গয়া কবি পরানি ।

দুইখান খুঁজিয়া গোটা খাটী দিয়া তেঁও বঁচি করি ॥

ধরকতু বনে গয়া কবি পরানি ।

একখানা খুঁজিয়া দিয়া করি শেষ বঁচি ।

“First settle the matter about the dowry and then leave for your home. Surely I shall give my daughter, fetch the bridegroom.” On hearing this, Dharmakem (bridegroom’s father) said quickly, “Tell me finally how many Kowries do you want?” Push pakem (bride’s father) replied, “Dear friend, my bargain is that you will give two pieces of saree and 260 Kowries.” Dharmakem said, “My friend, my bargain is one piece of saree and 180 Kowries.”

(Dwijia Madhab—*Mangal Chandir Geet*, 17th century).

Even the people of the lower classes, or the poor, who had no property or asset were bound to give dowries. Thus, we find in the *Shivayan*⁵², the poor father of the bride had nothing but five myrobalsans to present to the bridegroom :

“সব এক বর বানিতে লজা পড়ে ।

আনি যে দিবে কিছু দিতে খাজি পাড়ে,

কাণা গাউ দিব এক হস্তিকী দিয়া..... ॥”

51. Jnanendra Mohan Das—*Bangala Abhidhan*—Vol. II, Calcutta : Indian Publishing House, 2nd edn., 1937, P. 1257.
52. Dwija Madhab, *Mangal Chandir Geet*, (ed.) S. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1965, P. 42.
53. Rameshwar, *Shivayan*, Op. Cit., P. 52.

"The father of a bride says, 'I am very much ashamed of telling one thing that I am penniless. I have nothing but five myrobals to present at the time of my beloved daughter's wedding'."

Here, the recipient of the dowry was the bridegroom. In the Hindu society system of *Joutuk* or gifts was also in practice. This was usually given to the son-in-law or to the newly-married couple. Kalketu, the hunter, in *Chandimangal* (16th century) received a useful gift ⁵⁴ from his father-in-law. It was a bow with three sharp arrows (কৌশল ত্রিশূল দ্বারা).

Hindu law of inheritance recognised the daughter's right to parental property. Thus the system of presentation in the form of money, dresses, furniture, landed property or gold and silver jewellery prevailed. Kings and rich persons celebrated the marriage ceremony with pomp and pageantry. They were also used to present attractive gifts or *joutuk* to their son-in-laws. In *Gupichandrer Samnyas* (17th century) ⁵⁵, we find that Gupichandra received many attractive presentations from his three father-in-laws. One father-in-law offered him a beautiful elephant (কাজীরা ফরাহা) and the other presented him gold, silver, fine silk dresses and a golden houseboat. The third father-in-law, King Harishchandra, presented him *Padma*, the younger sister of the bride *Aduna*, as a gift (কৌশল ত্রিশূল দ্বারা) who however, for all intents and purposes became Gupichandra's wife. ⁵⁶

The system of marriage was to some extent different in the Muslim society. Here, the father of the bride did not usually commit any dowries. On the contrary, the bridegroom or his parents had to assure a sum of money to the bride at the time of marriage and it was known as *Mohrman*. System of *Joutuk* or presentation of gifts was also in practice in the Muslim society. This is reflected in the Muslim Bengali literature of the medieval period. Saiful Mulk the hero of Abdul Hakim's *Lalmati Saiful Mulk* (17th century), received horses, elephants, jewelries, camels, cows, gold, and silver ornaments, hoots etc. as '*Joutuk*'. ⁵⁷

The position of Hindu widows was very deplorable in the medieval period. They were not allowed to remarry and had to practice various austerities. But Muslim women could marry again if she wanted it. In *Vijaygupta's Manasamangal* (17th century) we find :

54. Mukundaram, *Chandi Mangal* (Kalketu Upakhyan), (ed.), M.A. Hai and A. Pasha Op. Cit. P. 42.
55. Shukur Mahmud, *Gupichandrer Samnyas*, Op. Cit. P. 14.
56. *Ibid*, P. 15.
57. Abdul Hakim, *Lalmati Saiful Mulk* (MS) Op. Cit., P. 185.

"গায়ে কাশ্মি ভা বিবাহিত য়।
 বড় দিয়া আশ্রিত তখন জোলাই য় ॥
 বড়ী বনে জাগো বি কো কাম জা।
 যাইলে জাগাই তেঁ গাি জা য় ॥
 "The mother of the weaver girl consoles her just-widowed daughter saying, you should not cry, my dear child, we can get you another husband, if you desire."⁵⁸
 Divorce was probably in vogue among Muslims only. In a famous historical ballad, we find a very painful end of a love-epic at the sudden news of the divorce :

"তাক গায়া গায়ে বিবি যোড়াই গায়ে।
 গায়েত রসিত যো বিবি গায়ে ॥

"She read the divorce-letter while on horse-back,
 A snake seemed to have bitten her on the forehead."⁵⁹

(Dewan Firoz Shah, *My mensingh ballad*,
 17th or 18th century.)

Although there is a scarcity of materials throwing light on the way of life of the common women of ancient times, our search for them can however continue. The present paper about the women in the past, is not a whole and complete one. It is however, hoped that it will uncover many facts concerning the life of women in the past and also that it will be an important record of the nature, activities and life of Bengali women in the past.

A lot of manuscripts are waiting in the libraries to be edited as specimens of the rich literature of the past and made available to readers both general and literary minded. We, the readers of Bengali poetry, are waiting eagerly for the interesting revelations the old texts are likely to make. We hope to find out more facts about the livelihood of the women of the past, their dreams, joys and sorrows, from these.

58. Vilay Gupta, *Manasamangal*, (ed.), B. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, Bani Niketan, (No. date), P. 60.
 59. Quoted by D. C. Sen., *Prachin Bangla Sahitye Musalmaner Abadan*, Dacca, Mukhdum Library and Ahsanullah Book House Ltd., 1840, P. 140.

Beginning of English Education in Rajshahi Town :

A Case Study of Boalia School, 1828-1872*

Md. Nurun Nabi

For various reasons, institutions for the spread of English education began to be established in and around Calcutta through the efforts of the British missionaries as well as through private enterprise. When the benefit of English education became obvious, institutions along similar lines began to be established in the outlying areas. The Boalia school in Rajshahi Town is an example of such an institution. It was established in the year 1828 at the initiative of some public spirited persons and by local subscriptions realised from the European and local citizens of the district. The school started with great enthusiasm, but it had a rough sailing. The school ceased to function after only two years of its establishment due partly to the waning of interest of some of the benefactors and partly to the fact that some of the supporters among the officials left Rajshahi. One of the bungalows was sold to pay the debts, and the other had a mortgage on it at 200 rupees. ¹

The school building was admirably located in an open space about a quarter mile away from the river Padma. The principal market, habitations of the local people, and the residences of the European gentry were all located within the circle of a mile or half in the eastward and westward. The Headmaster had a Bungalow contiguous to the school but the other masters resided in the town as there was no accommodation facility within the campus.

"The School house is a matted thatch roofed Bungalow with an open verandah about 6 feet wide all round, the Bungalow has four door ways, and is well lighted and ventilated by open lattice work all-round.

This school consists of only one long Room about 54 feet in length, and 20 in breadth, with an open verandah all round. ²

*This is an extract of the 3rd Chapter of my M. Phil. dissertation entitled *Development of Modern and Traditional Education in Rajshahi Town—A Study of the Role of Rajshahi College and Rajshahi Madrasah, 1873 - 1920*. (Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University. 1979).

1. See *General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for the year 1836*. (Calcutta : Printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Circular Road, 1837). P. 149. (Referred to hereafter as D. P. I. Report).

2. D. P. I. *Report for the year 1840-41, 41-42*. (Calcutta : G. H. Huttman, Printed by William Rushon and Co. 1842), P. 198.

As regards the enlargement of the school building, the Governor-in-Council sanctioned a grant of 300 rupees and suggested the utilization of the services of the local prisoners in making and conveying bricks and the realisation of subscription from the local people.³

Though William Adam in his second Report wrongly observed that the school was established in July, 1833, he gave valuable information about the institution. When he visited the school in the middle of July, 1835, he found it in a decaying condition the obvious reason of which, according to him, was 'the want of superintendence'. Adam maintained that the school was in operation when he had entered the district, but for want of funds, it was suspended later on. He remarked: "Although the school does not now exist, its revival may be hoped for,....."⁴ Adam was hopeful of the prospect of this school, and he approached the Government for its revival. Adam recommended the revival of the school on two grounds.⁵

Adam's recommendation was made at a time when steps were being taken to spread English education in the districts. The Resolution of the Governor-General in Council on March 7, 1835 was an expression of this decision. In pursuance of that policy the government took up the Boalia school and appointed Sharada Prasad Basu as the Head Master. The Government paid off the mortgage on the condition that the bungalow would be considered as the property of the government. The Local Committee, however, did not recede into the background. They also appointed a teacher of Vernacular language at their own expense, [of their own contributions.] When the school was taken up by the Government, the number of pupils receiving instructions at that time was 98. But the quarterly report of the Committee of the school revealed that the number of students was 90 Hindus, two Mohammedans and one Christian i. e., 93 in all at the end of the year of 1836.⁶

Adam reported that there were three teachers: one for English who received eighty rupees and an assistant teacher who received twenty rupees and a teacher for Bengali who received eight rupees. The proportion of

3: *Ibid.*, P. 196.
4. William Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal* (1835 & 1838). Ed. by Anath Nath Basu, (Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1941), P. 184.

5. The first is that throughout the district there is not at this moment a single institution of education of European origin. The second is that a school house and a teacher's house already exist and would be immediately made over to the Committee if a school were to be established. Whereas if not occupied, they will fall into disrepair and ruin; and the same expense will be necessary at some future time." *Adam's Second Report*, P. 186.

6. D. P. I. *Report for the year 1836*, (Calcutta; Printed at the Baptist Mission Press, 1837), P. 150.

teacher and students was 1 : 31 which was quite insufficient for the pro- per training and guidance of the students. The total expenditure of the school per month amounted to Rs. 120 including the expenses for books, pens, paper, ink and sweeper. All these expenditures were met from the subscriptions which never amounted to more than one hundred and thirty eight rupees. But with the decline in subscriptions, the condition of the school deteriorated. At last, the subscription came down to eighty-six rupees which also was not regularly realised. The subscriptions were mainly drawn from public functionaries, indigo-planters, Zaminders, and local officers of the courts, christians and non-christians in almost equal proportions.⁷

As for the supply of books, the Head Master suggested that the poor pupils should be provided with books free of cost either by the General or Local Committee while the students whose parents were solvent were to pay for them. The Head Master's survey revealed that about 50 percent of the students were able to purchase books. There was also difficulty in procuring books as the School Book Society did not have a depot in Rajshahi. The Head Master or the guardians had to buy books from other big towns. This caused delay in the instruction.⁸

The school hour was from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. but when it did not serve the purpose well the Head Master extended it by one hour more for the betterment of the students.⁹ The entire school was divided into eight classes beginning from Class I to Class VIII. Again, their was sub- division of classes particularly in the lower classes when the pressure of students became acute.¹⁰

In accordance with the Inspector's proposal, the Secretary of the Local Committee of Public Instruction submitted an estimated plan of Rs. 7671-6-1 to the Government of Bengal on 10th May 1848 for the construction of a new school building capable of accommodating 200 boys. In this connection, a sum of Rs. 2260 was realised from the local inhabitants and a sum of Rs. 3164-9-8½ was deposited in the Collectorate in June 1845. Upto 11th September 1848, the total collection amounted to Rs.

7. *Adam's Second Report*, P. 185.
8. *D. P. J. Report for the year*, 1836 (Calcutta : printed at the Baptist Mission Press, 1837), P. 150.
9. See Head Master's letter to the Secretary of the Local Committee of Public In- struction, Boalia dated 4th November, 1850 in the *School Annual Report for the year* 1850.
10. *D. P. J. Report for the years 1840-41, 1841-42* Calcutta : G. H. Huttman, printed by William Rushon and Co. 1842). P. 195.

11. This information is based on a letter dated 11th Sept 1848 from T. W. Wilson, Secretary of the Boalia school addressed to the under Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal See *Boalia School copies of Correspondence from July 15th 1844 to February 5th 1852* (Ma- nuscript, Rajshahi College Record Room).

5982-9-52.¹¹ The bulk of the amount was contributed by two local zamindars of repute. "Baboo Prosonath Rae of Digbapathia gave 1,000 Rs. and the Rajah of Natore Anundonath Rae gave 500 Rs."¹² The zamindar of Puteah made a contribution of Rs. 5,751 for the construction of the school building.¹³ The best site for the new school building was selected in the old school campus. The brick-built school house was completed in 1849 by subscriptions¹⁴ and it was occupied in January 1850. The Head Master C. Ridge reported to the Secretary L. C. P. L. about the new building "..... it is very commodious, fairly and well adapted for the purposes of the school—one room is set apart for the Library—there are two classes consisting of merely 40 boys in the large hall—the other 3 rooms have each a class in them—the building is very dry and has on the whole an improving appearance."¹⁵ Principal Harrison of Berhampore College in his Inspection Report of 1854 said: "The School house is very convenient and admirably situated, is in good repair, and has a play-ground round it, in which I saw the boys enjoying a running swing and playing as one might think only boys in England could play."¹⁶ Owing to the encroachment of the river Padma, the school building was in danger of being washed away. The Local Committee of Public Instruction demolished the school building in August 1857 and the materials of the building were taken charge of by the official Magistrate, C. E. Chapman.¹⁷ In consequence of this unusual circumstance, the classes were shifted to a bungalow of a very influential and wealthy man of the town. However, it was not sufficient for accommodating the students and consequently the school was closed down from September to October and also due to the *Dusserah Pujah*.¹⁸ The Inspector of Schools, Lodge, in his report of 1858-59 remarked that ".....the students have been collected together with great inconvenience sometimes in hired bungalows, and sometimes in godowns lent for the purpose by gentlemen at the station; and at present, as the only place available they assemble in

12, See letter from C. Ridge. Head Master of Boalia School dated 7th February 1850 addressed to the Secretary L. C. P. L. Boalia, *ibid*.
 13, See D. P. I. Report for the year 1861-62 (Calcutta: Printed by P. M. Croncubung, Military Orphan Press, 1860), P. 310.
 14, See D. P. I. Report for the year 1858-59 (Calcutta: printed by P. M. Croncuburg, Military Orphan Press, 1860), P. 310.
 15, See letter to the Secretary L. C. P. L., Boalia from the Head Master dated 7th February, 1850.
 16, See D. P. I. Report for the year 1852-55 (Calcutta: "Calcutta Gazette" Office, 1855), P. 303.
 17, See D. P. I. Report for the year 1858-59 (Op. Cit., P. 310).
 18, See D. P. I. Report for the year 1857-58 (Date, year and place of publication missing), PP. 298 - 301.

the circuit house.²⁰ This seriously arrested the progress of education of the boys. Such instable condition of the school made the Government enhance the rate of her grant at the rate of 230 per month. Moreover, the zamindar of Puteah Rajah Jogendra Nath made a handsome contribution of Rupees 5751/- for the construction of a school building during the years 1860-61.²¹ In this time of difficulty the public did not come forward with contributions as they had done before, mainly because of their feeling that being a Government school, it was the duty of the Government to maintain and run it. However, the construction work of the school building was accomplished in the year 1862 with the amount partly contributed by the Rajas, partly by the Government and partly from the surplus amount of tuition fees realised from the pupils in different years, But this new building was enclosed, low and damp during the rainy season. In the same year, attempts were made to raise the lands and to erect a *ghat* to the north of the tank and for enclosing the school compound with wooden railing or pucca foundation. The Committee expressed its gratefulness to Rani Sarat Sundari Devi of Puteah for contributing Rs. 3200/- for the execution of the above work. She was the wife of Raja Jogendra Narayan Ray. She also had contributed a sum of Rs. 5751/- for the erection of the school building in the year 1862.²¹

A. LOCAL COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The Local Committee of Public Instruction was created as a subordinate body of the General Committee of Public Instruction. It was empowered to exercise its control over the places where colleges and schools were situated at a distance from Calcutta. The General Committee only exercised its district control over the institutions of Calcutta and Hooghly. The Local Committees were composed of Europeans and local inhabitants who were appointed by Government duly recommended by the General Committee. Each Committee had a Secretary from among its members, but where there was a Collegiate Institution, the Principal assumed the post of Secretary *ex-officio*.

19. See D. P. I. Report for the year 1861-62 (Calcutta : printed at the Baptist Mission Press, 1863), P. 154.
20. See D. P. I. Report for the year 1860-61 (Calcutta : printed at the Bengal Military Orphan Press, 1862) P. 87.
21. See Letter No. 3 despatched to the Inspector of Schools, N. E. Denison, Cllinsurah, dated, Boalia, 8th April 1870 preserved in Letter Book, Boalia School from 1867—March 1872 (Manuscript, Rajshahi College Record Room).

The funds were controlled by the Secretary subject to the general supervision of the Local Committee. The funds consisted of public donations, subscriptions and tuition fees of the students. ²² The Local Committees were to meet once a month and often if necessary for the transaction of business.

The Principal functions of the Local Committees were to carry into effect the orders of the General Committee, to regulate and control the principals and masters besides their appointment and removal, to suggest improvements and correct abuses, to encourage local subscriptions and donations, to visit the college or school and to write a Memorandum of their visit in a book stating their opinion as to the changes and improvements of the institutions, a copy of which was to be forwarded for the information of the General Committee. The Memorandum was to consist of information relating to English and Vernacular classes. In addition to that the Committee had to admit and expel the pupils of the Institution under Rules 39 and 47; to superintend and assist at all examinations for prizes, scholarships; to sanction leave of the professors and masters less than a month and in case of a month, the approval of the General Committee was needed but in urgent cases, the Local Committee could sanction a months' leave, reporting it to the General Committee and forwarding a sick certificate; to forward a half-yearly Report on behalf of the Principals and Head Masters under Rules 13 and 28, with their remarks; to forward Annual Reports of the condition of the buildings. Requisition of books and stationaries was also to be forwarded by the committee. ²³ The members of the LCPI of Boalia school had all along been Government officials-

B. TEACHING STAFF

The first man who got recognition as teacher of this town and of Boalia school was Sharada Prasad Bose who made great contribution towards the spread of modern education in Rajshahi. He joined the school as the Head Master when its condition was far from encouraging. The reason for his selection by the Government is not known to us but he must have had administrative experience in the past to which the English officers of this town might have laid emphasis and recommended his case. The second man to join the school was Prosonocomar Sen as the Head Pundit on 14th May 1838. On 13th November, 1838 Baboo

22. D. P. I. Report for the year 1847-48 (Calcutta : W. Ridsdale, Military Orphan Press, M. D. CCCL VIII), P. CLXXXII.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. CLXXXIII - CLXXXIV.

Sibchunder Goose was appointed as officiating second Master. The 3rd Master whose name is not known to us joined his new assignment on July 1, 1839.²⁴ Possibly he was Rudra Kanta Lahiri whose name appeared in the list on 30th April 1844. On 30th April 1844 the name of Kailas Chandra Bidyandhi was found in the list as Head Pundit. In the same year the post of a second Pundit was created and filled up by Shiva Prasad Sanyal. In 1844, the school experienced an irreparable loss in the death of the Head Master whose long service of eight years saved the school from possible extinction and greatly raised the standard of the school in spite of many limitations. "The Committee took occasion to record their sense of the importance of his services, and of the ability and sound discretion, as well as of the peculiar talent for imparting knowledge to his pupils which distinguished him during the long and uninterrupted period of his incumbency."²⁵ He was succeeded by C. Ridge, and the second mastership was conferred on Baboo Thakordas Chakerberty. This was for the first time that to the teaching staff was added a European who took up the responsibility of instructing the non-Europeans. What was the reaction amongst the teachers, students and guardians at large was not recorded. Besides Thakordas Chakerberty, Kunjal Banerjee was added to the staff as the officiating 3rd teacher and so also Brojo Sundar Maitra as the 4th master and Ambika Churn Turkbagis as the second Pundit. Only Kailas Chunder Bedyandhi was retained in his post.²⁶

The Head Master C. Ridge died in 1850. On his death, the second teacher Huro Gobind Sen was appointed in his place. The Secretary of the school, in forwarding his application, praised him as a good teacher. As a result of the vacuum created by the promotion of Huro Gobind Sen certain changes in the teaching staff occurred,²⁷

After the death of C. Ridge, the local authorities decided that ".... every master should take charge of the class immediately above that which he had previously taught, and the fifth mastership be filled up by an officiating teacher".²⁸

24. D. P. I. Report for the years 1840 - 41 & 1841 - 42 (Calcutta : printed by William Rushon & Co. 1842), P. 193.
25. D. P. I. Report for the year 1844 - 45 (Calcutta : printed by Sanders and Cones No. 4, Tank Square 1845), P. 151.
26. D. P. I. Report for the year 1844 - 45. op. cit., P. 151.
27. See letter No. 32 addressed to the F. I. Mount Esq. M. D. Secretary to the Council of Education in Correspondence 1844 - 1852 (Manuscript).
28. D. P. I. Report for the year 1850 - 51 (Date, year and place of publication missing).

TABLE 3

Proportion of Local and Out-of-District Student in 1871.

| | 1st class | 2nd class | 3rd class | 4th class | 5th class | 6th class | 7th class | 8th class | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| No. of students from Rajshahi | 9 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 11 | 2 | 8 | 15 | 75 |
| Out of district | 16 | 12 | 16 | 22 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 2 | 101 |
| Grand Total : | | | | | | | | | 175 |

D. COURSES OF STUDIES

The course of Bengali learning consisted of reading and writing in Bengali and accounts in the local way ; and that of the English scholars consisted of reading, spelling, writing and translation from English to Bengali. They further studied the simplest rules of grammar and arithmetic. They were moreover imparted some knowledge of geography and astronomy. The highest class studied English History, Ancient History and Introduction to Natural Philosophy.

Course of Study for Boalia Zilla School 1871.³³

1st Class

Entrance Course

Byakaran Kumudi

2nd Class

Entrance Course for the year following

Grammar'—Hiley's

Marshman's *India*, Part I, and

Collin's *British Empire*.

Geography—Cornwell's, and map drawing.

Translation from English to Bengali

and Bengali to English.

Geometry

Algebra

Arithmetic

Mathematics

33. Letter No. 14 from the Head Master, Boalia Govt. School to the Inspector of Schools N. E. Division dated 24th June 1871. *Correspondence of 1867-72* (Manuscript).

Byakaran Kumudi, Part II & Part III

Rijupath, Part III

Bengali Composition.

3rd Class

Selection from poetical Reader No. III

Robinson Crusoe, or Goldsmith's

Citizen of the World

Grammar—Hiley's

Translation from English to Bengali & Bengali
to English

Marshman's *India* Part I

} Hindu and Muhammadan
period

Geography—Cornwell's & map drawing,

Arithmetic

Algebra

} Mathematics

Geometry

Byakaran Kumudi—Part I

Rijupath—Part II

Bengali Composition,

4th Class

Mural Class Work

Poetical Reader No. II

Grammar—Hiley's Abridged Translation from English
to Bengali & Bengali to English.

Diction—English to Bengali

History—Peter Parley's *Universal History*

Geography—Primary & map drawing

Arithmetic—Vulgar & Divisional Fractions, Ratio & pro-
portion.

Geometry Book—I

Rijupath—Part I

Upakramanika

Bengali Composition

Handwriting

5th Class

4th Book Reading

Grammar—Hiley's abridged (including parsing)

Translation of easy sentence from English to Bengali &
Bengali to English.

Dictation and Handwriting

Peter Parley's *Universal History*

Geography primary & map drawing

Arithmetic—Vulgar Fractions, mental arithmetic.

Upakramanika

Bengali—Oaitehasik Upannash, Podda Path—Part III

6th Class

Rudiments of knowledge

Beginner's Grammar including parsing

Translation from English to Bengali and Bengali to

English

Dictation and Handwriting

Geography from map and map drawing

Arithmetic—simple & com. Rule & Reduction and mental arithmetic.

Bengali—*Sarir Palan, Kabita - Kusumandoli.*

Shisubodh Byakaran Loharam.

7th Class

Reader No. 1

Grammar—Beginner's Grammar & Drally

Translation from English to Bengali & Bengali to English

Dictation in English & Bengali

Handwriting

Arithmetic—Simple Divisions & mental arithmetic

Bengali—

Byakaran Moukhik—Akhyan Manjuri

8th Class

First Book of Reading

Writing Bengali from Dictation

Arithmetic—Rotation, addition, Multiplication

Part I, II

Satkari Datta

Shisu Shikha Part III

Bodhoday.

F. AWARDS AND PRIZES

The idea of awarding prizes to the boys of this school was conceived by the Committee in 1841. The Committee adopted such an idea owing to the sorry performance of the boys in English composition and the knowledge of History. The Committee suggested that "..... a prize be in future awarded to the scholar who composes the best Essay on a subject to be given at the next Examination....."³⁴

34. D. P. I, Report of 1840 - 41, 1841 - 42 op. cit., p. 196.

The distribution of prizes for the Annual Examination of 1849 was held on the 3rd October 1850 which though scheduled to be held earlier, had been put off due to delay in procuring the books for this purpose on the one hand, and on the other, due to the fact that the officers of the court whose presence was considered desirable were about to leave the station before the scheduled time. The persons who donated in cash or kind for the success of the ceremony were the following : ³⁵

Baboo Lokenath Mitra, a wealthy zamindar gave 30 rupees in books and money ;

A Vakeel (whose name does not appear) gave 10 rupees in books ;

Baboo Aparmund Bagchi, a guardian of one of the boys gave 16 rupees in books ; and Raja Chundro Sekarrasur Rae of Tarrapore contributed 16 rupees in books.

The prize giving ceremony for the sessions 1849—50, and 1850—51 was held in 1851 with great pomp and pageantry. The ceremony was attended by many of the local elites. The prize giving ceremony of 1852 took place in February 1853. Babu Kistender Narayan Ray, zamindar of Bolihar made a generous contribution of Rupees 100 for prizes. The local Committee resolved to devote the amount to the encouragement of regular attendance in school. The other local gentlemen who witnessed the ceremony also made contributions of Rupees 17. ³⁶

The distribution of prizes for 1853—54, occurred in July 1855. The donations for prizes given on this occasion by the zamindars and other gentlemen of the district, amounted to company's Rupees 101, besides a considerable number of books, amounting in value to about company's Rupees 53: ³⁷

35. *Annual Report of 4th November 1850. See Correspondence of 1844 - 52.*

36. *Annual Report of Boalia School session 1850 - 51 Sixteenth year. See Correspondence 1844 - 52.*

37. *See D. P. I, Report from 27th January to 30th April 1855. Op, Cit., p. 190. The following were the contributions.*

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|
| Raja Prosunno Nauth Ray | — | 50 |
| Bhyrubendro Narin Ray | — | 25 |
| Chunder Sekureshur Ray | — | 16 |
| Roy Loke Nauth Maltra | — | 10 |

Total : 101

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----|
| Kour Anand Nauth Ray | | |
| books valued at | — | 40 |
| Baboo Brijoo Coomer Mallick — books | | 10 |
| Baboo Jogo Bundhoo Ray — books— | | 3 |

Rs. 53

The distribution of prizes for the year 1854-55 which had been deferred for an unusually long time was held in January, 1857, simultaneously with that for the year 1855-56. The prizes were bought with contributions from the benefactors. ³⁸

In the year 1868, Koomar Promotha Nath Ray of Dighapatia proposed to the Local Committee of Public Instruction to endow Rs. 100 annually in the form of prize to encourage the boys of this part of the country in the exercise of English composition to be competed for by the students of the districts of Rajshahi, Pabna and Bogra. The Committee highly appreciated the proposal and wrote to the Director of Public Instructions for his approval. The Director in his letter No. 4930 dated the 31st December 1868 suggested that the Promotha Nath prize Examination be held at the Boalia School alone but the Committee apprised the Director that as the Koomar was equally interested in the progress of education in these districts, the examination should be held simultaneously in the Zilla Schools by means of a written test, the question papers of which would be sent to these districts under sealed covers. The Committee also expressed their opinion that the examination might be held in the month of July as the rainy season afforded many facilities of locomotion in these districts. The examiners were to be appointed by the Local Committee of Rajshahi and the pupils were examined in essay and passages for translation. Finally, the Committee appealed to the Director to request the secretaries of the Local Committees of Bogra and Pabna to extend their collaboration, ³⁹

In compliance with his words, the Koomar in the year 1869 offered to the Secretary of the Local Committee Rs. 100 for the prize. But the student who came out first in the Examination declined to receive the money and maintained that a medal would be more appropriate. Mr. Heely suggested that the medal should bear the insignia of the Koomar's family and accordingly the medal contained on one side the Coat of mail of Raja

38. See D. P. I. Report for the year 1856 - 57 (Calcutta ; John Gray, "Calcutta Gazette" Office, 1857), p. 377.

25 Rs. by L. S. Jackson, Esq. C. S. for Bengali Essay writing.

10 Rs. by Babu Panchanan Banerjee

10 Rs. by Babu Tariny Churn Mukherjee

Both for Bengali Essay writing.

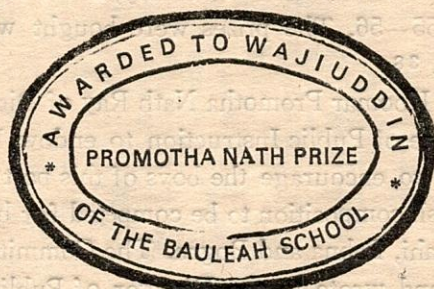
50 Rs. Kumar Anund Nath Mukharjee

as prizes for proficiency in Literature,

to be awarded in the several classes.

39. Letter No. 44 and No. 6. See *Correspondence of 1867-68*. (Manuscript, Rajshahi College Record Room).

Promotha Nath Ray and on the other had the following inscription. ⁴⁰



A special examination was held in July of 1869 simultaneously at Rajshahi, Pabna and Bogra and the candidates were examined by W.L. Heely, Collector and Magistrate of Rajshahi and by the Secretary himself who after a careful examination declared one Wajiuddin, a student of Boalia School as the winner of the prize. ⁴¹

In 1870 W.L. Heely and Mothura Nath Bondhapadhyay were appointed examiners of Raja Promotha Nath prize Examination. The prize was shared by two students : one from Boalia school and the other from Pabna school. They were Loke Nath Chakravarti of Boalia School and Giris Chandra Bhattacharjaya of Pabna School. ⁴²

The P. N. prize Examination was held as usual in the month of July 1871 under the supervision of Reverend Behari Lal Sinha and the Secretary himself. The prize valued at Rs. 100 was classified this year into three heads. One was distributed for the best essay, one for the best piece of composition and one for translation. ⁴³

For the best essay Rs. 50 ; to a boy of the Boalia School.

For the best piece of
composition Rs. 30 ; Ditto Ditto

For Translation (a) Rs. 10 ; Ditto Ditto
(b) Rs. 10 ; to a boy of the Bograh School.

G. OTHER ASPECTS OF TEACHING IN BOALIA SCHOOL :

On repeated prayers of the local people, the Local Committee recommended to the Government that the sanskrit and Vernacular studies be introduced in the school. The Deputy Governor was pleased to sanction

40. Letter No. 3. See *Correspondence of 1867-72*.

41. Letter No. 3. See *Correspondence of 1867-72*,

42. For details see letter No. 54 addressed to the D. P. I. dated Boalia, 20th October, 1870. See also *Correspondence of 1867-72*.

43. D. P. I. Report of 1871-72 (Calcutta : Calcutta Central Press Company Limited, 5, Council House Street, 1873), P. 156. Also see *Correspondence of 1867-1872*,

the proposal in 1850—51 conditional on “no extra charges being consequently incurred.”⁴⁴ But owing to the natural reluctance of the local people to pay for education when gratuitous instructions (here afforded by the Lokenath School) could be procured, the experiment did not meet with the expected success. The Sanskrit department was not opened in that year but later on it was introduced as the second language and was taught in 5 upper classes in lieu of Bengali.⁴⁵

The Committee introduced the system of teaching by means of monitors who were chosen by the Head Master from amongst the students of the upper-most class for imparting instruction to the boys of junior classes. The students were examined on Monday once a week. Besides, the Head Master devoted one hour or half to supervising their duties. This system was introduced either because of the dearth of teachers at that time or due to the failure of the Committee to afford sufficient remuneration to attract teachers.⁴⁶

Introduction of Tuition Fee : In order to minimise the expenses of Government, the system of tuition fee was introduced by the Government. Fees were charged for the whole year, but for the convenience of the parents and guardians, a system of monthly payment was introduced. Generally the fees became due on the first day of each month but in case of the closure of the school, this was charged on the opening day. For further benefit of the parents, seven days grace period was allowed. On these days no fine was charged. After the expiry of the grace period, a fine of one anna a day per pupil was charged who did not pay off his fees. In case of failure of payments of tuition fees or fines by any pupil, his name was to be struck off from the Register of the school. Of course, there was provision for re-admission.⁴⁷

The Boalia school introduced the system of tuition fees in 1845. After that, the financial condition of the school began to improve. The rate of fee in the first four classes was raised as of April 1858 from rupee 1 to 2 rupees per mensem in order to meet the expense of appointing an intermediate teacher in between the 1st and 2nd master, on a salary of rupees 75.

44. See Annual Report for the Session 1850-51. *Correspondence 1844-1852*, Also see *D. P. I. Report for the year 1850-51*, p. 132.

45. See letter No. 4 addressed to the Magistrate of Rajshahi dated Boalia, 9th April, 1870. *Correspondence of 1867-72*.

46. See *D. P. I. Report for the year 1836. op. cit.*, p. 151.

47. See *Rules for the payment of school fees in Government Schools*, dated 21st December, 1917.

This expenditure might have been covered by the surplus of fees already in favour of the school, which amounted to 1,284 rupees. But the introduction of such increased charge did not greatly improve the financial condition as there was a fall in the total number of students. ⁴⁸

Discipline of the School : The discipline of the school had all along been commendable. There was no record of the breach of discipline or gross misconduct on the part of the boys. The Inspector of schools who visited the school in 1845 was deeply moved to witness the overall picture of the school and remarked : "On entering the school I was struck with the order and neatness prevailing throughout, with the arrangement of the classes, and with the absence of all confusion ; each boy seemed to know his position, and each master his duty. Nor was this quietness and discipline got up for the occasion of my visit, to continue as they too often do, merely for a short time ; but for the six days I was there, and for four or five hours each day, they remained the same. If now and then interference on the part of the masters was required, a word or a look was sufficient, and I have seldom seen obedience so readily granted and authority so easily enforced. ⁴⁹ The teachers of the school were very regular and dutiful. The Principal of Berhampore College who visited the school in 1854 remarked : "From the several registers, I found the masters were very regular, and I could see the Local Committee are more than ordinarily attentive..... " ⁵⁰ The members of the Local Committee were very vigilant over the general administration and discipline of the school. In 1871, they expressed their satisfaction at the general discipline of the school and working of the teachers. ⁵¹ It was only due to the brilliant performance of the boys that the school attained its superior position and high status in Bengal. Some of the successful students of this Institution were Babu Kunjalal Bandhopadhyay (Judge of the Lower Court of Calcutta), Babu Shib Parasad Sanyal (Deputy Magistrate), and Babu Mohini Mohan Ray and Babu Kisori Mohan Ray the renowned lawyers of the Calcutta High Court. ⁵² Besides, the well known writer and lawyer Akshay Kumar Maitra was a student of this school.

With a view to improving the discipline of the school, it was decided to introduce the system of imposing fines from June, 1851. It was a

48. See D. P. I. Report for the year 1858—59, *op. cit.*, P. 308.

49. See D. P. I. Report for the year, 1845-46. *op. cit.*, p. 158.

50. See D. p. I. Report from 30th Sept. 1852 to 27th January 1855. *op. cit.* p. 303.

51. Letter No. 2. See *Correspondence 1867-72*.

52. Sree Kalinath Choudhury, *Rajshahir Sangkhipta Itihas* (Short History of Rajshahi), Calcutta School Book Press, 1308 . p. 80.

common practice with the students to keep themselves absent from their classes even after enjoying a long vacation. As a result, the programme of studies suffered. In order to put an end to such irregularity in attendance and prolonged absence the Head Master made this proposal to the Local Committee on 16th June, 1851. The Committee concurred with his proposal and opined that "every boy absenting himself from the school without satisfactory cause should be fined anna one per day during his absence in addition to the payments of the arrears of his schooling fees, 53

CONCLUSION

The Boalia Shool of the town of Rajshahi played a very significant role in the spread of modern education in this area. It was from this school that the Rajshahi College eventually emerged. It was the Rajshahi College that dominated the intellectual and cultural life of the Northern region of Bangladesh. The quality of teaching at the school was of very high standard to attract meritorious students and qualified teachers.

The role of the local officials for fostering modern education in this town was laudable. The local officials who were members of the local Committee of Public Instruction took great interest in promoting the standard of teaching and discipline at the school. As a result of their frequent visit to this school, the teaching staff were quite alert in the discharge of their duties. The efforts both the teaching staff and the local officials raised the standard of this School and it became one of the best schools of Bengal during the pre-partition days.

THE VILLAGE POLICE IN BANGLADESH :

A Historical Analysis

Md. Moksuder Rahman

A village watchman or the chowkidar has been the real foundation of law and order in the rural areas since the Indian history began. ¹ In Bengal the village watchman was a remnant of the primitive village system, which prevailed throughout the whole of the inhabitant Hindustan in ancient times. The policing of the rural areas was left to the locality and it was done by the local chowkidars who were the servants of the village communities and were paid by the villagers themselves out of the village land or a share of crops. They were neither paid nor managed by the central government. In ancient Bengal the *Gramini* (the village headman) had the principal responsibility to arrange the watch and ward to maintain peace and security inside the village area. The village watchman was the chief executive assistance of the village headman in matters of maintaining law and order. The village responsibility was enforced by the village headman who was always assisted by the one or more village watchmen. The village watchman was the real executive police of the country, ²

Besides the rent free land the watchman was remunerated from other sources depending in amount and character on local customs and traditions. For instance they were paid by grain for watching the crops in the field and at the threshing floor, called *Bojha* (load), *panja* (five finger) a sheaf as large as they could be grasped, also *Manpowra* (a fee of one quarter of a sheer on each man watched). They were also entitled to various miscellaneous fees and perquisites, called *Haq* (right) of attending at *hat* (market), feasts and festivals and guarding shops carts and travellers. The ancient names of the watchman was *Nishapal* (guardian at night), *pahari*, (watchman), *ashoto pahari* (one who kept watch throughout the 8 prahar or 24 hours), and *jagania* (wide awakener).³

1. Sir George Dunbari : *A Hisory of India From the Earliest time to the Nineteen Thirty Nine*. (London, Nicholson and Watson Limited, 1949). p. 204.
2. John Matthai : *Village Government In British India* (London ; London School of Economics and Political Science, 1915). P. 132.
3. H. S. Dunsford ; "The Village Watch in Bengal" *Calcutta Review, 1885*" (Calcutta, W. H. Corey and Co., 1885) Vol. 80, p. 132.

Mughal Period :

According to Sir Judunath Sarker, the *chowkidars* were the servants of the village communities. They were responsible for policing the local areas. They were maintained by the villagers and they were not the officers of the state.⁴ But on the accession of the Mohammadans to power, a radical change took place in the form of government. The villagers lost their supremacy and the zemindars were appointed by the state and charged with the collection of revenue and the administration of civil and criminal justice within their sphere. The large establishments were placed at their disposal and into this the village watchmen were also absorbed. They were variously known under the names of the persian title, such as *Pasban*, *Nich-ban* and *Chowkidar*. So far as rural areas were concerned the Mughal interfered very little with the ancient customs of the village administration. They incorporated the villages into the administrative unit only for revenue and police purposes and the local responsibility was left to the local people themselves.⁵ In Bengal the village watchman was originally an officer of the village community. But a great change took place over the position of the village police during the Mughal administration. The Mughal system of police administration was built on the basic principle of local responsibility. It was the principal responsibility of every *Zemindars* (Land Lord), to the central government of securing persons and property within the extent of his *zemindari*. This was an essential condition of his tenure. In this way the zemindars were held responsible for the prevention of theft and robbery, detection of crimes and restoration of stolen property. The zemindari servants on police duties were divided into the following four categories : i.e.

- (a) the frontier police of a military character ;
- (b) the regular police force for internal disorder ;
- (c) the personal guard ;
- (d) and the village staff, including the village watchman ;

Their main duty was the collection of rent and police duty was subsidiary and was generally neglected. They maintained peace and security inside the village areas through the chowkidar.⁶ The village watchmen became their personal servants and they were maintained by the zemindars. They served the zemindars by day and watched the villagers by the night.⁷

4. Sir, Judunath Sarker ; *Mughal Administration* (Calcutta : Sarker and Sons Ltd., 1952) P. 11.

5. Hugh Tinker ; *Foundation of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma* (London, the Athlone Press, 1954). P. 17.

6. N. Majumdar ; *Justice and Police in Bengal*. (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyah, 1960). p. 51.

7. John Matthai, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

Village Watch Under the British Administration (upto 1870)

By a proclamation in December 7, 1792, Lord Cornwallis's government took the police of the country directly into its own hands and deprived the landholders by law of all authority which had been attached to them as an agent of the state. At the same time all the branches of their establishment which had been maintained mainly for police purposes were abolished. With this the village watchmen lost their position and were reduced to that of a mere private servant. The police service of the village watchman was transferred from the zemindar to the regular police under the direct order of the government. Each *Zilla* (District) was divided into thanas of about 20 square miles and to each *Thana* (police station) a *Darogah* (officer-in-Charge) was appointed with a body of armed burkundazes selected by himself. The village watchmen declared subject to the control of the newly appointed darogah, but their relation with the zemindars as the private servants was left undisturbed.⁸

The permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1793 made a radical change in the organisation and control of the village watchman. The zemindars lost their supremacy of the village watchmen chowkidars were placed under the direct control of the police inspector, known as the Darogah. But the change was, however, nominal, because the zemindars by their great local influence controlled the village police. Only they were under the control of the regular police by law, but in practice they were zemindar's men. The double character of the village watchman was supported by service land and was perpetuated. The right of nomination of the watchmen and the responsibility of reporting and aiding in the detection of crimes were left with the zemindars and the duty of conveying letters from one police post to another was imposed upon them. In this respect Mr. Blunt (the Superintendent of Police in Bengal) said that the chowkidars were required to serve two masters, being nominated by and entitled to receive their pay from one, but bound to obey and be liable to punishment and dismissal from the other, effectively served neither, and they were betrayed by both.⁹ Ultimately the system proved to be an expensive failure.¹⁰

Lord Wellesly began an inquiry into the causes of the failure to maintain peace and order in Bengal as early as 1801. In Madras, a committee was appointed by Lord William Bentinck in 1806 with the same

8. H. S. Dunsford, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

9. *Ibid.* p. 105

10. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*. "The Indian Empire" Vol. IV (New Delhi—Today and Tomorrow publishers 22—B/5). p. 386.

objectives. In 1813, the court of Directors appointed a special Committee to institute an inquiry into the administration of justice and police in the territory of the company. In 1818, the court issued orders on the subject. They pointed out that the village police secured the aid and co-operation of the people at large as the system adopted itself to their customs. They recommended that the village police should be well paid so that respectable persons could be attracted to this job. The court therefore, directed that measures should be taken for the purpose of re-establishing the rural police agreeably to the usages of the locality. The Court anticipated from this measures a reduction of the greater part of the darogah establishment and also of police corps. ¹¹

To provide watch and ward in the rural areas, Chowkidari or Local Police Act was brought into operation in Bengal in 1856. In that year a committee was appointed by the Parliament with the purpose of considering the improvement of the character of the rural police. Sir Fred Halliday, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, got a very fresh opportunity of expatriating on the relinquiries of the village watchman. According to him the village police were disorganised and they had lost their morality. To him, "village watchmen are now declared to have no right to remunerate for service and the Magistrates have no power to enforce their rights, even if they had any rights to enforce. Hence the chowkidars are all thieves or robbers, in as much that when any one is robbed in a village, it is most probable that the first person suspected will be the village watchman." During this period village watchmen were disorganised and they were extremely corrupted. ¹² A few months after the Mutiny of 1857 a second Bill for the amelioration of the condition of the village watch was brought into the council but the Bill was declared to be wrong in practice and unsuited. The following year the government of India appointed a fresh committee composed of Messers Court, Wanchope, Robinson, Temple and Burce. The committee expressed a faith in two principles which should be maintained for the proper working of the village watchmen, i.e. (i) the preservation of the local and popular character of the village watchmen and (2) rendering of the village watchman efficiently for local public service. To secure these objectives they keenly felt it necessary that the appointment and succession of the village watchman should be regulated by local

11. *Report on the Indian Police Commission* (Fraser Committee) (1902-03), (Simla, Government printing Office, 1904) Para-13.

12. H. H. Dodwell : (ed.) *The Cambridge History of India*. (Delhi ; S. Chand & Co, 1958). Vol. VI, p. 26.

customs and the rules regarding these matters should be made by the state or by the land holders or by both. The amount of remuneration should be fixed and its realization should be enforced by District Officer and the control of the village watch should be vested in the hands of the Magistrate or police officer.

In the year 1864, Mr. Hobhouse, a member of the Legislative Council in Bengal, drew up a memorandum on the village police. He proposed that the chowkidars should be government servants and should be paid in cash out of a fund raised through the imposition of taxes upon the landholders. He also proposed that there should never be less than one chowkidar to 25 houses. But the government did not accept his proposals. Mr. McNeile, a brilliant young civilian was then specially deputed to inquire into the whole subject. He had visited a number of Districts and in 1866 submitted a report to the government. The causes of the failure of the chowkidari system, according to him, were certain evil influences. That evils, he thought, might be removed by the appointment of a *Sirdar* or *Dafadar* (a petty police officer) to supervise the chowkidars of a circle of villages averaging an area of 12 square miles, by the regular payment of the sirdars and chowkidars of a sufficient salary and by rendering them altogether independent of villagers and land holder. He proposed that there should be not less than 4 chowkidars to each circle and not more than 2 chowkidars to every 3 square miles area. The whole force should be subordinated to the District police and should be controlled by the District superintendent of Police.

The Magistrate should fix the amount which should be raised in each circle and should call the residents of that circle to appoint a panchayet upon whom would devolve the duty of assessment. ¹³

Village Chowkidari Act VI (BC) of 1870 :

There were difference of opinion and thinking regarding the organisation of the village police. One group argued that the village police should be placed on the line of regular contabulary and the villagers should pay special taxes to bear the expenses of the salary of the chowkidars. The other group opposed strongly not to change the rural character of the village police. To solve this problem a committee was appointed with Mr. River Thompson, secretary of the government of Bengal, in 1869. The duty of the Committee was to draft a Bill to reform the village police based on the principles of retaining the municipal character of the rural police and providing the simplest possible ways of ensuring their regular and prompt payment of wages,

13. Dunsford, *op. cit.*, pp. 112—115.

The Bill was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council on 22 January 1870. Finally the Bill came into being as the Act VI (BC) of 1870 and thereafter it was published in the Calcutta Gazettee on 9 March, 1870. The Bill was read in the council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for the purpose of making laws and regulations regarding the appointment, dismissal and the maintenance of the village chowkidar on the 26th February 1870, and was referred to a select committee which was to report on or after the 2nd April. It was proposed in the Bill that (i) all the village police in the country should be brought under one uniform system, remunerated by cash payment, (ii) that the village chowkidars should be distinguished from the regular Thanadari police, and (iii) that for the more efficient control and supervision over the village police a *panchayet* (a committee), should be appointed in each village by the District Magistrate. On the recommendations of the committee the Act VI (BC) of 1870 came into existence in Bengal. The main objectives of the Act were firstly, that the people at large should pay for their own protection and secondly, that it was the duty and policy of the government to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people themselves.¹⁴

The Act VI (BC) of 1870, divided the country side into a number of unions each of which comprised about 10—12 square miles. Those areas were placed under a *panchayet* or a committee appointed by the District Magistrate. The Act empowered the District Magistrate to appoint a *panchayet* in any village which contained more than 60 houses. As a rule of the government the *panchayet* consisted of not less than 3 and not more than 7 persons. They were entrusted with the duty of appointing and maintaining the village police. They were responsible for the collection of the chowkidari tax (a special tax-imposed upon the village landholder) for the regular payment of the salaries of the chowkidars. The *panchayet* was responsible for the maintenance of peace and security of the villagers within his jurisdiction and the chowkidars were their main instruments for these purposes. The chowkidars were appointed by the *panchayet*, but they were dismissed by the District Magistrate.¹⁵ During the discussion of the Bill, Moharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore seriously criticised the provision. He pointed out that if the chowkidars were appointed by the *panchayet* they should be dismissed by the *panchayet* and no sanction of the District Magistrate should be necessary in that regard. But the government did not pay any heed to him and the problem remained unsolved for years to

14. *The Calcutta Gazettee*, 9 March, 1870, (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Press, 1870).

15. Section (XL) of 1870.

come.¹⁶ The panchayet had the power to determine the amount which should be paid to the chowkidars. But there were provisions that no chowkidar should be paid a sum smaller than 4 Rupees per month.¹⁷ The chowkidars received their monthly salary from the panchayet. If the panchayet failed to pay them on a schedule time, the chowkidars had the right to appeal to the Magistrate. The Act of 1870 vested the following duties upon the chowkidars :¹⁸

The Act empowered the chowkidars to arrest any suspected person and at once to take that persons to the police station.¹⁹

In the working of the chowkidari Act, 1870, there was a usual complaint that chowkidars were not regularly paid and the panchayet kept no regular accounts.²⁰ There was no good relationship between the panchayet and the chowkidars. Many times the chowkidars avoided the decisions of the panchayet. Though the chowkidars were appointed by the panchayet yet they had no control over them.²¹ In a word they failed to achieve their stated objectives. A draft Bill was under consideration of the government to provide for better system of appointment of the panchayet and for more punctual payment of the chowkidars. The village chowkidari Act of 1870 did not work well and in 1881 Mr. Munro, C. B., Inspector General of Police suggested the appointment of a commission to deal with the whole question. The recommendation of this commission were submitted in 1883, which proposed certain amendments of the laws regarding the proper working of the village police. According to the opinion of the commission the panchayet failed to realise their main objectives, that is the regular payment of the salaries of the chowkidar. The Committee suggested that the law regarding this purpose should be amended immediately. Accordingly, in 1886 a Bill was introduced in the Bengal legislative council to amend the village chowkidari Act of 1870. The Bill became law as Act I (B. C.) of 1886 since the conclusion of the year.²² The main changes which were suggested in 1886 were as follows :

16. N. C. Roy ; *Rural self Government in Bengal*. (Calcutta, Calcutta University, 1936). p. 133.
17. Section (XI) of 1870.
18. For details discussion See The Calcutta Gazettee 9, March 1870. Section (LII) and (XLV)
19. *Ibid.*, Sec. (XL VI).
- 20; *Report on the Administration of Bengal (1884—85)* (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Book Depot, 1886), p. 6.
21. *Report on the Bengal Administration* (Rowland and Committee) *Enquiry Committee (1944—45)* (Dacca ; NIPA Reprint, 1902), Para 395.
22. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1885—86* ; Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press. p. 8

- (1) The panchayet should be relieved of the responsibility of collecting the taxes which were required for the maintenance of the village police. They should only assess according to the Act of 1870, but the responsibility of collecting the taxes should be the responsibility of a government salaried personnel (Tashilder) working under the District Magistrate.
- (2) They should receive only money salary in every case. Any lands assigned for watchman still outstanding, were to be settled with the zemindars, the produce should go to the fund, called village watchman fund.
- (3) The chowkidars should receive their salaries from the police station.²³ But the amending Act, 1 (B. C.) of 1886 did not seem to have effected much improvement in the working of the village police and ultimately it was dropt.²⁴

The Act of 1892 :

In accordance with the recommendations of the police commission of 1891, a draft Bill was prepared for the amendment of the chowkidari Act of 1870. The Bill was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council on 23rd April 1892²⁵ by Mr. (Later on Sir) Henry Cotton. The aim of this Act was to bring the village police into closer touch with the regular police. The Act took a step in the direction of centralizing the police administration and of bringing the village watchman into closer relation with the District Magistrate. Before the passing of the Act, the panchayet not only appointed the chowkidar, but had the supreme authority to determine their number and salary. Under the new law, the panchayet nominated them but the final appointment of the watchman rested with the District Magistrate. It was also provided that the Magistrate and not the panchayet should determine their number and salary.²⁶ The Act of 1886 provided that all fines and penalties should go to the village chowkidari fund but the Act of 1892 provided that fines and penalties were to be credited not to a village chowkidari fund, but to the District chowkidari fund for the maintenance of the village watchman, which should be controlled by the District Magis-

23. Matthai, *op. cit.* p. 48.

24. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1887-88*; (Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press 1889), p. 7.

25. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1892-93*; (Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press, 1894), p. 11. part I.

26. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1891-92* (Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press, 1893), Part I, p. 6.

trate.²⁷ The Act brought the village watchmen into the closer relation with the regular police.

There was a satisfactory increase in the amount of rewards paid to the chowkidar from the District Chowkidari fund for their better work. In the District of Bakerganj, the Magistrate had introduced the practice of giving medal to the chowkidar and it was appreciated by all. The long felt necessity of placing the chowkidar under the petty officer of their own class were put into practice by appointing the Dafadar in many districts.²⁸ The appointment of a Dafadar to supervise the activities of the chowkidars was introduced in many districts of the province with good result, and the government strongly insisted on the necessity of carefully fostering this important branch of police by sympathetic treatment and judicious reward.²⁹

The Police Commission of 1902—03 :

The next demand regarding the village watchmen was that they should better perform their duty in relation to the maintenance of peace and security and the protection and detection of crimes as the servants of the local bodies than the agent of the provincial government. The fact was put into practice by Indian Police Commission which was appointed by Lord Curzon's government in 1902. The Committee was presided over by Sir Andrew Frazer. The Commission submitted its report in 1905. Among other matters it was also the duty of the commission to inquire into the working the rural police.³⁰ According to the opinion of the commission the village police ought not to be separated from the village organisation and placed under the regular force. They desired to see the chowkidars not as a body of low paid stipendiaries or subordinate police scattered over the country, but as the village agency itself. According to them the village was the unit of administration and that improved administration lies in teaching the village community to take a keen interest in their own affairs. The chowkidars should be the servants of the village community and should be subordinate to the village headman. The headman should be held responsible for the proper performance of the police work inside the village. The village police should be remunerated according to the local custom and by the

27. C. E. Buckland ; *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Government* ; (Calcutta, Kedar Nath Bose Ltd. 1902), Vol. II, p. 920.

28. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1899—98* ; (Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press, 1899), Part I. p. 8.

29. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1899—1900* ; Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press, 1901), Page—7.

30. *Report on the Indian Police Commission (Fraser Committee) (1902—03)*, (Simla, Government Central Printing Office. 1905), Para—2.

local people themselves. According to the commission the chowkidari pay should be borne by the *Riot* and this should keep the village watchman into the closer relationship with the riots. The commission opposed the regular chowkidari parade in front of the officer-in-charge of a thana. The commission attended several parades at the thana and found no practical utility of those parades. Where periodical visit to the thana or police station was regarded as necessary, but that should be reduced to the smallest possible number in a year. The commission had no hesitation to say that the regular chowkidari parades which were practised in Bengal were absolutely useless.³¹ The commission strongly approved the liberal system of rewarding the village chowkidars with money *Paggaries* (turban) dress, etc. for their braveous work.³² The police commission 1902—03 again proposed to place back the chowkidars under the control of the village headman.

Position of the Village Police from 1905—1919 :

During the period the chowkidars were employed in all the districts of Eastern Bengal. The Dufadari system was also enforced throughout the Bengal Districts. A dafadar was employed to supervise a circle comprising the beats of 10 or more chowkidars and he was generally exempted from the duty of watch and word like the chowkidars. His main responsibility was to supervise the activities of the chowkidars. The total cost of the rural police increased from Rs. 34,51,880 to Rs. 35,29,564. During the year a scheme was revised by Mr. Savage for improving the status of the village panchayet for the better control and utilization of the village police towards the protection and detection of crime and criminals, experimentally in Dacca, Tippera and in Natore subdivision of Rajshahi District.³³ Again in 1912 Mr. J. N. Gupta, an ICS officer, was placed on special duty to supervise the chowkidari matters. Mr. E. G. Hard, Superintendent of police was also placed on special duty with the instruction to co-operate with Mr. G. N. Gupta. They proposed that the present rate of pay of the chowkidar and the dafadar should be increased. It was proposed by them that a rate of Rs.12 to 15 should be sufficient instead of Rs. 6 to 12 to induce efficient whole time man as the dafadar. Their proposal was under consideration of the government.³⁴

31. *Ibid*, Para—44 and 49

32. *Ibid*., Para—50

33. *Report on the Administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam, (1905—1906)* (Shillong, printed at the Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariate Press, 1907), Part II, pp. 122—133.

34. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1912—1913*, (Calcutta Bengal Secretariate Press, 1914), Para 83.

Before the introduction of the Village Self Government Act in 1919, we can see two types of local governments in the rural areas in Bengal, i.e. the village panchayet which was established under the village chowkidari Act in 1870, and the Union Committee which was established under the Bengal Local Self Government Act in 1885. In accordance with the Bengal Local Self Government Act 1885 a three-tier system of local self government was created in Bengal, i.e. the District Board, the Local Board and the Union Committee. The District Board was at the District level, the Local Board at the Sub-divisional level and the Union Committee at the Union or village level. As units of local self government in rural areas, the union committees were entrusted with many duties and responsibilities for the rapid rural development, but the police function at the rural areas became the subject of the village panchayet.

The Union Committee which was established in 1885, did nothing for the rural development and ultimately it failed to achieve its stated objectives. For administrative reform, the parliament constituted an enquiry commission, composed of senior Indian Civil Service members. The commission was presided over by Mr. C. E. M. Hobhouse. There were 5 other members from Bombay, Madras and Bengal. Romesh Chandra Dutt was the only Indian member. The Commission began its enquiry on 18 November 1907. The Commission was known as the Royal Commission upon Decentralization in India. They proposed for a three-tier system of local government and of which at the lowest level village panchayets were to be created. The Royal Commission upon Decentralization pointed out that the chowkidari system should be managed by the village panchayet. According to them the union committee had failed to achieve its desired objectives. The commission proposed that the village ought to be the foundation of the local government, that attempt should be made to constitute and to develop the village panchayet for the proper administration of the village affairs. The body was to be responsible for the local watch and ward. The Commission further recommended that the Chowkidar or village watch and ward and local welfare functions should be united in the hand of a single body instead of two separate bodies.³⁵ The commission submitted their report on 25 February, 1909 for the most gracious consideration of His Majesty's government.

Levinge Committee—1913-14 :

In 1913 the government of Bengal again convened a group of senior

35. *Report of the Royal Commission upon Decentralization (Hobhouse Commission) in India 1909* ; (London ; Darling and Sons Ltd ; 34-40 Bacon Street, E. 1909) ; Vol. I p. 245.

civil service officers and entrusted it with a special duty. The enquiry was officially known as the Bengal District Administration Committee 1913—1914, but the report took its informal title after the name of its chairman, Hon'ble Mr. E.V. Levinge. The Committee opined that the Union Committee had failed and proposed that the union committee and chowkidari panchayet should be integrated into a single body. The great majority of persons whom the committee interviewed, experienced two views regarding the control of the village police. One group like Mr. Greake, commissioner of Chittagong Division and Mr. Bonham Carter, the Inspector General of Police of Eastern Bengal and Assam strongly opposed to place the chowkidar under the control of the panchayet. The activities of the panchayet, to them, should mainly be the development of the village areas and the chowkidars should be placed under the control of the regular police. One group proposed that the chowkidars should be paid from the provincial fund and the chowkidari tax should be directed to the developmental work of the village areas, such as road, sanitation, communication etc. But the Levinge Committee did not appreciate any of the two proposals mentioned above.³⁶

The committee proposed that by increasing the efficiency of the panchayet and securing their co-operation through the Circle Officer, real improvement in the execution of the watch and ward in rural areas by the village police should be possible. The committee proposed strongly that the chowkidars should be controlled by the village panchayet and for the same village panchayet should be strongly organised. The committee pointed out that in the areas where the village panchayet was efficient the chowkidars performed their duty properly.³⁷ During the period there was no uniform pay scale for the chowkidars. It was differently settled in different districts, such as, in Bakargong, the District Magistrate opposed to raise the pay of the chowkidars. In Faridpur, the District Magistrate, Mr. Wood Head would like to raise the pay to Rs. 9, Mr. Spray the District Magistrate of Mymeusingh wished to increase their pay to Rs. 7, Mr. Birely the District Magistrate of Dacca raised their pay only in a few areas. But there was a general opinion that the existing pay of the chowkidars was manifestly too poor. The Levinge Committee at a conference of the commissioners at Darjeeling on 2, October 1913 proposed that the pay of the chowkidars should be raised to Rs. 12 and was supported by the majority mem-

36. *Bengal District Administration Committee (Levinge Committee) Report 1913—1914.* (Calcutta ; Bengal Secretariate Press, 1915), Para—107.

37. *Ibid.*, Para—108

bers present there. They again proposed that the chowkidari pay should be borne by the villagers as their own servants. The committee proposed that the Dafadar should be the whole time government servant and the committee agreed with the conference of Darjeeling that some portion of their increased pay should be borne by the panchayet.³⁸ The report as to the success of the appointment of the whole time dafadar in the Madaripur Sub-division under the Faridpur District was then confirmed by the government and the question of the extension of the scheme to other sub-divisions was under consideration.³⁹

Rural Police Under the Village Self Government Act. 1919 :

There was no important change in the working of the village police and there were well founded complaints about the inadequacy of the chowkidars' and the dafadars' pay. The government was then considering a wide scheme of village Self Government. Regarding the same, a Bill dealing with the whole question was submitted to the government of India in the year 1919.⁴⁰

On the basis of the recommendations of the Montague Chelemsford Report on April 24, 1918, Sir Satyendra Prasana Singha (S. P. Sinha), then a member of the Legislative Council of Bengal, introduced a Bill in the Council to extend the village self government in the province. The salient feature of the Bill was the amalgamation of the two bodies, i.e. the village panchayet and the Union Committee into a one body to be known as the Union Board. The Act created a two-tiered system of local government, the District Board and The Union Board. the Union Board was mainly an organisation for the rural areas. The Union Board created under the Act V. of 1919, performed two types of functions, compulsory and optional. The municipal welfare function was the optional and the compulsory function of the Union Board was to maintain the rural police. Providing watch and ward in the villages was a function compulsorily imposed upon the Union Board. According to the provisions of the Act, the Union Board had the authority to nominate a person to be a dafadar or a chowkidar. There was also provision that if the Union Board failed to nominate within a responsible time, the District Magistrate had the authority to appoint any person as dafadar or a chowkidar. With the prior permission of the District Magistrate the Union Board could dismiss any of the rural police

38, *Ibid.*, Para—110

89, *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1915—1916* ; (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Press, 1917), Para 77.

40. *The Administration of Bengal Under the Earl of Ronaldshay, G. C. I. E, 1917—1922*), (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate ; Bengal Secretariate Press, 1922), pp. 32—33.

within their jurisdiction.⁴¹ During the discussion of the Bill an attempt was taken to increase the powers of the Union Board in matters of appointment and dismissal of the rural police but failed.⁴² The number of chowkidars and dafadars and then salary were settled by the District Magistrate with the consent of the Union Board.⁴³ Both the Union Board and the District Magistrate had the authority to punish any of the rural police for the violation of their regular duties. The District Magistrate could punish them with a fine not exceeding the amount of one month's salary and the Union Board a half month's salary. All fines which were realised from then were credited to the District Chowkidari Reward Fund, controlled by the District Magistrate.⁴⁴

It was the duty of the rural police to communicate the necessary information to Officer-in-Charge of a police station and to the president of the Union Board, about every unnatural, suspicious and sudden death and other urgent news like riot or serious affray. They had power to arrest any criminal and had also power to hand over that arrested persons to the police station without any delay.⁴⁵ As to the appointment and dismissal of the chowkidar and the dafadar, a minor change took place respectively in the year 1927 and in 1936. Some new rules were added to the original Act of 1919. According to new rule when any vacancy should exist for the post of a dafadar and chowkidar, the Union Board should send a report to the District Magistrate through the Circle Officer and officer-in-charge of the police station along with a Nomination Roll accepted by the majority members of the Union Board. Final appointment was to be made by the District Magistrate. Again when the District Magistrate should appoint or dismiss any of the chowkidar or the dafadar in his discretion, he then should send a report to the Union Board through the Circle Officer.⁴⁶ Regarding the punishment and reward to a chowkidar or a dafadar, two amendments took place in the year 1927 and in 1930 respectively. It was added that any punishment or reward to them should be directed by the Union Board at a meeting and a report to that effect should be sent to the District Magistrate through the Circle Officer within a week of such meeting of the

41. *The Bengal Village Self Government Act V of 1919*; (Alipore, Bengal Government Press, 1937), Section 20 (1), (ii).

42. N. C. Roy ; *op cit.*, p. 145

43. *Self Government Act, 1919. op cit.*, Sec. 21

44. *Ibid.*, Sec. 25

45. *Ibid.*, Sec. 22, 23, 24 and 25.

46. (a) Notification No. 385, PL; dated the 17th January 1927.

(b) „ „ 8705, PL; dated the 20th August 1936.

Board.⁴⁷ There was no provision for the payment of the cost of equipment of the dafadar and the chowkidar in the original Act of 1919. It was amended in 1927 and was decided that the annual cost of equipment for them should be fixed by the District Magistrate after considering the view of the Union Board. The Circle Officer would send to the Board by December 7, a notice of demand of cost of equipment for the ensuing year and the District Magistrate would sanction it. The amended Act of 1933, made the chowkidars subordinate to the dafadars. Accordingly a Dafadar was responsible for seeing whether the chowkidars were performing their duties or not. He had the authority to pay a surprise visit to at least two of the chowkidar's beats once in a fortnight. The number of the chowkidars employed by the Union Board were varied from 6 to 16 and the number of the dafadars never exceeded two. On an average a dafadar was placed in charge of 10 chowkidars.⁴⁸

During this period the village watchmen were under the control of triple authority, i. e. the Circle Officer, Officer-in-Charge of a police station and the Union Board. The Circle Officer did nothing but only to co-ordinate the decision of the District Magistrate and the Union Board. In fact the District Magistrate delegated his authority to the officers subordinate to him. Practically they were under the dual control, i. e. the Union Board and the officer-in-charge of police station. The appointment of a dafadar or a chowkidar mostly depended upon the favourable consent of the officer-in-charge of police station. The dual control placed them in a very difficult position. It was very harder for them when the relationship between the Union Board and the thana were not cordial. Simultaneously they were to serve two master and they felt uneasiness because, "serving the two masters is always an unfavourable job." It was expected by the Union Board that the power of the officer-in-charge of the thana and that of the District Magistrate or any power which was delegated by the District Magistrate to the Sub-divisional officer or the superintendent of police relating to the appointment, dismissal and punishment, should be vested in the Union Board. It was expected that the control over the village police should be exercised by the village organisation i. e. by the Union Board. But actually it did not happen.⁴⁹

47. (a) Notification No. 385, PL ; dated the 27th January 1927.

(b) " " , 2015, PL ; dated the 22nd May, 1930.

48. N. C. Roy ; *Rural Self Govt.* p. 163

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68

Blandy Committee Report 1936 :

In 1936 the government of Bengal constituted a Committee under the leadership of Messrs E. N. Blandy, C. I. E., ICS and A. D. Cordon, C. I. E., I. P. to enquire into the strength of the unarmed branch of the police in Bengal. The Committee was asked to advise the government whether the inter-relationship of the Thana and the rural police was sufficiently safeguarded in controlling crime and criminals or not, how should the position be improved. The Committee surveyed the whole field and interviewed many of the officials and non officials. One of the Senior District Magistrate put forward the suggestion that the chowkidari force should be entirely divorced from the control of the Union Board. He suggested to make the rural police as an inferior branch of the regular police and should be paid by the government. Another district police official suggested that the Union Board should be made entirely responsible for the control of the crimes within their jurisdiction. According to his proposals, each Union Board office should become a thana and the regular police force should be reduced. The rural police should be given some arms under the control of the District Magistrate to enable the Union Board to deal with the serious outbreak of disorder. Both proposals were most extreme in either direction. Many argued that to supervise the activities of the rural police two or three peons should be appointed. But the committee did not accept the proposal on the ground that it should impose a heavy burden over the fund of the Union Board. Although there were differences of opinions, the committee agreed with the vast majority that the rural police system should not be ended but should be mended.⁵⁰

The principal defect which the committee observed was that the village chowkidars had to serve two masters, viz the Union Board and the thana police. In some districts this leads to the chowkidars "playing off the one against to the other." The committee did not find any legal solution of the problem. It believed that some kinds of regular police interference were necessary to control the village police. The committee regarding the problem, suggested that it should be fully overcome only when the president and members of the Union Board should realize that the primary objective of the rural police was to safeguard the life and property within their jurisdiction. Since the regular police more or less well trained so their supervision over the rural police in matters of protection and detection of crimes and criminals was necessary. In section 8 of part IV of the Report, the

committee suggested the following measures regarding the proper control and utilization of the rural police.

- (1) The Union Board should pay the rural police regularly and punctually as their own servants.
- (2) The pay of the rural police should be increased in those areas where it was manifestly too low.
- (3) The increased rate of pay should be borne by the Union Board.
- (4) The provisions of Rule 37 of Union Board Manual, Vol I should be strictly followed by all concern, (Art. 37) of the Act of 1919 provided that Union Board should impose yearly rate on persons who were owners or occupiers of building (Building includes a Hut and shed. Art4) within the Union for the salary and equipments of the dafadars and the chowkidars.)
- (5) The number of the chowkidars in some union should be reduced and that of the dafadars should be increased without imposing any extra burden upon the Union Board's Fund.
- (6) The committee recommended to liberalize the Equipment Fund Rules so as to permit the issue to the rural police both of warm clothing and of Kerosin oil. They proposed that the rural police should be given warm cloth during the winter season and should be given the kerosin oil for hurrican lantern to work properly at night.⁵¹

Position of the Rural Police From 1919—1944 :

During the period varying reports were received from the different districts on the working of the rural police and the complaints of inadequacy of their pay were general and well founded.⁵² Inspite of their inadequate pay there were several instances of good works done by them. Several instances of bravery and devotion to the duty were recorded, notably that of a dafadar in Dacca who arrested a notorious criminal.⁵³ In Chittagong, a chowkidar arrested a political absconder. In Faridpur, a chowkidar, though wounded chased some docoits who were armed with revolvers. In Khulna, a dafadar inspite of threat of personal violence assisted the police in arresting a dangerous criminal.⁵⁴ In Dacca, a chowkidar was given a

51. *Ibid.*, Part IV Section 8

52. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1919—1920* ; (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Book Depot, 1922), Para 79.

53. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1930—31* ; (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Book Depot, 1933).p. 21.

54. *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1932—33* ; (Alipore, Bengal Government Press, 1934), p. 6.

reward of Rs. 50.00 in connection with the arrest of a political offender. A gratuity of Rs. 100.00 was granted to a widow of a dafadar of Gournadi thana in the District of Backarganj who was killed in offering resistance to a group of political dacsots.⁵⁵

The average monthly cost of each dafadar and chowkidar was Rs. 6.0.7 against Rs. 6.2 of the previous year. The number of the rural police and their cost during the last two decades are given below :—

| Year | Number | Cost |
|------|--------|-----------|
| 1921 | 84,787 | 57,06,496 |
| 1931 | 77,014 | 57,17,417 |
| 1941 | 74,485 | 53,94,465 |

There were little improvements in cases of payment to the rural police. Statistics received from the several districts show at the end of the year 1941, 16, 446 dafadars and chowkidars were unpaid, of which 980 had not received their pay for over 6 months 1,120 for 6 months and 5,246 for 3 months. They were neither supplied the warm clothing during the winter season nor kerosin oil for hurrican lantern which were proposed by the Blandy Committee in 1936. Inspite of all these difficulties, the rural police performed their duties most sincerely. For instance, in Dacca, a chowkidar while attempting to arrest a criminal was seriously injured with a *Ram Dao*, (a heavy knife) but he arrested him inspite of his injuries.⁵⁶

In the year 1944, the government of Bengal constituted a committee. Sir Archibald Rowland was the chairman of the committee. Regarding the rural police, the committee proposed to implement the E. N. Blandy Committee's recommendations, because those were not implemented. The Rowland Committee could not give any better advice to the government than those which were contained in the chowkidari report of 1936 and the committee accordingly recommended to government for its further consideration.⁵⁷

The hundred years domination of the British government over the Indo-Pak subcontinent came to an end in the year 1947. In the same year pakistan came into existence as a free and independent nation. With the emergence of pakistan, the British rule over this territory came to an end, but

55. *Report on the Administration of Bengal 1933—34* ; (Alipore, Bengal Government Press, 1935), p. 14.

56. *Report on the Police Administration in the Province of Bengal (Excluding Calcutta and its suburbs)* in 1941, (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariate Press, 1942).

57. *Report on the Bengal Administration (Rowland Committee) Enquiry Committee 1944—1945*, Para 403.

the administration of the local self government at the rural areas remained the same as it was in the past. A radical change took place over the local administration in 1959, when Basic Democracies orders had been declared by the President Ayub of former Pakistan. Organisation and functions of the rural police changed a little just after the emergence of Pakistan. In the year 1953, a total number 40,051 dafadars and chowkidars were in eastern part of Pakistan. The total cost of the maintenance of the rural police was Rs. 60,61,592 but the payment of the rural police was irregular in almost all the districts. The total number of the rural police who remained unpaid for various periods were 15,004, of them 4,558 were not paid for more than 6 month, 1,208 for 6 months and 2,447 for 3 months. The monthly salary of the chowkidar and dafadar was very low and it was very difficult to enlist the better class of men as in rural police. They were not supplied with the proper equipments for night patrol. In spite of all these, there were a number of instance of good works done by the individual member of the rural police. There was well founded demand that better service could be expected from the rural police only when they should be given a suitable pay and their payment should be made regular.⁵⁸ In 1955, government of East Pakistan commissioned Mr. S. D. Khan, an officer of the former Secretariate to make recommendations about the organisation of the local bodies in the province. He submitted his report in 1956. During his inquiry some persons including the government officers suggested that the rural police should be provincialized and taken over by the police department. They proposed that the rural police should be paid by the government.⁵⁹

Rural Police Under the basic Democracies Orders, 1950.

Basic Democracies Orders was declared by the president Md. Ayub Khan of former Pakistan on 27 October, 1959. According to the Orders a four tier system of local government was created in East Pakistan i. e., the Divisional Council, the District Council, the Thana Council and the Union Council. The Union council was an organisation specially for the village areas. The Union Council were entrusted with many functions for the rural development, such as irrigation, construction of road bridges, sanitation health and other functions of municipal nature. Moreover, the

58. *Report on the police Administration of the province of East Bengal for the year 1953.* (Dacca, East Bengal Government Press, 1956.).

59. Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury ; *Rural Government in East Pakistan.* (Dacca, Puthi-ghar Ltd., 1969), p. 13.

maintenance of peace and security, law and order within the Union became the chief function of the Union Council. The Union Council maintained peace and security through the village police as there was provision in the original order to maintain the village police for the same purpose. ⁶⁰

During the period the rural police was not regularly paid in many districts and was not supplied with adequate equipments. The poor sum of monthly remuneration for virtual whole time duty, in the days of abnormally high cost of living, was not at all attractive for candidates to offer themselves for employment in rural police. The total number of the rural police and the cost of amount of their salary for the year 1962, 1963 and 1964 are mentioned below :—

| Year | Number of the rural police | Amount of pay | Monthly average pay |
|------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1962 | 33,805 | 74,711.27 | 18.37 |
| 1963 | 33,858 | 96,576.26 | 22.29 |
| 1964 | 32,748 | 88,227.69 | 22.50 ⁶¹ |

The total number of the rural police and their average monthly pay had been increasing day by day during the Basic Democracies regime. For the better use of rural police, their uniform pay scale, better recruitment, proper training, system of rewarding all these were declared by the government in the year 1968, under the title of "The East Pakistan Union Council (Village Police Force) Rule, 1968."

The old chowkidar and the dafadar were renamed as the Dafadar and the Mahalladar respectively under the new rule. ⁶² According to the new rule of 1968 the village police exercised those functions which were specified in part II of the third schedule. ⁶³ The village police was required to keep watch and ward within the jurisdiction of the Union and to assist the people in matters of preventing crimes in the locality. It was also the responsibility of the rural police to help the chairman for the same purposes. Once in a fortnight he would have to report to the Officer-in-Charge of a police station about the movement of the bad charactered and the arrival of the suspicious charactered in the union. He would have to inform

60 *Basic Democracies Order, 1959* (Modified upto 1966) (Dacca, East Pakistan Govt. Press, 1966) Article—28).

61. *Report on the police Administration in the Province of East Pakistan for the year 1962—63 and 1964.* Dacca, East Pakistan Govt. Press, (Respectively in the year 1964, 1967 and 1968).

62. *The East Pakistan Union Council (Village Police Force) Rule, 1968*, Rule, 3.

62, *A Hand Book of Basic Democracies*, (Dacca ; East Pakistan Govt. Press. 1964). Part I Art 28 (1).

the police station about the riot or serious affray, secret disposal of death body mischief by fire, and should have to maintain a death and birth register also.

Both the dafadars and the Mohalladars were appointed by the Union Council. For the efficient performance of their duty there was a provision for promotion from a Mohalladar to a Dafadar. In case of fresh appointment of a dafadar or a Mohalladar, the circulation was made by the Union Council by beating the *dram* in the local Hat or Bazar (Market). After doing so, the chairman of the Union Council should constitute a selection Committee consisting of three members including the member of the respective ward. The chairman should preside over the selection committee. After the preliminary selection, it was placed before the next full meeting of the council for approval. The approved list with all particulars was sent to the Thana Council. The Circle Officer, after due consultation with the officer-in-charge of the thana should send back the list again to the Union Council. On receipt of the approved list the appointment was made by the chairman of the Union Council. In case of promotion from a mahalladar to a dafadar, the above mentioned procedures were also applied. ⁶⁴

Whenever the appointment was made by the chairman, the appointee was to undergo a short course of training of one month at the local police station. The training course was prescribed by the superintendent of police. During the training period both the dafadar and Mahalladar were under the control of the sub-divisional Police Officer. The sub-divisional Police Officer had the power to discharge or reverse any member of the rural police should failed to complete his training course efficiently and successfully. Also the chairman with consent of the majority members of the Union Council had the power to suspend or discharge any of the rural police on legal ground. For confirmation, a report was sent to the Thana Council. There was an ample scope for the rural police to appeal to the Controlling Authority (S. D. O.) through the Circle Officer (Development) if suspended or discharged. In case of second appeal, the Deputy Commissioner's decision was final. The Deputy Commissioner had the power to delegate his authority to the superintendent of police in this respect. ⁶⁵

The pay scale of the rural police was fixed by the government but the cost was borne by the Union Council from the Union Fund. The salary of the rural police was paid on the 3rd day of the following month by the chairman in their presence. ⁶⁶ The rural police was supplied equipment

64. *The Village Police Force Rule, 1968, Rule 4.*

65. *Ibid.*, Rule 10.

periodically free of cost. The item and price of the equipments were determined by a committee consisting of Inspector General of prisons, Inspector General of police, and the member of the respective Local government Department. From the respective central jail equipments were supplied by the Inspector General of prison and the central jail should arrange for the supply of requirements for each thana through the Circle Officer (Dev.) under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner. The chairman should distribute the uniforms and equipments in presence of two other members of that council and at the end should report to the Circle Officer regarding the same. On the recommendation of the chairman of the Union Council, the Deputy Commissioner should reward any of the rural police for doing good works either in cash or kind. On the other hand officer-in charge of the thana had the authority to take proposals for rewarding any of the rural police for the discharge of their duties properly and sincerely in connection with the maintenance of law and order, prevention and detection of crimes. His proposals, when accepted by the Thana council, was sent to the Deputy Commissioner through the Sub-divisional Officer. After recommending the proposals, the Deputy Commissioner sent it back to the Circle Officer (Development) and to the chairman through the Sub-divisional Officer. The chairman of the Union Council should arrange for the distribution of that reward. The Deputy Commissioner had the authority to delegate his power in respect of sanctioning the reward to the superintendent of police or to the sub-divisional officer.⁶⁷ These kinds of rewards were given to them from the "village Police Reward Fund", maintained by the Deputy Commissioner.

During the Basic Democracies regime rural polices were more or less organised. They were under a uniform pay scale throughout the country. Their pay scale had been increasing like other officers of the country with the increasing of the high rate of price of the essential commodities. More or less their activities were praise worthy in matters of protection and detection of crimes within their respective jurisdiction. Their immediate controlling authority was the Union Council, and the officer-in-charge of the thana. There was very good relationship between these two bodies, so they faced no problems in discharging their functions than in the previous years. As a controlling Authority of the Union Council, the Sub-divisional officer interfered very little with the affairs of the village police. The training arrangement for them was very successful. In the previous years there was

66. *Ibid.*; Rule 5.

67. *Ibid.*; Rule 6.

no arrangement for training of the rural police. The process of selection as stated above was very satisfactory, this constituted an improvement on the previous method. If they were suspended, there was a legal way for appeal to the sub-divisional officer and to the Deputy Commissioner. The process laid down for disciplinary measures appeared to be sound.

Village Police after the independence of Bangladesh :

After the emergence of the people's Republic of Bangladesh all the previous system of local governments were dissolved by a presidential Order (P. O. No. 7) in 1972.⁶⁸ With the dissolution of the local governments system, the administration of the Union Councils was also dissolved. Under the new Order, the Union Council was renamed as the Union Panchayet. Temporarily the functions of the Union Panchayets were carried out by a chairman and other members appointed by the Sub-divisional officer.⁶⁹ Article 59 of the constitution of the people's Republic of Bangladesh provides the provision of election for the local government units. To give effect to this article the government had declared the rules and regulations about the election of the local governments in 1973. Under the title of "The Bangladesh Local Government (Union Parishad and Paurashava) Order, 1973". In the new order the Union Panchayet was again renamed as the Union Parishad. During this period village polices were under the disposal of the Union administration. Their pay scale, position and organisation remained the same as it was in the Basic Democratic regime.

To make the local government units more purposeful and development oriented the local government Ordinance has been declared by the government in 1976. According to the provisions of the local government Ordinance of 1976 the Union parishads are entitled to perform various functions for rural development. Chapter IV of the Ordinance Prescribes the functions to be discharged by the Union Parishad as a rural self government unit, such as Civic Functions, Revenue Functions, Developmental Function and the police and Defence Functions.⁷⁰ Among these functions the police and the defence functions of the Union Parishad is one of the most important.⁷¹ Through the village police the Union Parishads discharge these

68. *The Bangladesh Local Council and Municipal Committee (Dissolution and Amendment Order,)* 1972 (Dacca, 20th January, 1972) Article 3 (1) A.

69. *Ibid.*, Art. 3(1) C.

70. *The Local Government Ordinance, 1976*, (Dacca, Bangladesh Government Press, 1976), Chapter IV.

71 *Ibid*, Art 31.

functions and maintain peace and security in the rural areas within the jurisdiction of the Union. Now the village police, i. e. the Mahalladar and dafadar exercise such powers and discharge such duties these which are specified in part two of the first schedule of the Local government ordinance, 1976.⁷²

Now the government is taking measures to make village police most efficient in matters of prevention and detection of crime. As a measure the government has declared the new pay scale for the village police in 1976 to include efficient men in the village police force.

At present the Mahalladar is getting Tk. 120 (fixed) instead of drawing Tk. in the scale of 70-1-100 per month, and Dafadar Tk. 135 (fixed) instead of pay in the scale of Tk. 80-4-120 per month of the previous year.⁷³ In the past the pay scale of the rural police was fixed by the government but the cost was borne by the Union from the Union Fund. It was a heavy burden upon the Union fund and was a great obstacle to the developmental works done by the Union Council or Union Board. But to-day the village police is entitled to receive his monthly salary from the office of the Union Parishad, 50 percent of which is borne by the Union Parishad and remaining 50 per cent by the government.⁷⁴ It thus saves a large amount which the Union Parishad can spend for other developmental purposes. In the past, the equipments of the village police were given by the government but the cost was paid by the Union Council from the Union Fund, but to-day they are getting their annual equipments free of cost. The government grants as amount for the same purpose which is distributed according to the strength of the village police of the respective districts under the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner distributes the equipments among the sub-divisions and the sub-divisional officer distributes it among the union parishads through the Circle Officer (Dev). For the braveous and gallantry performance of their duty there was a provision for rewarding the individual members of the rural police from the 'chowkidari reward fund'. All fines and penalties of the rural police were credited to that fund and they were rewarded from it. Now the present government has taken a decision to allot a sum of money to the 'District Village police Reward Fund' for rewarding the village police.⁷⁵ It is no doubt and important step towards development of the village police. To day they regard

72. *Ibid.*, Part II of the first schedule (For details discussion about the functions please See the Local government ordinance, 1976)

73. (a) Ministry's No. S-1/IU-2/76/5(19), dated, Dacca, the January 5 1976.

(b) Ministry's No. S-1/14-5/76/18(19), dated, Dacca, the January 17, 1976.

74. Notification No. S-1/C-3/79/800. dated, Dacca, the 23 December, 1979,

75. Notification No. S-1/G/16/79 /810(19) dated, Dacca the December 26. 1979.

themselves as purely the government servants. As a petty police their honour and prestige is more secure to-day than in the past.

Conclusion :

In order to make them more effective and purposeful, they should be given more facilities like other officers of the government. All the government officers are getting their rationing facilities, so the village police should also be given the same. To organise them in a directional and disciplined way, the union parishad as a self-governing unit of the rural areas must keep an eye over their activities, because the village police serve the village people under the authority of the Union Parishad. Both the chairman and members of the Union Parishad should actively co-operate and assist the village police in every problem which they face. The chairman and the member of the Union Parishad should see whether the village police are getting their way regularly or not.

In many places still they are not getting their monthly salary regularly. For instance, the village police of seven Unions of Satkhiras sub-division under the district of Khulna have not been getting their salary for long seven months.⁷⁶ We think that it is due to the negligence of the authority of the Union Parishad.

As Government servants, the village police should be entitled to travelling allowance for their weekly attendance to the Thana headquarter for communicating necessary informations to the officer-in-charge. In the days of abnormally high rise of price of the essential commodities their pay scale is very poor to led a simple life. Similar recommendations have been made by the chairmen of Dacca Division at a conference organised by the local Government Institute, Dacca in March 12, 1979.⁷⁷ In this regard we propose that this law paid government servants should be placed under any cadre system and should be given other opportunities along with the pay.

The policy of the present government is oriented to rural development and with this aim in view the government is giving more grants to the Union Parishad. Under the present arrangement the Union Parishad has to pay the salary of village police from its fund which means on the otherhand a curtailment of its development fund. If the government becomes the pay master of village police, two purposes will be served. Firstly, the Union Parishad will be relieved of the extra burden of their pay and it will help

76. *The Dainik Bangla* ; November 16, 1979.

77. K. O. Azam, and Hossain Ali "Union Parishader Bivinna Shamasha" Azam, *Local Government Quarterly* (Dacca Local Government Institute, 1979), Vol. 8, p. 57.

the Union Parishad to spend the additional money to other developmental activities, secondly, the village police will feel that they are government servants and will enjoy more job security and will psychologically be induced to do more work. Similar recommendations have been made by the rural development Academy, Bogra, in a week-long meeting of the newly elected chairmen of the Union Parishads of Rajshahi Division in 1977.⁷⁸

To keep watch over the activities of the village police and to make their more organised, effective and purposeful in matters of prevention and detection of crimes in the rural areas, an enquiry commission should be instituted by the Government in the light of Indian Police Commission 1902—03, and the Blandy Committee, 1936. Through the Committee government would be able to know the actual picture of the rural police and their workings, and the government should make an honest endeavour to organise and reactivate the village police according to recommendations that emerge from the inquiry committee. In the interest of village peace and security, the reorganisation and revitalisation of Village Police has become an important task for the government.

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79. Manzurul Mohammad Sultan, "Report on the Training of the Chairman of the Union Parishad, Rural Development Academy, Bogra 17 December, 1977 p. 11.

Question of Regional Ministries in Bengal for the Interim Period between the decision to Partition Bengal and the advent of Dominion States :

S. A. Akanda

During the Second World War the importance of India in the Allied war strategy and India's nationalist movement hastened the process of her independence. The Cripps Mission (1942)¹ and the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)² were intended to work out a formula for the gradual transfer of power to Indian hands.³ By the 1940s the All-India Muslim League had

1. On March 11, 1942. The British War Cabinet (1940—45) led by Prime Minister Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874—1965) decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps (1889—1952 ; a distinguished British Statesman; Ambassador to the USSR, 1940—42 ; Member of the War Cabinet, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, 1942—45 ; President of the Board of Trade, 1945—1947 ; Chancellor of the Exchequer [succeeding Hugh Dalton], 1947—50 ; afterward Lord Parmoor) to India for consultation with the leaders for the solution of the Indian problem.
2. The Cabinet Mission consisted of the three members of the British Cabinet led by Prime Minister Clement Attlee ; (i) Lord Pethic-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India ; (ii) Sir Stafford Cripps, President of Board of Trade ; and (iii) Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1945—46, and Minister without Portfolio from 4 October, 1946, later Viscount Alexander of Hillsborough. Their terms of reference were to 'seek agreement with Indian leaders and the subject of the agreement being constitutional principles and procedure. Neither the Cripps nor the Cabinet Mission were empowered to impose, or to recommend for imposition, any solution (as Lord Mountbatten did in 1947) ; nor were they to be concerned with the details of a future constitutional structure. They were not principals but mediators.
3. For details of negotiations between the representatives of His Majesty's Government and the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, See N. Mansergh (ed.), *The Transfer of Power 1942—47*, Vols. 1—X (London : Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1970—1981) ; H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide : Britain-India-Pakistan*, (London ; Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1969). Also see IOR L/PO/433—Private Papers of Mountbatten, Fortnightly Reports, 1—17, 1947, pp. 1—250 (This collection consists of the fortnightly reports of the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, dealing with the political situation in India, and day-to-day negotiations of the Viceroy with the Indian leaders regarding the *modus operandi* of the transfer of power. Also see Larry collins and Domini of the Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the partition of India* (March 22—August 15, 1947), Dacca, University Press Limited 1982.

redefined its constitutional objective to fight for a separate homeland.⁴ The Viceroy Lord Wavell (Field Marshal Viscount, later Earl, Archibald Percival Wavell, Viceroy and Governor-General of India from October 1943 to February 1947) was in favour of handing power to an united independent India stage by stage. By and large when the constitutional agreement between the two major political parties—the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League—became impossible, Clement Richard Attlee, British Prime Minister (1945–51), even hinted at the possible partition of India and early British withdrawal.⁵ On 20 February 1947, the British government announced their firm commitment to end the British rule in India by June 1948.⁶ This announcement raised the question of partitioning Bengal, an issue which was a threat to the Hindu *Bhadralok*.⁷ The incorporation of Bengal, in whole or two-thirds of the existing province with its

4. The historic Lahore [Pakistan] Resolution, adopted on 23 March 1940, declared :
 “ that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute ‘Independent States’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.”

Liaquat Ali Khan, *Resolutions of the All-India Muslims League* [from December 1938 to March 1940] (Delhi, n. d.), pp. 47–49.

5. It is claimed that Attlee was anxious to transfer power earliest and did not approve of Lord Wavell's proposal to hand over power to United India stage by stage. Therefore the Prime Minister suggested that Lord Wavell might even canvass the possibility of a settlement on the basis of a divided India, but Lord Wavell was dead against it as in his view it would make the defence of India extremely difficult, if not impossible. Hence Lord Wavell was replaced by Earl Mountbatten in February 1947, who processed partition of India and independence by August 1947. Humayun Kabir, *Muslim Politics 1906–47 and other Essays* (Calcutta : Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969), p. 71.
6. Statement by His Majesty's Government, 20 February, 1947, IOR R / 3 / 1 / 159, File No. 1446/22/GG/43, pp. 1–4, (This collection comprises the correspondences of the Governor of Bengal, the Viceroy, and the Secretary of State for India on the question of regional Ministries in Bengal during April–August 1947. This also includes the extracts of the meetings of the staff of the Viceroy and file notes of functionaries attached to the office of the Viceroy). *The Statesman* (Calcutta : 21 February, 1947).
7. ‘*Bhadralok*’ literally means the ‘respectable people’, the ‘gentlemen’. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the term was frequently used as a synonym for high caste Hindus—a socially privileged and consciously superior group. For a picture of the *Bhadralok* society, see H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society ; Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1968), pp. 5–41.

resources, and more than half of its Hindu population to Pakistan, meant putting the Hindu community at the hands of the Muslim political elite permanently; as a result, the Hindu elite were forced to the conclusion that the partition of Bengal was preferable to its total incorporation into Pakistan.⁸ While some leaders of the Bengal Muslim League including the Chief Minister, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy⁹ argued for an united

8. As early as January 1947, Major-General A. C. Chatterjee of *Azad Hind Army*, founded an Association to work for the division of Bengal. N. C. Chatterjee, "Separate Homeland for Bengali Hindus," *Tribune* (4 March 1947); *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (22 April 1947); *Hindusthan Standard* (20 April 1947). In February, the Hindu Mahasabha constituted an organising Committee with the objective of establishing a separate province for the Hindus of Bengal and started a movement in favour of the partition of Bengal. At the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha Conference at Tarakeswar during 4—6 April 1947, Nirmal Chandra Chatterjee, the working President of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, in his address stated :

"As the Muslim League persists in its fantastic idea of establishing Pakistan in Bengal, let us declare to-day that the Hindus of Bengal must constitute a separate province under a strong national government. This is not a question of partition. It is a question of life and death for us, the Bengalee Hindus." *Ibid.* (5 April 1947).

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee addressing the conference declared: "I can conceive of no other solution of the communal problems in Bengal than to divide the province and let the two major communities residing herein live in peace and freedom." *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (5—7 April, 1947). Again in a public meeting in Delhi on 22 April 1947, Dr. Mookerjee even declared: "This separation must not be dependent on Pakistan. Even if Pakistan is not conceded and some form of a weak and loose centre envisaged in the Cabinet Mission Scheme is accepted by the Muslim League, we shall demand the creation of a new province composed of the Hindu majority areas in Bengal." *Ibid.* (25 April 1947). Earlier the working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress, in its meeting held in Calcutta on 4 April 1947, also adopted a resolution in favour of partition of Bengal. *Ibid.* (5 April 1947). Surendra Mohan Ghosh, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, commenting on a statement of Suhrawardy declared: "An undivided Bengal in a divided India is an impossibility." *The Statesman* (2 May 1947). Sir Jadunath Sarkar (1870—1958) also advocated the formation of a new west Bengal Province, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* (2 June 1947). For details, see Amalendu De, *Swadhin Bangabhumi Gathaner Parikalpana: Prayash O Parinati* [Independent Bengal: The Design and Its Fate]. (Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan, 1975).

9. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, M. A.; B. C. L., Bar-At-Law (1893-1963). Born in an illustrious family at Midnapore (West Bengal); educated at Calcutta, Oxford and London; in early life associated with labour movement in Calcutta; Deputy Mayor of Calcutta while C. R. Das was the Mayor; member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1912-1936; member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1937-47; Minister of Bengal in A. K. Fazlul Huq Cabinet, 1937—41, and K. Nazimuddin Cabinet, 1943-45; Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, 1937—45; last Chief Minister of United

Bengal,¹⁰ the Bengal Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha demanded partition of the province.¹¹

Bengal, 1946—47; advocated independent sovereign, united Bengal in 1947; elected member to Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1947; but expelled in 1948 for retaining Indian citizenship; leader of Muslim League Parliamentary Party in West Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1947—49; migrated to Pakistan in 1949 and founded the Awami League; one of the Chief Organisers of the United Front in 1954; federal minister in the 'Cabinet of Talents' 1954—55; Member, CAP, 1954—55; leader of the opposition and one of the principal opposition spokesman on the constitution bill in 1956; member, National Assembly of Pakistan, 1956—58; Prime Minister, 1956—57; dismissed by President Iskander Mirza (1899—1969) though he claimed to have majority in the Assembly; challenged disqualification under EBDO during Martial Law 1958—62; arrested just before promulgation of Ayub constitution in 1962; on release advocated non-revival of political parties; organised the National Democratic Front (NDF) as a movement for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

A successful lawyer and a champion of the parliamentary form of government.

10. Arguing for an united Bengal, in a statement Suhrawardy declared; "I have always held the view that Bengal cannot be partitioned. I am in favour of a united and greater Bengal. I speak for myself. I speak for Bengal. I am visualising an independent undivided, sovereign Bengal in a divided India". Khwaja Nazimuddin, in a statement, declared: "It is my considered opinion that an independent sovereign Bengal is in the best interests of its people, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, and I am equally certain that partition of the province is fatal to the interests of Bengalis as such. Bengal has always received step-motherly treatment from the centre and the rest of the provinces. Whenever I talk to my Hindu friends their one demand is: let Bengal settle its own affairs. The logical conclusion of this demand is recognition of sovereign status for Bengal. Then and then only can Bengalis settle their own affairs." Of course, there was difference in the thinking of Nazimuddin from that of Suhrawardy. According to Nazimuddin, independent sovereign Bengal will be part of Pakistan. *The Statesman* (8, 9, 23, 26 and 28 April 1947).
11. On 26 April 1947, Kiran Sankar Roy (1891—1949), leader of the opposition in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (1901—1953), Hindu Mahasabha leader, and Bidhan Chandra Roy (1882—1962) held joint consultations and decided that a deputation of Bengal should meet the Congress Working Committee to impress on it the need for formally supporting the demand for partition of Bengal, when it meets next. *The Statesman* (28 April 1947);
The Calcutta Corporation, with the unanimous support of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha Councillors, adopted a resolution in support of the move for the partition of Bengal on 13 May 1947. The motion which was declared 'carried' urged that "Hindus and nationalists of Bengal must have a separate home of their own where they shall be free to maintain and develop their culture and civilization unhampered," and to achieve it, demanded "a new province

It was against this background that the British government offered the 3 June 1947 plan,¹² which specifically provided for the partition of India as well as of the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, and the creation of two independent States—India and Pakistan. This plan set out that the Provincial Assembly of Bengal would be asked to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim majority districts,¹³ and the other the rest of the province. The members of the two parts sitting separately would be empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned. If simple majority of either part decided in favour of partition, division would take place and arrangements would be made accordingly.¹⁴

Therefore, for the interim period between the decision to divide Bengal and handing over of powers, Sir Frederick John Burrows, the Governor (from February 1946 to 15 August 1947) thought of having a coalition government to run as a care-taker government till partition took place. The Governor confided to the Viceroy that he thought of forming a coalition government in Bengal as "a necessity" as early as 14 February 1947 "as offering the only hope of obviating partition in the first place, and then

be constituted out of those parts of Bengal including this great city where they form a majority of population and that under no circumstances Calcutta be made a neutral zone."

The motion also criticised the Bengal Ministry, requested the Governor to dissolve it forthwith, and pending final partition of the province, to constitute separate regional ministries, or in the alternative to take over the administration of the province under Section 93 of the Government of India Act. *Ibid.* (14 May 1947). Also see Nripendra Nath Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. I (Calcutta: The Annual Register's Office, 1947), pp. 37—38, 47—48, 53—54 and 241—42.

It was now the turn of the Muslims and the Scheduled Caste leaders to defend the ideal of an undivided Bengal. For Jogendra Nath Mandals's Statement, 21 April 1948, and K. Nazimuddin's statement, 22 April 1947 see *IAR*, p. 59; *The Statesman* (22—23 April 1947).

12. The plan of 3 June 1947, according to Lord Mountbatten, "was evolved at every stage by a process of open diplomacy with the leaders This system of open diplomacy was the only one suited to the situation." Quoted in H.V. Hodson, *op. cit.*, p. 393.
13. The Muslim majority districts of Bengal according to 1941 census were; (1) Chittagong Division—Chittagong, Noakhali and Tippera; (2) Dacca Division—Bakerganj, Dacca, Faridpur and Mymensingh; (3) Presidency Division—Jessore; Murshidabad and Nadia; and (4) Rajshahi Division—Bogra, Dinajpur, Malda, Pabna, Rajshahi and Rangpur.
14. Statement by His Majesty's Government, 3 June 1947, *IOR R/3/1/159*, pp. 1—4; *The Statesman* (4—5 June 1947).

since 3 June of affecting partition peacefully.¹⁵ Whatever might have been the origin or reason of the partition movement in Bengal, the argument that seemed to have influenced the Governor to think about a coalition ministry was that the Suhrawardy Ministry, according to him, was regarded by the Hindus as being no better than a Muslim Ministry though it had three non-Muslim Ministers. Hence, its title to be in sole office for the whole province and particularly to control the administration of West Bengal after a vote in favour of partition would be bitterly denied. Therefore, the arguments in favour of the coalition government, in such circumstances, seemed to the Governor to: (1) give the Hindu members on the Separation Committee equal standing and equal access to papers and officers; (2) to let the province at large to see they have this standing; (3) to avoid possibility of accusations, otherwise inevitable, that a government virtually drawn from one community only will take unfair advantage i. e., postings, appointments and disposition of supplies; (4) to form nucleus of two future governments; and (5) to give sufficient standing to the Hindus to enter into engagements with members of the services.¹⁶ With this end in view, he met Suhrawardy, the Bengal Chief Minister, and Kiran Sankar Roy,¹⁷ leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the Bengal Legislature. Suhrawardy rejected the idea "without in any way meeting my [Burrows] arguments" and made it clear that he would not like to make room for members of the opposition in his cabinet which he thought "could quite well carry on as a care-taker government till partition actually takes effect."¹⁸ Roy also argued that he did not think participation in a coalition ministry "for two months was necessary or likely to be usefull."

15. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, Telegram No. 389 of 14 February 1947 and Quoted in Telegram No. 163-C, dated 19 June 1947, *IOR R/3/1/159*, p. 8.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Kiran Sankar Roy (1891–1949). Born at Dacca; educated in Calcutta, Oxford and Lincoln's Inn; called to the Bar in 1921; Member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1923–35; and Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1937–47: Leader of the opposition Congress Parliamentary Party in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1940–47; Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in East Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1947, and also leader of the Opposition in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly during 1947–48; resigned from the CAP in 1948 and went to India; appointed Home Minister in Dr. B. C. Roy's Cabinet(s) (1948–62) but died in February 1949. S. P. Sen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography* (DMB), vol. II (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1973), pp. 53–55.

18. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy Telegram Confidential 159-C, dated (& received) 17 June 1947, in *IOR*, p. 5.

He also did not like the idea of Section 93,¹⁹ but suggested that the formation of regional ministries should be worth considering.²⁰ The Governor discussed the issue of forming regional ministries with Suhrawardy in details. Suhrawardy raised the question of great administrative difficulties in such an arrangement. He, however, did not turn the idea down. He promised that he would give full consideration to it in consultation with his colleagues and the Muslim League High Command. He assured the Governor that "I will do my best."²¹

The Governor felt that Jinnah would play a vital role in the making of Suhrawardy's decision. He, therefore, briefed the Viceroy to make every attempt "to interest Jinnah in the idea of regional ministries."²² On behalf of the Viceroy, General (Sir Hastings Lionel—later 1st Baron Ismay; Chief of Staff to the last Viceroy, Earl Mountbatten in 1947) Ismay met M. A. Jinnah²³ on 18 June, and enquired whether he would be willing to authorise Suhrawardy to form a regional ministry in Bengal for the interim

19. Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935, provided that if at any time the Governor of a Province was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the provincial administration could not be carried in accordance with the provision of the Act, he might assume himself all or any powers vested in or exercisable by any provincial authorities.

20. *IOR*, p. 5.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876—1948). Born at Karachi; educated in London; called to the Bar in 1896; entered politics in 1905 as a disciple of Congress leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866—1915) and Dadabhai Naoraji (1825—1917) and remained in the All-India Congress until 1920; joined the Muslim League in 1913; was mainly responsible for bringing about League-Congress reconciliation during 1913-16, and famous Lucknow Pact of 1916; described by Sarojini Naidu (1879—1949) as 'the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity'; Member, Indian Legislative Assembly from 1918 until 1947; leader of the Independent Group in the Assembly, and a member of the panel of Chairmen in 1920's; member of the Minority Reforms Enquiry Committee in 1925; formulated 'Fourteen Points' on the federal constitution of India in 1928; attended the Round Table Conference (ETC) in London in 1930 as a representative of Muslim India; after the conference settled in England until 1934, and corresponded with Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1873—1938, Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan); President, All-India Muslim League 1934—47; in 1936 reorganised the Muslim League and made it a mass organisation; adopted the Pakistan Resolution in the Muslim League Council meeting held at Lahore on 23 March 1940; led the Pakistan Movement until India was partitioned in 1947; first Governor-General of Pakistan, 1947-48.

Known as the Quaid-i-Azam (great leader) and the 'Father of the Nation'.

period. Jinnah "flatly declined."²⁴ Disappointed at Jinnah's response to the suggestion of regional ministries, the Governor thought of alternative solutions. Either, he would be required to continue with the present ministry with whatever safeguards of impartiality he could devise and enforce, or to go into Section 93. To the Hindus, the present ministry was a symbol of Muslim domination, although there were three Hindus in it, who of course, represented none. Its administrative control over West Bengal, in particular, after a vote in favour of partition would be challenged. Now the only way in which both the parties could be placed on a level of equality for the conduct of partition negotiations seemed to be by going into Section 93.

What would be the possible reaction of the League and the Congress to Section 93? Though K. S. Roy did not favour the imposition of Section 93 administration as against regional ministries, the Hindus in general, he thought, would be likely to welcome its imposition rather than have the existing government continue in office without any Congress elements. The Muslim League could very well argue that they still commanded an absolute majority in the legislature and hence there would be no point in going into Section 93. This argument was decisive in the context of a united Bengal. But in the event of a decision in favour of partition, the argument "in logic and equity..... loses much of its force."²⁵ The Governor's assessment of the situation was that "if I force Suhrawardy out of office I may not obtain the cooperation of the League in Separation Committee; on the other hand, I am doubtful if I shall obtain Congress cooperation if I retain the present ministry in sole charge."²⁶ Under these circumstances, the Governor thought, the Section 93 administration "by *agreement* if I can get agreement", offered the best chance of securing useful cooperation of both the parties. He did not expect an open agreement from Suhrawardy but "acquiescence" coupled with promise of League's cooperation in the Separation Committee. The Governor, therefore, sought authorisation from the Viceroy to declare Section 93.²⁷

In fulfilment of the 3 June proposal, the Bengal Legislative Assembly met in two sections on 20 June. Two questions were put to the members: Should Bengal be partitioned? And if so, which Constituent Assembly

[24. Viceroy to Governor of Bengal, Telegram 1489—S, dated 18 June 1947; repeated Viceroy's camp (Kashmir), following Ismay, in *IOR*, p. 7.

25. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, Telegram confidential No. 163—C, dated 19 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

should draft the constitution? In a joint meeting of the members (from the Muslim majority districts and Hindu majority districts) presided over by the speaker of the House Mr. Nurul Amin,²⁸ 90 members voted for Bengal joining the existing (Indian) Constituent Assembly and 126 members for a new and separate (Pakistan) Constituent Assembly.²⁹ Members representing Hindu majority districts met separately under the chairmanship of Maharajadhiraj Bahadur Sir Uday Chand Mahatab of Burdwan, and decided by 58 to 21 votes that Bengal should be partitioned and the constitution of the state comprising these areas should be framed by the existing Constituent Assembly (elected in 1946).³⁰ Members representing Muslim majority districts, sittings separately, decided by 106 to 35 votes against partition. When the results of the voting of the members of the Hindu majority areas were communicated to them, they decided by 107 to 34 votes that the state comprising the Muslim majority districts should join the proposed Pakistan Constituent Assembly.³¹

28. Nurul Amin, B. A., LL. B. (1897-1974). Born at Comilla; family moved to Mymensingh; educated at Dacca and Calcutta; joined Mymensingh Bar in 1924; President, Mymensingh District Muslim League, 1937-49; Chairman, Mymensingh District Board, 1937-47; Member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1942-45; Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1943-47; Speaker, Bengal (United) Legislative Assembly, 1946-47; Member, East Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1947-54, Minister in Khwaja Nazimuddin Cabinet, 1947-48; Chief Minister, East Bengal, 1948-54; Member, Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 1947-54; defeated in 1954 elections; a leading member of the National Democratic Front (NDF) since its inception in 1962; Chairman, NDF, 1964-67; Leader of the opposition in the National Assembly of Pakistan, 1965-69; Chairman, Pakistan Democratic Movement, 1967-69; Chairman, Pakistan Democratic Party, 1969-71; supported Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his four demands of 7 March 1971 speech at Race Course Maidan at Dacca; moved to Pakistan during liberation war of Bangladesh and did not return to Bangladesh; Vice-President, Pakistan, 1972-74.

A strong advocate of Parliamentary form of government in Pakistan during 1958-71.

29. *The Statesman* (21 June 1947).
30. Those who voted for partition of Bengal consisted of 48 Congress members, including 13 Scheduled Caste members, 4 Anglo-Indians, 2 independents, 2 communists, one Indian Christian and one Hindu Mahasabha member. The opposition included 21 Muslim League members including Suhrawardy. *Ibid.*
31. All Muslim League members in this part of the Assembly, numbering 100, voted against partition and for joining the new Constituent Assembly. 5 Scheduled Caste members and one Indian Christian supported them. 34 Congress members including K.S. Roy voted for partition and joining the existing Constituent Assembly. One Communist member in this section voted with the Congress on the issue

No sooner had the news of the decisions taken by the members of the Hindu majority area to partition Bengal become public than the Hindu leaders demanded for the dissolution of the Suhrawardy Cabinet and formation of regional ministries. A demand for the immediate dissolution of the present Bengal Ministry and the formation of two regional ministries was made in a resolution at a meeting at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta on 21 June 1947, presided over by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee.³² In a telegram to the Viceroy, the General Secretary of the Provincial Hindu Mahasabha sent the resolution adopted at the meeting and argued that the present ministry had no moral or constitutional rights to continue in office and power after the clear verdict in favour of partition of Bengal. The formation of two regional Ministries, one for West Bengal and the other for East Bengal, he added, "was essential in order to make impossible any unfair distribution of assets and other division of liability as between the two provinces and also any precipitate and inequitable withdrawal of food grains and other essential commodities from West Bengal."³³

Faced with this situation, the Governor thought of Section 93 as an alternative. He had a long discussion with Suhrawardy on 21 June and made it clear to him that since decision had been taken for partition of Bengal and now the principal business would be dividing up assets and

of partition and with the Muslim League on the question of joining the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. Two notable absentees were Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq (1873—1962, Chief Minister of Bengal 1937—43), and Mr. J. C. Gupta. *Ibid.*

32. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, M. A., Ph. D. (1901—1953). Born in Calcutta in an illustrious family; son of Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee (1864—1924); educated in Presidency College, Calcutta and at Lincoln's Inn, London; elected to Bengal Legislative Council in 1929 from the University Constituency; elected to University Senate in 1924; Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, 1934—38; joined the Hindu Mahasabha and became its Acting President in 1939; Finance Minister in A.K. Fazlul Huq's Cabinet, 1941—42; Minister for Industries and Supplies in the first National Government of India, 1947—50; elected to first Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament, Lower House) from North Calcutta in 1952; leader of opposition in the Parliament during 1950-53; bent his energies to partition Pakistan; primarily to his efforts that part of Bengal and Punjab was saved for India; that explains his famous retort; "Congress partitioned India and I partitioned Pakistan."
33. General Secretary, Hindu Mahasabha to Viceroy, Telegram dated 21 June 1947, in *IOR R/3/1/159*, pp. 10A—10B; *The Statesman* (22 June 1947). The Congress members also demanded dissolution of the Suhrawardy Cabinet and appointment of Separate regional Ministries. *The Statesman* (22 June 1947).

liabilities between the two provinces. He "did not consider it feasible for a Ministry drawn from one side only to continue in sole charge of the whole province." He also pointed out that "any attempt to maintain the present ministry in sole charge would invite attempt to set up parallel government in West Bengal suppression of which he would not wish, or be in a position to handle." Since the alternative solution of coalition ministry and the regional ministry having been rejected both by the Congress and the League, the Governor wanted to know what Suhrawardy would suggest.³⁴ Suhrawardy did not give his answer directly but replied "why put the onus on me? Why should I commit political suicide?"³⁵ By replying indirectly, what he intended to mean was that he was not going to suggest what the Governor should do or help him to go into Section 93. Actually, Suhrawardy was trying to put the whole responsibility for the action on the Governor. However, it seems, according to the Governor, Suhrawardy promised full cooperation even under Section 93 in the process of partition and had in fact named Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin³⁶ and himself as the two League members in the Separation Committee, and also nominated a Muslim Officer for the official Steering Committee.³⁷ In fact, Suhrawardy was not in favour of Section 93. The Governor, however, in anticipation of cooperation from both the parties, prepared everything for going into Section 93 and sought Viceroy's formal concurrence for its proclamation by 23 June 1947.³⁸

34. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, (repeated Viceroy's camp, Kashmir) Telegram No. 166—C dated 21 June 1947, *IOR*, p. 12.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Khwaja Nazimuddin, M.A., Bar-at-Law, C.I.E. (1894—1964), Born at Dacca; a member of the illustrious Nawab family; educated at Aligarh, Cambridge and London; entered politics in 1922; Chairman, Dacca Municipality, 1922—29; elected to Bengal Legislative Council in 1923; member, Bengal Executive Council, 1934—37; Knighted in 1934; member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1937—47; Minister in Fazlul Huq Cabinet, 1937—41; leader of opposition and of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party, 1941—43; Chief Minister of Bengal, 1943—45, member of the All-India Muslim League Working Committee, 1937—47; first Chief Minister of East Bengal, 1947—48; Governor-General of Pakistan (succeeding Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah), 1948—51; Prime Minister of Pakistan (succeeding Liaquat Ali Khan), 1951—53; dismissed by Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad in April 1953; Member Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 1947—54; President, Pakistan Council Muslim League, 1962—64; Organised Combined opposition parties (COP) for electoral battle against President Ayub Khan in 1964; advocated restoration of parliamentary democracy and independence of the judiciary.

37. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, *IOR*, p. 12.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 12—13.

The Viceroy was away in Kashmir. Ismay saw Jinnah. Jinnah pointed out that the Bengal Governor's intention threatening Suhrawardy of going into Section 93 if he did not accept regional ministries would be *ultra vires*.³⁹ Jinnah begged Ismay as well as the Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy (APSV) to inform the Viceroy requesting him to take no final decision till he had discussion with Jinnah. The Viceroy's Assistant Private Secretary informed the Viceroy in Kashmir that "we [the government] ought to accede to Jinnah's request" i. e., the Suhrawardy Cabinet must be allowed to continue. The Viceroy should telegraph to the Governor of Bengal to "hold his horses until he received further instructions."⁴⁰

After his meeting with the Governor Suhrawardy held consultations with the members of the League Parliamentary Party in Bengal. He then wrote to the Governor that the members of the League Parliamentary Party considered that to go into Section 93 would be wholly unconstitutional so long as the province remained united. As between a coalition Ministry and Section 93, they preferred a coalition Ministry and they stated that a Coalition Ministry or Joint Ministry (Regional Ministry) must be given a test before Section 93 could be imposed. They thought the correct position would be for the present ministry to function as a care-taker Government until separate Legislatures could be set up.⁴¹

On his return from Kashmir, the Viceroy met Jinnah. The Viceroy said he had two alternative suggestions to offer, namely, (a) Coalition Government, and (b) Regional Ministries. To neither of these did Jinnah first agree.⁴² The Viceroy then proposed that the existing Government in Bengal should remain in power but that "a shadow cabinet should be formed in West Bengal which should be invested with a right of veto over all decisions taken by the government affecting West Bengal." To this Jinnah agreed.⁴³ If Jinnah did not agree to either of the proposals, the Governor of Bengal was left with no alternative but to take the administration of Bengal in his own hand under Section 93. The ostensible reason for deciding

39. APSV to Governor of Bengal, Telegram No. 1533—S dated 21 June 1947 (following from Ismay), and Telegram No. 1534—S, 21 June 1947, *Ibid.*, pp. 16—17.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

41. Tyson, Secretary to the Governor of Bengal to Viceroy's Secretariat, New Delhi, message over telephone, 23 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

42. Viceroy to Governor of Bengal, Telegram No. 1552—S, dated 24 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

43. *Ibid.*

in favour of Section 93 or finding out one of the solutions was the risk that if the present Suhrawardy ministry remained in office, the Hindus of West Bengal might take it into their own hands to set up a parallel government in Calcutta which would inevitably cause widespread trouble. The real reason on the part of the Governor for stressing it too much for a decision for one of the solutions was the fact that it was unfair that during the two months before the transfer of power all the assets of the whole of Bengal should be in the control of one party, while the other party would have no means of getting access to information, nor have a legal position from which to hold a watching brief for the Hindus when the division of the assets and liabilities of the government were to be decided. Speculation about Section 93 was so ripe in Calcutta that the Governor felt "I must put out a press note and broadcast explaining continuance of present ministry."⁴⁴

Accordingly, for the implementation of the plan, George Edmond Brackenbury Abell, Private Secretary to the Viceroy (1945—47) issued the following instructions to the Governor of Bengal:

- (a) the members of the shadow cabinet should be sworn in as members of the government ;
- (b) they should be without portfolio ; and
- (c) they should be given opportunity to see papers affecting West Bengal and that any proposal about West Bengal should not be given effect without their concurrence. Swearing in of ministers was necessary. Otherwise, they would have access to information and a good deal of power without any statutory responsibility.⁴⁵

The Governor, on receipt of the communication, sought the permission of the Viceroy to issue a press note and broadcast immediately explaining the continuance of the present Ministry with addition of "Shadow Ministers".⁴⁶ The Governor then summoned H. S. Suhrawardy, and Dr. P. C. Ghosh (1891—), the leader of the West Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party. On 26 June evening, while Suhrawardy accepted the terms of the announcement which the Governor proposed to make in regard to

44. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, Telegram No. 170—S, dated 24 June 1947, *Ibid.*, pp. 24—25.

In another telegram to the Viceroy, the Governor confided that the "Hindu feeling here is very strong against continuance of present Ministry" and warned that "we cannot face possibility of a 'movement in West Bengal'." Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, Telegram No. 173—S, dated 25 June (received 26 June) 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 27.

45. George E.B. Abell, Secretary to the Viceroy's note in reply to Bengal Governor's Secretary's phone call on 24 June 1947. *Ibid.*, p. 26. Viceroy to Governor of Bengal, Telegram No. 1652—S, dated 29 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

46. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, dated 25 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the reformation of his Ministry, the Congress Leader "absolutely refused to accept" the proposal for a "Shadow Cabinet" before he could discuss the matter with the Congress High Command in Delhi.⁴⁷ The Governor of Bengal, in anticipation, alerted the Viceroy on the necessity of persuading the "Congress High Command to accept it on behalf of themselves and their local representatives".⁴⁸ The Viceroy also supplied a text of the draft instructions based on the draft press statement on the agreement about the Shadow Cabinet for West Bengal to the Congress High Command and assured the Governor that this would be acceptable to the Congress.⁴⁹

After his return to Calcutta, Dr. Ghosh met the Governor and accepted the proposal. Thereupon Dr. Ghosh was asked to submit the names of the members of his "Shadow" Cabinet. Suhrawardy welcomed Dr. Ghosh on the formation of his Cabinet and extending hand of cooperation, in a statement, issued to the press, said, the partition of India and Bengal had been decided upon. The latter had been only 'nationally' partitioned along very general lines. Therefore, "we must work out of the partition of Bengal in a spirit of peace and cooperation. Our disputes and differences must be transferred from the jungle to a higher plane where they can be resolved in a spirit of reasonableness."⁵⁰

With the concurrence of the Viceroy, the Governor Sir Frederick Burrows, in a broadcast from Calcutta on the night of 1 July 1947, announced the decision to set up "a cabinet in respect of the non-Muslim majority part of the Province." He had asked Dr. P. C. Ghosh to nominate members of his new cabinet (exactly corresponding opposite numbers to the existing ministries) who would be sworn in as Ministers. Explaining the relationship between the existing government and the new Ministers, the Governor added:—

The present Ministry would be in actual administrative charge of the various portfolios but the policies which they formulated would be implemented only in East Bengal unless the West Bengal Ministers agreed to their application to, and implementation in, West Bengal. On all questions affecting West Bengal, the West Bengal Ministers shall be consulted. In the event of a difference of opinion, the case will be referred to the cabinet. The West Bengal Ministers

47. Notes by G. Abell, PSV and Ian Dixon Scott, Deputy PSV on the telephone messages received from Bengal Governor's Secretary on 26 and 28 June 1947 respectively; *Ibid.*, pp. 28—28A.

48. Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, Telegram No. 173—S, dated 25 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 27.

49. Viceroy to Governor of Bengal, Telegram No. 1651-S, dated 29 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

50. *The Statesman* (1 July 1947).

will have the right to call for relevant papers and to comment thereon or on their own initiative to ask the Secretariat to examine any proposal. They will also have the right to initiate policies in matters solely concerning West Bengal, and any decision reached by them shall be implemented by the government. The work of the government for this short interim period will be limited as far as practicable to routine administration, and to affording all the assistance possible to the Separation Council and its committees in their work of preparing and settling the terms of partition.

Though this was not an ideal form of government, it was, in the words of the Governor, "a novel expedient designed to meet novel situation".⁵¹

Dr. P.C. Ghosh submitted the list of ten Ministers for his Shadow Cabinet to the Governor on 2 July 1947. The ministers of the Shadow Cabinet were introduced to the Governor by Mohammad Ali,⁵² Finance Minister (Officiating Chief Minister in the absence of Suhrawardy then in Sylhet), who were then sworn in as Ministers.⁵³ The list below shows allocation of portfolios to new Ministers against existing Ministers :⁵⁴

| Department | Ministers-in-Charge | Corresponding West Bengal Ministers. |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Chief Ministers | } Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy | Dr. P. C. Ghosh |
| 2. Home (excepting Jails Branch) | | |

51. Viceroy to Governor of Bengal, Telegram No. 1652-S, dated 29 June 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 30B. Draft announcement, *Ibid.*, pp. 33—35, and message from the Governor's Secretary to I. D. Scott, Viceroy's office on the operative part of the broadcast on 1 July 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 36.

52. Mohammad Ali, B. A. (1909—1963). Born at Bogra : a member of the Nawab family and grandson of Nawab Sayid Nawab Ali Choudhury (1863—1929) of Dhanbari in Mymensingh (now in Tangail); educated in Calcutta; Chairman, Bogra District Board, 1936—37; member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1937—47; Parliamentary Secretary under Chief Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin, 1943-45; Minister of United Bengal in Suhrawardy Cabinet, 1946—47; member, CAP, 1947—48; Ambassador to Burma, 1948—49; High Commissioner to Canada, 1949—52; Ambassador to USA, 1952-53; Prime Minister of Pakistan (in succession to K. Nazimuddin), 1953—55; Ambassador to USA 1955—57; Ambassador to Japan, 1957—61; Member, National Assembly of Pakistan, 1962—63; Minister foreign Affairs in the Presidential Cabinet of Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, 1962—63, and leader of the Government party in the National Assembly, 1962—63.

At the time of election in April-May 1962 was an advocate of parliamentary democracy, but in June 1962 became a supporter of the centralised Presidential system.

53. *IOR*, p. 45. *The Statesman* (3—4 July 1947).

54. The Secretariat organisation in Bengal provided for 15 Ministries, With 11 Ministers only, in the Muslim League Cabinet, a Certain amount of combination

| Department | Ministers-in-Charge | Corresponding West Bengal Ministers. |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 3. Finance | } Mr. Mohammad Ali | Dr. B. C. Roy Temporarily Mr. J.N. Panja |
| 4. Health & Local Self-Government. | | |
| 5. Judicial | } Mr. Nagendra Narayan Roy | Mr. Mohini Mohan Barman |
| 6. Legislative | | |
| 7. Land & Land Revenue | } Mr. Fazlur Rahman | Mr. Kalipada Mookerji |
| 8. Home (Jails) | | |
| 9. Agriculture, Forest & Fisheries | Mr. Ahmed Hossain | Mr. Hem Chandra Naskar |
| 10. Commerce, Labour & Industries | Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed | Dr. Suresh Chandra Banarjee |
| 11. Education | Mr. Saiyed Muazzam-uddin Hossain | *Mr. Nikunja Bihari Maity. |
| 12. Co-operation, Credit & Relief | Mr. A. F M. Abdur Rahman | Mr. Kamal Krishna Roy |
| 13. Works & Buildings | Mr. Dwarka Nath Baroi | Mr. Bimal Chandra Sinha |
| 14. Irrigation & Waterways | Mr. Tara'nath Mukerjee, CIE, MBE | *Mr. Nikunja Bihari Maity |
| 15. Civil Supplies | Mr. Abdul Gofran | Mr. Radhanath Das |

*Mr. Nikunja Behari Maity was duplicating these portfolios while the West Bengal Ministry short of one Minister.

Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Dr. B. C. Roy were not the members of the Bengal Assembly, and as such, were supposed to get themselves elected within six months from the date of assumption of office. Dr. Ghosh also included the name of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, as a member of the West Bengal Shadow Cabinet, but he declined the offer. Explaining why he was unable to join Dr. Ghosh's cabinet, Dr. Mookerjee, in a statement termed the situation as "anomalous". He said: "The new Ministers cannot do any good unless they have the authority to deal directly with the administrative machinery of the Province. The League Ministry will have administrative control over the entire Province and the West Bengal Ministers will not be entitled to have any say whatsoever on questions of policy administration in respect of East Bengal. This is not only anomalous but highly derogatory."⁵⁵ On 5 July 1947 B. C. Sinha was sworn in as the 11th member of the West Bengal cabinet.

of Ministries arose. It was to secure the same combination of Ministries for the shadow Ministers that Dr. P.C. Ghosh was asked to appoint his colleague as exactly corresponding "opposite numbers" to the existing Ministers.

⁵⁵, *The Statesman* (4 July 1947).

The Working of the New Cabinet :

The new Ministers attended their first Cabinet meeting on 5th July. Discussion was throughout very cordial and the attitude of the West Bengal (Shadow) Ministers was entirely helpful. This was specially noticeable under the item 'food' when their attitude to the needs of the deficit areas, almost entirely in East Bengal at the moment, could not have been improved upon. They made no distinction between East and West Bengal.⁵⁶

The two cabinets in Bengal worked smoothly since the induction of West Bengal Shadow Cabinet. The Suhrawardy cabinet, still in-charge of administration of the whole Province, had no difference with Dr. Ghosh's cabinet. There was full harmony and cooperation between the two cabinets and according to Mohammad Ali, "there was no hitch over any issue."⁵⁷ The Bengal Government decided on 12 July to appoint two officers as Joint heads of each Department, one nominated by the League Ministry and the other by Congress Shadow Ministry. The two officers in charge of a Department had equal powers,⁵⁸ On being interviewed, Dr. Ghosh said, "we enjoy full powers and have complete control of affairs affecting our province. We have initiated new policies and issued orders for carrying them out."⁵⁹

In the first week of August the two cabinets agreed to an arrangement under which all European and Muslim officers who had elected to serve in East Bengal to be replaced immediately by officers of the West Bengal

56. The Bengal famine of 1943 and its aftermath of misery and disease left for the Bengal government a serious food problem. The population of Bengal in 1941 was 61.15 millions of which six millions lived in urban and fifty-five millions in rural areas, majority of whom in East Bengal. It was estimated that Bengal needed 9, 800,000 tons of rice a year ; the total rice available in 1943 was under 7,000,000 tons a deficit of 2,800,000 tons. The price of rice went up. From April 1943 through April 1944, about 260,000 families had sold their rice lands ; and had thus lost their only means of living. About 660,000 families had sold their rice lands of partially and about 670,000 mortgaged their lands. Thus about 1.5 million families constituting one fourth of the number which had rice lands, before the famine had either sold fully or Partially or had mortgaged their rice land, P.C. Mahalanobis, "The Bengal Famine", IOR L/E/8/3321. Quoted in M. K. U. Molla, "The Bengal Cabinet Crisis of 1945," *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1980, pp. 132—133.

Since then the food problem has been the headache of every administration in Bengal, East Bengal/Pakistan and Bangladesh.

57. *The Statesman* (26 July 1947).

58. *Ibid.* (13 July 1947).

59. *Ibid.* (26 July 1947).

Ministry's choice.⁶⁰ Those intending to retire on 15 August were to remain in their present post for the intervening period. But, in the meantime, officers selected by West Bengal Ministry for those posts, "will join the various departments concerned as special officers and understudy the present incumbents to ensure a smooth changeover."⁶¹ Mr. S. Sen, Chief Secretary-designate, West Bengal joined the Secretariat on 2 August as Special Officer to understudy Sir Harold Samuel Eaton Stevens, Chief Secretary, Bengal (from 1946) till the latter's retirement on or before 15 August 1947. Mr. S. Gupta, Inspector-General of Police-designate; Mr. S. N. Chatterji, Calcutta Police Commissioner-designate also started working in similar capacities. The League Ministry selected Mr. Aziz Ahmed,⁶² then on deputation to Government of India, as Chief Secretary, East Bengal, and Mr. Zakir Husain,⁶³ Superintendent of Police, Dacca as Inspector-General of Police, East Bengal.⁶⁴

On 5 August, Khwaja Nazimuddin was elected leader of East Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Party (defeating Suhrawardy by 75 to 39 votes).⁶⁵ As Suhrawardy was an advocate of sovereign, independent united Bengal, independent of Pakistan, the landlord and orthodox section of the Bengal Muslim League (Maulana Akram Khan, Nurul Amin, Yusuf Ali

60. 23 out of 40 British ICS officers preferred to retire. 11 ICS British officers and 19 Muslim ICS officers declared their readiness to serve in Pakistan (all 59 Hindu ICS officers decided to serve in India). *Ibid.* (15-20 July 1947). Till 3 August the latest figures available, showed that of the 990 members of the ICS (Europeans 441, non-Muslim 450 Muslims 99), 93 Muslims and 73 British officers preferred to join Pakistan Government. *Ibid.* (3 August 1947).

61. *The Statesman* (3 August 1947).

62. Aziz Ahmed (1906—1982). Born in a landlord family in the Punjab; educated in Lahore; Joined the Indian Civil Service (ICS) in 1930; served in the Punjab and Bengal in different capacities until 1945; on deputation to Government of India until August 1947; Chief Secretary, East Pakistan, 1947—52; Secretary under the Central Government since 1952; Secretary Foreign affairs, Pakistan twice one in 1950's and then in 1960's; Pakistan's Ambassador to the USA in 1960's; Minister, Foreign Affairs, Pakistan in Z. A. Butto's Cabinet 1973—77.

63-64. Zakir Husain, B. A. (1898—?). Born at Chittagong; educated at Dacca and Aligarh; joined the Indian Police Service in 1923; served in Bengal in different capacities until 1947; first Inspector-General of police, East Pakistan, 1947—52; Chairman, Federal Public Service Commission, 1953—57; Governor of East Pakistan during Martial Law, 1958—60; Minister in the Martial Law Cabinet of President Ayub Khan, 1960—62.

65. *The Statesman* (6 August 1947). Mr. Habibullah Bahar proposed the name of Khwaja Nazimuddin and was seconded by Muhammad Rukunuddin. Suhrawardy's name was proposed by Md. Khuda Bukh and seconded by A. T. Mazharul Huque. *Ibid.*

Choudhury, Hamidul Huq Choudhury, Habibullah Bahar, and others), with the tacit approval of the central leadership of the All-India Muslim League, manoeuvred Suhrawardy out of the Leadership of the East Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Party.⁶⁶ It is also alleged that it was publicised amongst the Muslim members of the Bengal Legislature that it would not be safe to hand over the leadership of East Bengal in the hands of Suhrawardy, a resident of West Bengal and Calcutta.⁶⁷ However, following the election of Khwaja Nazimuddin as the Chief Minister-designate of the Province of East Bengal in Pakistan, a joint statement was issued by H. S. Suhrawardy, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Dr. P. C. Ghosh: "The Governments of East and West Bengal propose to work in a most friendly manner, whatever differences we may have, we shall always try to resolve them by peaceful methods."⁶⁸

on 14 August 1947, East Bengal became a new province and a part of Pakistan on the basis of 'notional partition' as provided in the 3 June Plan. A three member cabinet with Khwaja Nazimuddin as Chief minister of East Bengal along with Nurul Amin and Hamidul Huq Choudhury as Ministers was sworn in. The Suhrawardy cabinet, which was in overall charge of the government in Calcutta so long, handed over power to the Shadow Cabinet on 15 August which now assumed the sole charge of the administration of West Bengal within the framework of the 3 June announcement subject to the demarcation of boundaries by the Bengal Boundary Commission appointed in early July 1947.⁶⁹

66. *The Azad* (8, 10, 23, 31 July, and 6 August 1947).

67. *Hindustan Standard* (6 August 1947). Also quoted in Amalendu De, *op cit.*, p. 112.

68. *The Statesman* (9 August 1947).

69. The Bengal Boundary Commission's award, announced on 17 August 1947, drew up a line across the heart of Bengal and awarded all the Muslim majority districts, with the exception of Murshidabad, and major parts of Nadia, Malda and Dinajpur to East Bengal, leaving in India slightly more than a third of Bengal's land and people and only a slightly more than half of Hindu population.

The following was the percentage-wise distribution of the Muslims and non-Muslims and of total areas in West and East Bengal (under the award made by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission):

| | West Bengal | East Bengal |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Muslims | 5,301,021 | 27,704,414 |
| Non-Muslims | 15,893,593 | 11,407,498 |
| Total ; | 21,194,613 | 39,111,912 |

Conclusion

Since February 1947, the Governor of Bengal was endeavouring to form a coalition ministry in Bengal with the "hope of obviating partition in the first place, and then since 3 June of affecting partition peacefully." But neither the League Ministry nor the Congress opposition desired it. The Governor then suggested the alternative of regional Ministries when the partition of the province was becoming a foregone conclusion, but the idea was not acceptable to one side. Then suggestions were made in many quarters to take the administration of the province by the Governor under Section 93. But this was hotly contested by the League. The Congress also initially did not support it and preferred regional ministries. Though the Governor evaluated the alternative proposals in discussion with the leaders, his attempt had always been to find out a compromise formula to which both sides would agree, because after 20 June the Suhrawardy Ministry was admittedly quite unrepresentative in one of the two provinces. The problem was finally solved after a process of hard-bargaining between the Governor and the Bengal leaders and the Viceroy and the League and Congress high Command. Dr. P.C. Ghosh, the leader of the West Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party was asked to nominate the members of a Shadow cabinet exactly corresponding to the opposite numbers of the existing ministers. The persons so nominated were sworn in as ministers and were entitled to participate in all the meetings of the cabinet. However, the Suhrawardy Ministry was in actual administrative charge of the various portfolios but the policies they formulated were to be implemented only in East Bengal, unless the members of the West Bengal Shadow

| | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| Muslim as % of Total | 25.01% | 70.83% |
| Non-Muslims as % of | | |
| Total | 74.99% | 29.17% |
| Area in sq. miles | 28,033 | 49,409 |
| Density of popn. | | |
| per sq. mile | 756 | 792 |

Under the award 36.20% of the total area and 35.14% of the total population of Bengal went to West Bengal, while East Bengal got 63.80% and 64.86% respectively. Of the total Muslim population of Bengal, 16.06% went to West Bengal and 83.94% to East Bengal, while of the total non-Muslim population of Bengal, West Bengal got 58.22% and East Bengal 41.78%. *The Statesman* (19 August 1947).

cabinet agreed to their application to and implementation in West Bengal. On all questions affecting West Bengal, the West Bengal Ministers were to be consulted. They had the right to initiate policies in matters solely concerning West Bengal and any decision reached by them were to be implemented by the Government. On 15 August 1947, the Shadow Cabinet assumed the sole charge of administration of the province of West Bengal.

Table 1: Distribution of the total area and population of Bengal, West Bengal and East Bengal, 1947.

| Area in sq. miles | Population | Density of population |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 78,000 | 28,000,000 | 359 per sq. mile |
| 28,125 | 10,000,000 | 355 per sq. mile |
| 49,875 | 18,000,000 | 361 per sq. mile |

Notes: The total area of Bengal was 78,000 sq. miles and the total population was 28,000,000. The total area of West Bengal was 28,125 sq. miles and the total population was 10,000,000. The total area of East Bengal was 49,875 sq. miles and the total population was 18,000,000. The density of population in Bengal was 359 per sq. mile, in West Bengal it was 355 per sq. mile and in East Bengal it was 361 per sq. mile.

Inter-Regional Trade and the Location of Industrial Activities — Implication for Regional Disparity in Industrial Development.

M. Azhar-Ud-Din

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence as well as the stubborn persistence of regional differences in various levels of national development have long been recognized by economists throughout the historical experience of almost all the advanced countries of the world. Such disparities are to be found in developing countries too ; and perhaps this problem is more acute in these countries. Erstwhile Pakistan provides an ideal case for the study of such disparities. The county was composed of two distinct regions of East and West Pakistan separated both geographically and culturally from one another. Not only were disparities in per capita income and economic well-being glaring between the two regions, but also the non-resolution of such disparities could be held responsible for the break-up of Pakistan and secession of East Pakistan as an independent state of Bangladesh in 1971.

The present study proposes to focus on the locational aspect of regional disparities in the development of industrial activities with reference to inter-regional trade during the period from the 1947/48 to 1969/70. It will thus analyse the justification of the policy determind choice of industrial location, especially the location of the cotton textile industry in the erstwhile regions of East and West Pakistan. Throughout the study we would use the terms Bangladesh or B and West Pakistan or W for the two regions respectively.

II, DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The present study uses data obtained mainly from two sources e.g. The Monthly Statistical Bulletin and the Census of Manufacturing Industries (CMI). Both of these were the publications of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of the then Government of Pakistan. While the former beginning from 1948 used to have been regularly publised, the latter was

published for the first time in 1954, and then with irregular periodicity. Thus the data available from the various issues of the Bulletins are used for the whole period under review. But those from the CMIs cannot be done so because of the non-availability of even some of the published issues, especially of the 1960s.

We calculated average growth rates of the regional distribution of cotton textile mills, installed capacities of spindles and looms as well as estimated regional average and percentage figures in the production of yarn per spindle and cloth per loom hour. In doing so we had to face the difficulty arisen out of lack uniformity with regard to data on the quantities of individual commodities produced in the industries and entered into trade. Figures for some items and for some periods were missing. Furthermore, the CSO in some cases published different figures for some goods produced and traded in a particular period in different issues of its Bulletin. The explanations for such, so to say, erratic revision of figures was rather difficult to find. In addition, we had to face frequent printing mistakes in handling the data. In all such cases we had to depend upon a reasonable conjecture.

The rates of return on capital for some selected manufacturing industries of both the regions have been calculated based on the CMIs data on value added, fixed assets as well as working capital. However, the results of the Censuses were largely constrained by under reporting or non-response. Thus a CSO study revealed that the total value added in large scale industry in the CMI of 1959/60 was understated to the extent of 9.5% for B and 5.8% for W. A survey of industrial units in 1960 and 1961 by Papanek also corroborated the fact that there was a tendency on the part of the respondents to under-state outputs and overstate total capital costs simply to avoid tax assessments [18]. However, because of non-availability of any other reliable source in this regard, our calculations are expected to give fair results.

The rate of return is defined for the present purpose as the ratio of value added to fixed assets plus working capital expressed in terms of percentage

$$R_i = \frac{V_i}{F_i + V_i} \times 100$$

The purpose of this exercise

is : (a) to examine as to whether, inter-regional allocation of manufacturing investment was dictated by consideration of production efficiency ; (b) to analyse as to how the rates of return on capital between the regions were

related to the levels of capital ; and (c) to provide a basis for assessing as to whether inter-regional redistribution of manufacturing industries in Pakistan had followed the pattern suggested by temporal changes in their profitability in the two regions.

The concept of profitability as used here refers to social rather than private profitability [20]. By definition profit is equal to value added net of cost of employment. In estimating the rates of return we have used value added rather than profit in the numerator. The reason for the comparison of social rather than private profitability between the two regions is evident from the nature of the problem to be dealt with : that given the system of restriction whereby public policy determined resource allocation, it is the social rather than private profitability which is the relevant criterion for guiding such allocation. In trying to evaluate policies it is, therefore, necessary to compare social profitability between the regions.

III REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

The pattern and the changing composition of inter-regional trade in Pakistan are alleged to have been largely influenced by the policy of the Central Government rather than by any rational economic choice of location of new industrial activities between the regions. It is, of course, true that under the protective tariff and import control policy of the Government, industrialization had been faster in W than in B. There is evidence to show that in 1957 B had only 18% of the total number of establishments in Pakistan accounting for about 30% employment and 26% of total gross value added. These figures stood at 20.4%, 30.9% and 25.4% respectively of the national total by 1959/60(4). Except for food, beverage, wood and cork, paper and leather industries, an overwhelming proportion of gross output of all other industries originated in W. With a relatively much smaller allocation of foreign exchange to B for purposes of imports from foreign countries and with a such larger proportion of industrial output accounted for by W's tariff protected newly established industries, some of the imports of the former tended to have been replaced by those from the latter. Thus the development of these industries in W was directly supported, *inter alia*, by the availability of a sheltered market for their products in B.

It is evident from the analysis of the CMI data that the average size of plant in most of the industries was smaller in B than in W. This might have been the result either of a difference in the levels of imports per establishment or of a difference in the productivity of such imports, depending upon the nature of the production functions in the two regions. The

differences in the level of productive efficiency can be seen from the comparison of the rates of return on capital in 8 selected industries of both the regions for the year 1954 and 1959/60¹ as shown in *Table 1*. The rates of return measure the profitability of investment between industries and locations and as such provide a meaningful extension for inter-industry and inter-regional investment allocation.

TABLE—1

**Rates of Return on Capital in selected Industries by
Regions in 1954 and 1959/60 in Percentage.**

| Industries | B | | | W | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------------------|
| | 1954 | 1959/60 | Growth over 1954-1960 in % | 1954 | 1959/60 | Growth over 1954-1960 in % |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Food | 31 | 29 | -7 | 30 | 40 | 33 |
| Textile | 34 | 51 | 50 | 61 | 51 | -20 |
| Printing | 29 | 60 | 107 | 44 | 73 | 66 |
| Leather | 34 | 42 | 24 | 85 | 32 | -62 |
| Chemicals | 95 | 115 | 21 | 84 | 43 | -49 |
| Non-Metallic Minerals | 16 | 36 | 125 | 86 | 52 | -40 |
| Metal products | 26 | 54 | 108 | 12 | 61 | 408 |
| Transport Equipment | 22 | 24 | 9 | 40 | 30 | -25 |
| Sample Average | 33 | 49 | 49 | 51 | 48 | - 6 |

Source : Computed based on the data given in [4].

1. The choice of the period of our study from 1954 to 1959/60 is dictated by the non-availability of CMI data for the earlier as well as the later periods.

It is evident from columns 1 and 4 of the *Table* that in 1954 the rate of return on capital in all the industries excepting food, chemicals, and metal products was higher in W than in B. With the exception of food this rate had, however, improved in all other industries in B over the period 1954 to 1960. The relative improvement of such profitability in B was so substantial that in the terminal year the rate of return in the sample industries as a whole turned out to have been higher (rising from 33% to 49%) in that region than in W (falling from 51% to 48%). In other words, while the average profitability of capital in the sample industries rose by 49% in B, it declined by 60% in W during the period 1954 to 1960.

As can be seen from *Table-2* (p. 90), while the positive rate of capital accumulation (Col. 5) raised the return on the growth of capital in W (Col. 6) led to a fall in its profitability in all industries except food, printing and metal product (Col. 4). These phenomena tend to suggest that the rates of return on capital in B could be raised to levels comparable to those in W by relatively higher rates of capital accumulation in all the industries except food, printing and metal products. This is expected to have come about by a rise in B and fall in W of rates of return².

From the ratio of the rates of the return on capital between the two regions in 1959/60 (see col. 2 of *Table-2*), it may also be suggested that the over all social profitability (i.e., social return) of capital could be raised by a relatively higher rate of capital accumulation in textiles, leather and chemicals industries in B. The basis of this conclusion is that these industries might have already been over expanded in W. This is clear from the fact that the rate of return schedules [in the form of $V/k = f(k)$] were not only falling in these industries in W rather than in B, but were also lower than the levels in B in 1960. A case for a relatively higher rate of capital accumulation in W's food industry could be made on the same ground.

With regard to other industries e.g., printing, non-metallic minerals, metal products and transport equipment, the levels of rates of return in 1959/60 were higher in W which would apparently justify a higher rate of capital accumulation in that region. However, in view of the fact that the rates of return schedules in these industries also were rising in B, there is no apparent reason as to why these industries should have been concentrated in W to start with. In two of these industries e.g., non-metallic

$$2. \text{ Since } \Delta \left(\frac{V}{K} \right)^B / \Delta K^B > 1 \text{ and } \Delta \left(\frac{V}{K} \right)^W / \Delta K^W < 1;$$

where V=value added and K=stock of capital i. e., fixed plus working capital.

TABLE — 2

**Growth of Rates of Return and Capital Stock in
Manufacturing Industries by Regions during 1954—60**

| Sample Industries | R_o^B | R_t^B | $(R_t^B/R_o^B) - 1$ | | $\Delta K/k$ | | $(\frac{\Delta K}{k})^B / (\frac{\Delta K}{k})^W$ |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|-------|--------------|------|---|
| | R_o^W | R_t^W | B | W | B | W | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Food | 1.03 | 0.72 | -0.07 | 0.33 | 1.97 | 0.54 | 3.65 |
| Textiles | 0.55 | 1.00 | 0.50 | -0.20 | 0.95 | 1.16 | 0.82 |
| Printing | 0.66 | 0.82 | 1.07 | 0.66 | 0.11 | 0.04 | 2.75 |
| Leather | 0.39 | 1.31 | 0.24 | -0.62 | 4.29 | 0.62 | 6.92 |
| Chemicals | 1.13 | 2.67 | 0.21 | -0.49 | 3.29 | 2.67 | 1.23 |
| Non-Metallic Minerals | 0.18 | 0.69 | 1.25 | -0.40 | 0.84 | 4.63 | 0.09 |
| Metal products | 2.16 | 0.88 | 1.08 | 4.03 | 0.41 | 6.17 | 0.06 |
| Transport Equipment | 0.55 | 0.72 | 0.09 | -0.25 | 1.72 | 7.62 | 0.22 |
| Sample average | 0.65 | 1.02 | 0.49 | -0.06 | 1.12 | 1.14 | 0.98 |

Notes : R_o = Rate of return in the base year i.e., 1954 ;

R_t = Rate of return in the terminal year i.e., 1959/60 ;

K = fixed assets and working capital in 1954 ; ΔL = change in k over 1954 to 1960, Superscripts B and W are for Bangladesh and West Pakistan.

Source : Computed based on *Table-1* and [4].

minerals and transport equipments B appears to have had a relatively higher potential for future expansion as the rates of return schedules were not only rising in that region but were also falling in W.

In the light of the above analysis one can examine the rates of growth of capital stock in the two regions as shown in columns 5 and 6 of *Table—2*. The relatively higher rate of capital accumulation in B's food industry does not seem to have been justified by the temporal changes in rates of return between the regions. It is not clear as to whether the rates of growth of capital stock in W's non-metallic minerals and transport equipment industries were justified by the potentialities of these industries between the regions. On the contrary, the differences in the rates of accumulation between the regions in chemicals, metal products and leather industries appear to have been consistent with relative differences in rates of return in these industries.

However, the more than proportionate increase in the stock of capital in W in textile industry as shown in *Table—2* seems to have led to a misallocation of resources. This hypothesis will be tested by an empirical evidence from our analysis of the development of cotton textile industry in the country and the impact of the policy determined location of such industry on the pattern of regional allocation of manufacturing investment and the growth of inter-regional trade in cotton cloth.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF COTTON TEXTILES, AND REGIONAL PRODUCTIVE EFFICIENCY OF INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT (FIXED ASSETS).

The growth oriented economic adjustments between B and W after the partition of India was facilitated by the availability of inter-regional market for manufactured goods. Indeed the development of trade between B and W as a result of the restrictive trade and tariff policy of the Government facilitated the rapid growth of manufacturing industry, especially the cotton textile industry. However, there was a growing disparity over time in the development of such industry between the two regions.

As can be seen from *Table—3* (p. 93), since partition by far the larger number of new establishments in cotton textile industry were located in W. Just after Independence the production capacity of cloth was somewhat higher in B than in W. However, during the period under review the growth rate in such capacity was very negligible in B, whereas it was as high as 13.8% per annum in W. The relative share of B in the total looms and spindles capacity of the country was 40% and 48% in 1959/60. Despite the slight upward trend during the 1960s, the share was only 17% and 23% in 1969/70.

Having examined the regional disparity in the growth of cotton industry since partition, we shall now attempt to see how efficiently the equipment was used in this industry in the two regions. For this purpose, we shall use the criterion of output per hour. As machines were being operated at more than two shifts³ on the average in both the regions, the measure of output per year is likely to give a misleading picture in so far as it would tend to suggest that the productivity of equipment in Pakistan was more than what it might be in the more advanced countries. In order to avoid such a spurious conclusion from being drawn and to provide a more appropriate index of efficiency, we have estimated the per hour productivity of spindles and looms in the two regions as shown in *Table 4 & 5*.

It is evident, from *Table—4* (p. 94) that while there had been a secular decline in the average productivity per spindle hour in B until the mid-1960s, it remained almost constant over the period in W. Average spindle productivity was also about one-third higher in W than in B during the entire period under review. There is also evidence to show that the decline in the efficiency of capital was inversely related to the intensity of operation, which had pronounced upward trend in B.

As can be seen from *Table-5*(p.95) the position with regard to the output of cloth per loom was different from what it was with spindles. There had been a secular downward trend of loom productivity in both the regions, although the decline appears to have been rather small. Unlike spindles, the average productivity of looms during the period under consideration had been somewhat lower in W than in B. Here again, the productivity of equipment appears to have been inversely related to the intensity of their utilization.

From the foregoing analysis it may be concluded that the structure of machinery and equipment comprising spindles and looms in the cotton textile industry was not significantly different between the two regions. This is indicated by the fact that the average productivity of both spindles and looms was about the same in both the regions. Moreover, as most of the new equipment installed during the 1950s were of the same make (i.e., imported from the U.K. or Japan), the technical sophistication of such machines was also the same in the two regions.

TABLE—3

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF COTTON TEXTILE MILLS, INSTALLED CAPACITIES OF SPINDLES AND LOOMS IN SELECTED YEARS.

| Year | No. of Mills | Production of cotton cloth ('000' Yds) | Looms ('000' Nos) | Spindles ('000' Nos) | Looms capacity as % of total | Spindles capacity as % of total |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
|Bangladesh..... | | | | | | |
| 1948/49 | 9 | 50,150 | 2 | 99 | 40 | 48 |
| 1951/52 | 9 | 62,454 | 3 | 119 | 25 | 25 |
| 1954/55 | 18 | 61,446 | 3 | 218 | 14 | 15 |
| 1959/60 | 18 | 62,250 | 3 | 359 | 10 | 18 |
| 1964/65 | 29 | 48,773 | 5 | 617 | 14 | 24 |
| 1969/70 | 37 | 60,000 | 7 | 650 | 17 | 23 |
| Annual average growth rate in % | 05 | 0.04 | 5.3 | 10.2 | — | — |
|West Pakistan..... | | | | | | |
| 1948/49 | 11 | 40,102 | 3 | 107 | 60 | 52 |
| 1951/52 | 23 | 86,542 | 5 | 362 | 75 | 75 |
| 1954/55 | 73 | 325,740 | 19 | 1281 | 86 | 85 |
| 1959/60 | 89 | 544,216 | 27 | 1582 | 90 | 82 |
| 1964/65 | 112 | 714,755 | 31 | 1967 | 86 | 76 |
| 1969/70 | 120 | 756,000 | 33 | 2180 | 83 | 77 |
| Annual average growth rate in % | 12.0 | 13.8 | 11.7 | 31.6 | — | — |

Source : The absolute figures are from [5] and [6]. The growth rate figures are from Table 4—12 of [1].

TABLE—4

PRODUCTION OF YARN PER SPINDLE HOUR IN SELECTED YEARS
BY REGIONS : 1947/48 — 1969/70.

| Years | B | | | W | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| | Spindle hours worked (000,000) | Total yarn produced (000,000 lbs.) | Yarn produced per spindle hour (in lbs.) | Spindle hours worked (000,000) | Total yarn produced (000,000 lbs.) | Yarn produced per spindle hour (in lbs.) | % of 6 to 3 |
| | 1 | 2 | 2 ÷ 1 = 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 ÷ 4 = 6 | 7 |
| 1947/48 | 419 | 15.9 | 0.038 | 330 | 13.8 | 0.042 | 103.7 |
| 1951/52 | 496 | 20.3 | 0.041 | 1,386 | 49.4 | 0.036 | 97.5 |
| 1954/55 | 989 | 22.6 | 0.023 | 6,513 | 251.9 | 0.039 | 169.6 |
| 1959/60 | 2,320 | 49.2 | 0.021 | 9,820 | 353.5 | 0.036 | 211.8 |
| 1964/65 | 3,548 | 63.9 | 0.018 | 13,535 | 454.2 | 0.034 | 188.9 |
| 1969/70 | 3,780 | 100.0 | 0.029 | 15,850 | 584.0 | 0.037 | 154.1 |
| Average | | | | | | | |
| 1947/48 to 1969/70 | 1950 | 46.2 | 0.024 | 8,635 | 291.6 | 0.033 | 137.5 |

Source : [7]

V. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES OF AVERAGE VARIABLE COST IN COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

As has been indicated by the foregoing analysis ; the structure of fixed assets was not significantly different between the regions. Now we are to examine the differences in average variable cost (here-in-after referred to as AVC) which is considered to have been the sole indicator of any difference in efficiency⁴ of cotton textile industry between the two regions. Due to the difficulty in having disaggregated data on the cost of

4. Let $E=f(F,AVC)$, where E =level of efficiency, F =fixed cost, and AVC =average variable cost for both the regions.

$$\text{Since } F^B \approx F^W, \left(\frac{E^B}{E^W} \right) = f(AVC^B) / f(AVC^W) .$$

Table—5

PRODUCTION OF CLOTH PER LOOM HOUR IN SELECTED YEARS BY
REGIONS : 1947/48 — 1969/70

| Years | B | | | W | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|----------------|
| | Total loom hours worked (000,000) | Total cloth produced in (000,000) Yards | Cloth produced per loom hrs in yards | Total loom hours worked (000,000) | Total cloth produced in (000,000) Yards | Cloth produced per loom hours in yards | % of 6 to 3 |
| | (1) | (2) | (2) ÷ (1) = (3) | (4) | (5) | (5) ÷ (4) = 6 | 7 |
| 1947/48 | 10.5 | 52.7 | 5.019 | 6.8 | 35.4 | 5.206 | 103.7 |
| 1951/52 | 12.0 | 68.9 | 5.742 | 18.0 | 105.2 | 5.596 | 97.5 |
| 1954/55 | 15.8 | 63.8 | 4.038 | 92.0 | 389.4 | 4.233 | 104.8 |
| 1959/60 | 16.2 | 62.3 | 3.845 | 148.3 | 544.2 | 3.669 | 95.4 |
| 1964/65 | 15.2 | 48.8 | 3.211 | 175.0 | 714.8 | 4.085 | 127.2 |
| 1969/70 | 15.0 | 60.0 | 4.000 | 199.8 | 756.0 | 3.962 | 99.0 |
| Average 1947/48 to 1969/70 | 13.9 | 57.8 | 4.158 | 114.7 | 457.6 | 3.989 | 95.9 |

Source : [7]

spinning and weaving in the two regions⁵, we need to express the output of yarn and cloth together so that the estimated AVC would refer to the industry as a whole. In that case we should convert yarn output to its equivalent in cloth. The conversion technique has been shown by Islam in his study [11]. In the absence of information on unit cost in spinning and weaving he has multiplied the quantity of yarn by the ratio of unit price

5. Difficulty arises because of the fact that while the data on physical production were published for spinning and weaving separately by CSO in [7] those on costs of yarn and cloth were shown jointly in [4].

of yarn to that of cloth on the assumption that it is proportional to their corresponding cost ratio. The method of obtaining the output equivalent to yarn in cloth is shown below :

$$QC = QY (PY / PC)$$

Where, QC = quantity of cloth

QY = quantity of yarn

PY = Price of yarn per lb. i.e. Tk. 1.80

PC = Price of cloth per yard i.e. Tk. 0.63

Hence $PY / PC = 1.80 / 0.63 = 2.86$ [10]

Thus the rate of conversion of yarn output to its equivalent in cloth was 2.86. QC in the above equation denotes the quantity of cloth that could have been produced if the amount that was actually spent on spinning were spent in weaving instead. Thus on the basis of the CSO data and in accordance with the conversion technique shown above, the aggregate output of cloth has been worked out for the two regions during the years shown in Table—6(p.98). It is clear from the Table that during the period 1954—60 while the total cloth production in B increased from 122 million yards to 203.1 million yards, that in W increased from 773.4 million yards to 1555.3 million yards.

Our discussion has so far been confined to the problem of what items to be included in output, and how to reduce them to a common denomination such that they could be aggregated. We would now consider the cost side of the industry. The break-up of cost incurred jointly for spinning and weaving in cotton industry for both the regions can be had from the *CMI Reports* separately for the variable cost items such as labour, fuels and raw materials expressed in current prices. In order to isolate the effect of the difference of price changes between the two regions, the estimate of AVC should be based on constant prices. This will enable us to show the intertemporal variation in AVC as accounted for exclusively by the size of the plant and scale of operations. This will also help us to see as to whether, within relevant range of output, the industry had operated under increasing, decreasing or constant costs.

In the context of the above discussion, the costs of the variable items have, therefore, been deflated by the indices of their respective prices; and the annual average variable costs of aggregate output in terms of yards of cloth for the cotton textile industry in the two regions are estimated at 1954 constant prices for the years 1954 to 1959/60 as shown in Table-7 (p. 98).

It is evident from the Table that the weighted⁶ AVC is Tk. 0.44 per yard in B as against Tk. 0.42 in W. This implies that the AVC of cotton textile industry in B was only about 5% higher than that in W.

Assuming the structure of fixed assets as proportional to the scale of output⁷, the insignificant difference of AVC between two regions would suggest that there was no special advantage of one region over another in the manufacturing of cotton textile as a whole, although the efficiency of W was somewhat higher in spinning and that of B was higher in weaving as mentioned earlier in this paper. It is, however, interesting to note that while the AVC tended move directly with average scale of output in W it tended to move inversely with that in B. This is indicated by the following regression estimates for the two regions :

| B | W |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| $AVC^B + a + bS^B$ | $AVC^W = a^1 + b^1s^W$ |
| $= 71.9 - 0.031S^B$ | $= 12.9 + 0.027S^W$ |
| (0.028) | (0.038) |
| $R^2 = 0.81$ | $R^2 = 0.64$ |

Where S = average scale of output, as defined in million yards.

Despite the fact that the number of observation is rather small for allowing us to make conclusive remarks about the nature of returns in the cotton textile industry in the two regions, available evidence casts serious doubt as to the justification of contracting this industry in W beyond the optimum level of production. It can be seen from the above estimated regression equations that at output level $X_0 = \frac{a^1 - a}{b - b^1} = 10.2$ million yards of cloth, the AVC's are equal in both the regions. This indicates that subject to the limitations of the estimates $AVC^B \angle AVC^W$ at $X_1 > X_0$.

This implies that once the output level X_0 appears to have reached in W, expansion of the industry could, to a large extent, be concentrated in B.

6. The average size of the plants as shown in Table—7 is used as weight.
7. The scale of output is defined as aggregate production of cotton cloth divided by the number of establishments. This is also known as the average size of the plants. The proportionality of the structure of fixed assets (or fixed cost) to the average size of the plants has been broadly examined earlier in this paper.

TABLE—6

Aggregate Output of Cotton cloth by Regions 1954—1959/60
(Cloth in million yards and yarn in millions lbs.)

| Year | Output of cloth | Output of yarn | Cloth equi- valent to yarn (Col. 2 \times 2.86) | Aggregate cloth output (1) + (3) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| Bangladesh | | | | |
| 1954 | 63.0 | 20.6 | 59.0 | 122.0 |
| 1955 | 63.8 | 22.6 | 64.6 | 128.4 |
| 1957 | 56.7 | 33.4 | 95.6 | 152.2 |
| 1958 | 65.2 | 40.1 | 114.4 | 179.9 |
| 1959/60 | 62.3 | 49.2 | 140.8 | 203.1 |
| West Pakistan | | | | |
| 1954 | 282.3 | 171.7 | 491.2 | 773.4 |
| 1955 | 389.4 | 251.9 | 720.5 | 1,110.0 |
| 1957 | 470.4 | 282.5 | 807.8 | 1,278.2 |
| 1958 | 511.0 | 305.0 | 872.4 | 1,383.4 |
| 1959/60 | 544.2 | 353.5 | 1,011.1 | 1,555.3 |

Source : Figures in columns 1 and 2 are from [7]. Figures in other columns are computed by using the conversion rate of yarn equivalent to cloth shown in the text.

TABLE — 7

**Average Variable Cost in Relation to the Size of Plant in
Cotton Textile Industry by Region.**

(In 1954 constant prices)

| Years | Variable cost in million Tk. | Output of cloth in million yards. | AVC per yard in Tk. | Average size of plant in million yards. |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (1) ÷ (2) = 3 | (4) |
| Bangladesh | | | | |
| 1954 | 48.6 | 122.0 | 0.40 | 8.7 |
| 1955 | 53.7 | 128.4 | 0.42 | 9.9 |
| 1957 | 68.7 | 152.2 | 0.45 | 9.0 |
| 1958 | 96.3 | 179.9 | 0.54 | 6.4 |
| 1959/60 | <u>78.1</u> | <u>203.1</u> | <u>0.38</u> | <u>11.3</u> |
| Weighted Average | 0.44 | | | |
| West Pakistan | | | | |
| 1954 | 283.5 | 773.4 | 0.37 | 9.0 |
| 1955 | 469.2 | 1,110.0 | 0.42 | 11.7 |
| 1957 | 560.9 | 1,278.2 | 0.44 | 11.0 |
| 1958 | 642.2 | 1,384.4 | 0.46 | 11.2 |
| 1959/60 | <u>619.2</u> | <u>1,555.3</u> | <u>0.40</u> | <u>10.6</u> |
| Weighted Average | 0.42 | | | |

Source : Figures in columns 1 to 3 are from [11] and those in column 4 are from [4].

As is evidenced from *Table-7* (p. 99), the average size of plant was smaller in B than in W. This together with the fact that there was increasing returns in B and decreasing returns in W suggest that overall efficiency of cotton industry could have been enhanced by re-allocating a part of the installed capacity from W to B. It should be emphasized further that since there was little difference of AVC's between the two regions, the industry in B could have been extended to an extent that would have enabled her to satisfy the local demand. Obviously, this assertion is independent of the argument relating to the nature of scale of output between the regions.

VI. IMPLICATION OF THE LOCATION OF COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY BETWEEN THE TWO REGIONS.

The question of accelerating the pace of the development of manufacturing industry in B for reducing disparity in regional growth gave rise to a controversial issue that in so far as W had some locational advantages in manufacturing industry, the objectives of a balanced regional development would not be consistent with that of the maximization of output [1]. For instance, it is said that in the case of cotton industry the agglomeration of textile plants in certain areas of W⁸ and the easier access to raw materials would appear to indicate that B would offer an inferior locational choice. Our foregoing analysis has, however, shown that from the point of view of average variable cost of production the superiority of W in the production of cotton textiles may not have been justified; and that after a critical level of output had reached, it could even be advantageous to locate any further increase of output in the region of B, by expanding the capacities of already existing production units in that region.

The conclusion that from the view-point of differences in costs of production between the regions an expansion of cotton industry in B would appear to have been justified is further strengthened if transportation cost is also included in our analysis. The cost of raw materials, the major element of variable cost, included the cost of transportation from one region to the other. As W was the major raw cotton producing and supplying region in the country,⁹ this point had relevance only with regard to raw material cost incurred by the producers in B. Because of the cost of transportation, raw cotton was almost 28% more expensive in B than in W¹⁰.

8. Namely, Karachi, Multan, Lyalpur and Gujranwala.

9. During the late 1950s and the early 1960s the annual average cotton production was about 306 thousand tons in W compared to only 3 thousand tons in B.

10. For instance, the unit cost of cotton per bale in B was Tk. 467 and that in W was Tk. 364 [17].

Despite this, as mentioned earlier in this study, the average variable cost was only about 5% higher in the former than in the latter.

As the estimated average variable cost for the aggregated output also abstracts from the difference in the quality of the final product, the comparison of cost irrespective of the composition of output will introduce a bias in the estimated values. A correction of such bias would, therefore, strengthen our conclusion regarding comparative efficiency of the cotton textile industry in the two regions. As can be seen from Table — 8, the industry in B traditionally concentrated on the output of finer quality fabrics, which required a better quality cotton. The relative importance of coarse cloth in the output of the industry located in W and the preponderance of fine cloth in that of B would *prima facie* suggest a higher per unit cost for the aggregated output in the latter. Like W if more emphasis were given to the production of coarse cloth in B, the AVC per unit of cloth output would have most probably been lower in the latter compared to the former after covering the inter-regional transport cost of raw cotton.

TABLE—8

Regional Distribution of the Output of Cotton Cloth as Percentage of Total Regional Product : 1957 / 58 — 1964 / 65.

| Years | B | | | W | | |
|---------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| | Fine | Medium | Coarse | Fine | Medium | Coarse |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| 1957/58 | 38.0 | 57.8 | 4.2 | 6.7 | 41.6 | 51.7 |
| 1958/59 | 32.3 | 65.2 | 2.5 | 5.5 | 51.6 | 42.9 |
| 1959/60 | 35.4 | 64.4 | 0.2 | 6.2 | 56.7 | 37.1 |
| 1960/61 | 32.1 | 67.9 | 0.0 | 9.8 | 44.9 | 45.3 |
| 1961/62 | 27.1 | 72.9 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 48.5 | 44.0 |
| 1962/63 | 25.0 | 75.0 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 51.0 | 41.5 |
| 1963/64 | 20.5 | 78.5 | 1.0 | 9.0 | 56.0 | 35.0 |
| 1964/65 | 18.5 | 78.3 | 3.2 | 8.2 | 51.3 | 40.5 |
| Average | 28.7 | 69.9 | 1.4 | 7.5 | 50.2 | 42.3 |

Source : [7].

With regard to labour costs, it is evident from Table — 9 that W had a lower labour intensity than did B. This is borne out by the fact that with a higher average rate of wage in W¹¹, the proportion of labour cost in the total variable cost had been lower in that region than in B¹². In other words, the lower proportion of labour cost in W can be attributed to a lower proportion of labour per unit of output or capital. Table—9, however, shows that the productivity of capital was higher in B than in W,

TABLE—9

Labour and Capital Productivities In the Cotton Textile Industry**by Regions : 1954—1960**

(In millions of Tk. at current prices)

| Year | Value of product = V | Wage bill = L | Fixed capital = K | V/L | V/K | K/L |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| Bangladesh..... | | | | | | |
| 1954 | 74.6 | 14.4 | 37.5 | 5.2 | 2.0 | 2.6 |
| 1955 | 78.0 | 15.3 | 38.5 | 5.1 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| 1957 | 89.2 | 16.9 | 43.9 | 5.3 | 2.0 | 2.6 |
| 1958 | 121.9 | 22.3 | 72.3 | 5.3 | 1.7 | 3.2 |
| 1959/60 | 117.2 | 20.5 | 53.2 | 5.7 | 2.2 | 2.6 |
| Mean | 96.2 | 17.0 | 49.1 | 5.4 | 2.0 | 2.8 |
| West Pakistan..... | | | | | | |
| 1954 | 439.2 | 66.4 | 248.5 | 6.6 | 1.8 | 3.0 |
| 1955 | 547.5 | 92.4 | 367.3 | 5.9 | 1.5 | 4.0 |
| 1957 | 697.7 | 112.1 | 476.1 | 6.2 | 1.5 | 4.2 |
| 1958 | 809.9 | 135.0 | 558.3 | 6.0 | 1.5 | 4.1 |
| 1959/60 | 889.8 | 149.7 | 478.3 | 5.9 | 1.9 | 3.2 |
| Mean | 676.8 | 111.1 | 425.7 | 6.1 | 1.6 | 3.8 |

Source : Computed based on [4]

11. During the period 1954—60, the annual average wage rate in W was Tk. 1,182.0 compared to Tk. 871.0 in B. During the same period the average wage bill constituted 21% of total variable cost in W as compared to 25% in B.
12. Defining V, L and K to denote the value of products, wage bill and the value of fixed assets respectively, it can be seen that $V/L = (K/L) (V/K)$. That is to say, the average labour productivity was identical to the product of fixed capital intensity of labour and the average productivity of fixed capital.

although it was not high enough to compensate for the disadvantages caused by the lower capital intensity of labour in the former region. It is evident from the Table that there was a concentration of capital investment in W leading to about 36% higher capital intensity of labour (col. 6) and 13% higher labour productivity (col. 4) in that region than in B. However, the average productivity of fixed assets was about 25% higher in B than in W (Col. 5).

From the foregoing discussion it may follow that the concentration of cotton industry in W does not seem to have been influenced or explained by any exclusive superiority of that region over B although the former had easy access to raw materials and the latter had to bear a high transport cost for it. Moreover, available evidence seems to suggest that productive capacity could have been advantageously concentrated in B after it had grown to an optimum size in W, this point will be clear further from the discussion in the following section.

VII. INTER-REGIONAL TRADE VIS-A-VIS THE REGIONAL PRODUCTION OF COTTON CLOTH.

In our final analysis we propose to discuss the relationship between inter-regional trade and the production of cotton cloth in the two regions. We would also analyse as to whether in consideration of the supply of and the demand for cotton manufactures, the production of cotton cloth could be expanded beyond the existing limit in B. As can be seen from *Table-10* (p.104), during the period from 1951 to 1960 the total production of cotton cloth in W consisted of fine, medium and coarse cloth, the proportion of each being 7.9%, 60.1% and 32% respectively. While there was neither international nor inter-regional trade in coarse cloth for W, 24.8% of its medium cloth was meant for exports of which about 18.6% was exported to B. In other words, 11.2% of the total cloth production of W was sold in B's market. The import of cloth (all in finer variety fabrics) by W from B, on the other hand, had been only 0.2% of the former's total production of cotton cloth or 2.3% of its output of finer cloth.

The existence of inter-regional market had, however, little impact on the magnitude of the output of cotton cloth in B. This is borne out by the fact that out of an average annual production of 63.1 million yards of cotton cloth in B during the period 1951-60 only 0.6 million yards i.e., only about 1% of the output of that region was exported to W as shown in *Table-11*. Compared to this, 40 million yards of cotton cloth (all medium variety) constituting 63.5% of B's output was imported from W per annum. This implies that the average net import of B from W had been of the order of

TABLE — 10

Production and Trade in Cotton cloth of W : 1951/52 to 1959/60.

(In million yards)

| Year | Fine | | Medium | | | | | Coarse |
|----------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| | Production | Import from B | Production | Export to B | Export abroad | % of 4 to 3 | % of 5 to 3 | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| 1951/52 | 8.0 | 0.0 | 61.0 | 26.8 | 0.0 | 43.7 | 0.0 | 11.2 |
| 1952/53 | 14.1 | 0.1 | 106.9 | 16.1 | 0.0 | 15.0 | 0.0 | 19.7 |
| 1953/54 | 24.0 | 1.5 | 182.4 | 23.5 | Neg. | 12.9 | 0.0 | 33.6 |
| 1954/55 | 22.0 | 1.7 | 236.5 | 13.4 | 0.02 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 28.2 |
| 1955/56 | 26.4 | 1.3 | 329.5 | 27.0 | 2.7 | 8.2 | 0.8 | 62.5 |
| 1956/57 | 49.1 | 0.1 | 239.8 | 61.0 | 22.5 | 25.3 | 9.4 | 163.0 |
| 1957/58 | 39.7 | 0.4 | 213.2 | 65.2 | 2.7 | 30.6 | 1.3 | 261.9 |
| 1958/59 | 34.7 | 0.1 | 245.7 | 64.4 | 13.2 | 26.2 | 5.4 | 263.0 |
| 1959/60 | 36.1 | 0.6 | 294.1 | 63.3 | 78.3 | 21.5 | 26.6 | 191.2 |
| Annual average | 28.2 | 0.6 | 215.1 | 40.0 | 13.3 | 18.6 | 6.2 | 114.9 |
| % of total | 7.9 | 0.18 | 60.1 | 11.2 | 3.7 | | | 32 |

Neg. = Negligible

Source : [17].

62.5% (63.5% — 1%) of former's domestic output. This shows that about 39%¹³ of the total consumption of cotton cloth in B depended upon the output of the industry located in W.

13. This is worked out from Table—11 as follows;

$$\left(\frac{40.0 - 06}{63.1 + 40.0 - 06} \right) 100 = 39\%.$$

TABLE—11

Production and Trade in Cotton cloth of B : 1951/52—1959/60.

(In million yards.)

| Year | Total produc- tion. | Import from W | Export to W | % of 2 to 1 | % of 3 to 1 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 1951/52 | 48.2 | 26.8 | 0.0 | 55.6 | 0.0 |
| 1952/53 | 54.8 | 16.1 | 0.1 | 29.6 | 0.2 |
| 1953/54 | 61.4 | 23.4 | 1.5 | 38.2 | 2.4 |
| 1954/55 | 68.2 | 13.4 | 1.7 | 19.6 | 2.6 |
| 1955/56 | 57.9 | 27.0 | 1.3 | 46.6 | 2.2 |
| 1956/57 | 45.0 | 60.6 | 0.01 | 134.7 | 0.1 |
| 1957/58 | 74.2 | 65.2 | 0.4 | 88.0 | 0.6 |
| 1958/59 | 77.5 | 64.4 | 0.01 | 83.1 | 0.1 |
| 1959/60 | 80.6 | 63.3 | 0.6 | 78.5 | 0.1 |
| Annual average | 63.1 | 40.0 | 0.6 | 63.5 | 1.0 |

Source : As under Table—1

The extent of the dependence of B on the industry located in W for the supply of cotton cloth does not, however, appear to have been justified by any superiority of the latter region in textile manufacturing as analysed earlier in the present study. The consumption of cotton cloth in B as shown in Table—11 was also substantially higher than what was actually produced by the mills located in that region.

Moreover, there are reasons to believe that in the absence of imports and domestic production restriction, the absorption of cotton cloth in B would have been higher than what has been indicated by the consumption

TABLE-12

Development of Potential Weaving in B: 1951/52-1959/60

(In crores of taka at current prices)

| Year | Y^W | EC^W | EC^W / Y^W | Y^B | $\frac{(EC^W)(Y^B)}{Y^W}$ $= E'C^B$ | EC^B | $\frac{E'C^B - EC^B}{EC^B} \cdot 100$ $= PEC^B$ |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------------|--------|--|--------|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| 1951/52 | 1069.2 | 6.8 | 0.0064 | 1012.3 | 6.5 | 7.8 | -16.6 |
| 1952/53 | 1241.9 | 19.5 | 0.0157 | 1011.3 | 15.9 | 9.6 | 65.6 |
| 1953/54 | 1176.4 | 37.1 | 0.0315 | 828.6 | 26.1 | 10.8 | 141.6 |
| 1954/55 | 1002.1 | 38.8 | 0.0387 | 630.0 | 24.4 | 8.0 | 205.0 |
| 1955/56 | 1175.8 | 41.0 | 0.0348 | 848.4 | 29.5 | 9.4 | 213.8 |
| 1956/57 | 1406.4 | 45.9 | 0.0326 | 1399.9 | 45.6 | 11.2 | 307.1 |
| 1957/58 | 1529.7 | 55.6 | 0.0365 | 1313.6 | 47.9 | 16.9 | 183.4 |
| 1958/59 | 1563.3 | 60.9 | 0.0389 | 1259.7 | 49.0 | 14.7 | 233.3 |
| 1959/60 | 1709.6 | 60.7 | 0.0350 | 1434.3 | 50.2 | 20.6 | 192.2 |
| Annual average | | | | | | | 170.0 |

Notations : Y = Gross regional product.

EC = Actual Expenditure on cotton cloth.

$E'C$ = Estimated expenditure on cotton cloth.

PEC^B = Potential for the cloth industry in B as a percentage of the actual absorption of cloth.

B & W refer to Bangladesh and West Pakistan.

Source : Figures in columns 1 and 4 are from Appendix Table E-2 of [1] and those of columns 2 and 6 from [17]. Figures in other columns are computed.

statistics. Assuming that there was little difference in the per capita need for cotton cloth¹⁴ between B and W and the marginal propensity to spend on cotton cloth was the same in both the regions¹⁵, total expenditure on clothing would have been much higher in B than what it was under import and domestic market.

The extent of suppressed demand for cotton cloth in B as estimated in *Table-12* (p.106) clearly shows that the potential for expanding the cotton textile industry on the basis of total demand was quite high. According to this estimate, the excess of potential demand over actual absorption was about 17% (col. 7) of the latter. In other words, over and above efficiency considerations as analysed earlier, on the basis of higher demand for cotton cloth, B could support a textile industry which would be 2.70¹⁶ times bigger than existing one.

Further it is evident from *Table-11* that the annual average actual absorption of cotton cloth (i. e., 102.5 million yards) in B during 1951—60 was about 62% higher than the actual production (i. e., 63.1 million yards) of the region. This suggests that in the absence of dependence of B on W, the actual absorption in the former could support an industry in that region, which could be 1.62 times bigger than the existing one. Thus given the actual absorption of and potential demand for cotton cloth in B, she could support an industry which was $(2.70)(1.62) = 4.37^{17}$ times bigger than the existing one.

Even from the view point of difference in costs of production between the regions, an expansion of cotton industry in B would appear to have been justified. As has been shown earlier in this study that despite the fact that due to the cost of inter-regional transportation the cost of raw materials was 28% higher in B compared to W. The AVC was only 5% higher in the former than in the latter.

14. There may have been some difference in the need for woollen cloth because of the climatic difference between the two regions.

15. In view of the lower per capita income in B, the MPC seems to have been rather higher there than in w.

16. This is worked out from column, 7 of *Table-12*. It is equal to $\frac{PEC^B}{100} + 1.0$

17. This value would be smaller if it were possible to include the output of the handloom industry in the estimates of actual regional absorption. Hence the estimated value should be interpreted here as an indicator of the development potential of the large scale cotton textile industry which in part would imply the replacement of the cottage handloom industry.

There was little difference between the cost of transporting raw cotton or yarn and cotton cloth between the regions. This is because after it has been ginned, raw cotton is almost a 'pure' material in the sense that it loses very little weight in the process of manufacture. Therefore, considering the weight to be transported there is only a slight advantage in processing cotton at the growing point rather than at the consuming point, because in the former case it is the finished product and in the latter raw material that has to be transported. From this view point, the cotton textiles are generally known as a "footloose" industry in the sense that it could be easily located at any point between the raw material producing point and the market.

However, weight is not the only factor to determine transport cost. Freight rates on cotton goods per lb are also generally higher than on raw cotton. In addition, packing and insurance charges are heavier and handling costs are higher at every point. If the raw cotton producing area is the same as that of consumption of finished goods, this differential problem does not, however, arise and as such the locally established mills are at their maximum advantage with respect to the costs of transportation. On the other hand, mills which are not located in the cotton growing areas and engaged mostly in supplying foreign market rather than home market, are in an unfavourable position in this respect, because they are handicapped by the cost of transporting both raw material as well as finished products. Between these two extremes, "the transport advantage which mills have in serving a local market for finished goods is much greater than that derived from access to raw cotton" [22].

In the light of the foregoing analysis, the negligible difference between the cost of transporting raw cotton and that of cotton goods between B and W suggests that because of the transportation of finished goods from W to B, during the period 1954-60 the consumer in the latter region had to pay about 23% more (i. e., 28% transport cost minus the difference of 5% of AVC between B and W) than what he would have paid, had the cloth been manufactured in B.

Thus considering the negligible difference in AVC between the two regions, high demand for cotton goods and favourable climate and water supply in B, the negligible loss of weight of raw cotton due to manufacturing, and the difficulty in handling the shipment of cotton manufactures to cover the inter-regional distance, the cotton textile industry in B could have been substantially expanded after it had reached the optimum level in W. In doing so, the required inter-regional reallocation of resources would have reduced the over all cost of production of cotton textiles in the

country. Some of the recent studies [15,16] have also shown that indeed some of the "foot loose" industries, such as cotton textiles would have had a higher social rate of return in B than in W.

VIII. INTER-REGIONAL COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES.

Although in view of the availability of raw cotton W had in some sense a comparative advantage in the manufacture of cotton textiles to begin with, it is difficult to argue that the pattern of trade that subsequently evolved between B and W was entirely in consonance with such advantage. Furthermore, it is the dynamic and not the static aspects of comparative advantage that should have been considered in making a policy decision about industrial location. Indeed, as Nurul Islam argues [12], the application of the concept of static comparative advantage may have placed B at a disadvantage in a number of fields. The prevailing cost ratios of various industries in B may not have reflected the long run efficiencies vis-a-vis similar industries in W because of the as yet under-developed state of the basic social and economic overheads in the former region.

It could not also be argued that nearness to the source of raw materials was what dictated the location of many industries in W. The question whether the industry should be raw material oriented or market oriented could have been determined by the relative weight of imported raw materials. As can be seen from *Table—13* (p. 110), many of the industries were in fact heavily dependent upon imported raw materials. In view of the substantial inter-regional transport cost, and a high component of imported raw materials, as shown in *Table—13*, one could make out a strong case for 'market oriented' industries in Pakistan. In other words, based on the imported raw materials, a policy could have been pursued for the development of more market oriented industries in B rather than in W. However, in the absence of such policy, the relatively high degree of industrialization of W was mainly to be accounted for by the policies of import substitution pursued by the Government. as mentioned earlier in this paper.

The result of such import substitution was the development of most of the industries in Pakistan producing at a relatively high cost. There exists a body of literature to corroborate this fact [13, 14]. Evidence shows that on the average the ex-factory prices of industrial goods in Pakistan were 50 to 90 per cent higher than c.i.f. import prices. Thirty per cent of the industries had ex-factory prices what were 50 to 100 per cent in excess of c.i.f. prices. For about 16 percent of the industries, the ex-factory prices were higher than c.i.f. prices in the range of 100-200 per cent.

As a consequence of restriction on trade and import substitution policy of the Government the imports of both the regions were diverted from the low cost foreign sources to the high cost domestic sources of supplies in each region. In other words, not only could the industries enjoy the markets in the region of their origin but also that of the other. However, as the magnitude of B's (high cost) imports from W was almost double that of the latter from the former, B had to lose more in absolute terms compared to W.

Moreover, as argued by Khan [15], some of the imports of W from B were kept cheaper by the arbitrary and non-uniform tariff structure as determined by the multiple weapons of control of the Central Govt. Thus tea, formerly the second biggest export item of B abroad was directed to W by keeping its effective rate of exchange in export unfavourable. The forced diversion of tea from its exports to the foreign markets to W is confirmed by the fact that during the early years of Independence there was a ban on the export of tea abroad. In the later years, when inducement under the Export Bonus scheme was given to the export of other goods, especially jute and cotton manufactures and rice, no such bonus was allowed to the export of tea and thereby the effective exchange rate

TABLE 13

Relative Importance of Imported Raw Materials in Selected Industries

(Value in crores of Tk. at current prices)

| Industry — Group | Total raw materials | Imported raw materials | % of 2 to 1 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Printing and Publishing | 2.9 | 0.8 | 28.1 |
| Chemicals | 8.9 | 5.5 | 61.7 |
| Basic Metals | 6.5 | 4.5 | 69.8 |
| Metal goods | 5.7 | 4.3 | 75.4 |
| Other Machinery | 2.9 | 1.6 | 56.1 |
| Electrical Machinery etc. | 3.0 | 1.9 | 64.2 |
| Transport & Equipment | 3.6 | 3.1 | 86.1 |

Source : [12]

for the latter was kept low.¹⁹ Similar was the case with paper, another important import of W from B.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

Excluding jute manufactures the bulk of Bangladesh exports to West Pakistan consisted of raw materials and food stuffs. But the latter had a more diversified range of exports to the former of which food, raw cotton, cotton manufactures and machinery bulked large. The growth and composition of inter-regional trade, greatly influenced by the import substitution, exchange control and industrial allocation policies of the Central Government, shifted consumer's demand from relatively low cost foreign supplies to high cost domestic supplies of manufactured goods. The relatively higher growth of manufacturing industries, especially cotton industry in W was largely facilitated by the availability of wider market in B. However, in view of the negligible loss of weight of manufactured goods, especially cotton textiles, a high component of imported raw materials, and a considerably high inter-regional transport cost, W had little comparative advantage in the production of some manufactured goods including cotton manufactures. Nor was there any significant difference in the rate of return on capital or cost of production between the two regions. Moreover, apart from higher potential demand in B, her water supply and climatic conditions were also favourable for the development of industries, especially cotton industry. Considering all these factors, more market oriented as well as 'foot loose' type of industries, such as cotton textiles could be substantially expanded in B; and the required inter-regional reallocation of resources for doing so would have reduced the overall cost of production in the country.

19. Available evidence, however, shows that during the 1960s the annual average price of tea per lb. at the West Pakistan market was almost double (Tk. 4.4) the amount fetched at the world auctions (Tk. 2.4). This is evident from the data on the average unit values of exports of tea from B to foreign countries as well as to W as shown in [9, pp. 250, 252 — 55]. Sufficient data are not available to substantiate this evidence with respect to paper and paste-board as imported by W from B.

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Position of Men and Women in a Village in Bangladesh.

A. Quadir Bhuiyan.

The village Khawjapur is located in Kotwali Thana¹ in Comilla district. Khawjapur lies two miles west of Comilla town and three miles east of BARD.² A narrow metalled road from Comilla going upto Kalirbazar, a Union Parishad³ in Kotwali Thana, connects BARD with Comilla and passes through Khawjapur. The total population of Khawjapur is 956, of which 503 are male and 453 females. All the people in Khawjapur are Muslims. They are Sunni and belong to the Hanafi sub-sect (followers of Imam Abu Hanifa). In this paper, I shall make an attempt to discuss the position of men and women in Khawjapur. In discussing this position I shall concentrate mainly on its four aspects, namely, legal, economic, political and social. A discussion of the institution of *purdah* (veil) is also necessary for a proper understanding of the position of men and women.

It is generally said that Islamic personal laws (Shariat Laws) have guaranteed equal status to men and women in the society. It is also said that in Islam marriage is a contract in which consent of both men and women is required. Both parties in marriage have the right to seek the dissolution of marriage. Under Islamic laws women, like men, can inherit their share of the properties of their fathers and husbands. It may be mentioned here that the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, has sought to guarantee these rights to women in Bangladesh in the light of basic principles of Islam. However, the features of neither the Shariat Laws nor the state laws represent the existing social reality in Khawjapur. In Khawjapur, Muslim marriage is a contract only from the legal point of view, while it has other aspects as well, namely, social and cultural. Therefore, one need not over-tress only rural aspect of marriage. In Khawjapur, the seeking of consent

1. A *thana*, literally, is a police station where a contingent of police is stationed to maintain law and order. But, in fact, a *thana* is an administrative unit. Each *thana* consists of several unions.
2. After the liberation of Bangladesh, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Kotbari, Comilla has been redesignated as the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD).
3. In Bangladesh, the Union consisting of several Villages, is the basic and smallest unit of civil administration. Its administrative body is elected by the people of the respective Union.

of the bride and the groom for marriage is a formality only. The decision with regard to marriage, in most cases, is taken by the *walis* (lawful guardians) of the bride and the groom in consultation with their respective relatives. Sometimes the groom's opinion may get some consideration, but the bride's opinion is rarely considered. Though legally both men and women in the village have the right to seek dissolution of marriage, in Khawjapur *talaq* (divorce) is solely a men's privilege. In all the cases of dissolution of marriage by divorce in the village, it is the husbands who have initiated the divorce of their wives.

Although Islamic personal laws and state laws have specifically mentioned the entitlement of women from the properties of their fathers and husbands, in reality most of the women in Khawjapur do not inherit their share of property. Custom in the village demands that women should not ask for their share of paternal property. Women also do not want to claim their share of paternal property for a number of other reasons. First of all, if a woman takes away the share of her paternal property, she forgoes the right to receive occasional gifts from her natal family. Secondly, after the death of her parents, she may not be able to visit her natal home because her brothers are not under any obligation to receive her in their home. Thirdly, the women want to leave their share of property with their parents or brothers, as the case may be, because it is a sort of security for them. They can hope to return to their natal home in case of divorce by the husband, separation from him, or his death, if they leave their share with their brothers. Therefore, the women in general, do not claim their share of paternal property. As regards the husband's property, a woman can expect to get her share from his property after his death, only if she has children. If she does not have any child by her deceased husband, his agnates would be reluctant to give her due share.

The position of men and women in the village with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance can be summed up as follows. A man may have some say in his marriage but a woman has almost no say in her marriage. Though, legally, dissolution of marriage can be sought by both men and women, divorce is a men's privilege. The man can and do inherit his share of paternal property. The woman can but does not inherit her share. So, it would be incorrect to say that men and women in Khawjapur are equal simply because shariat laws and the state laws have given them both the same rights and privileges.⁴

4. S. A. Qadir has also expressed similar views regarding the legal position of women in Bangladesh. For details see S. A. Qadir *Modernization of an Agrarian Society ; A Sociological study of the operation of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance and Council-lation Courts in East Pakistan* (Mimeo), 1968.

As regards the economic position of the women in Bangladesh, there are a number of incorrect notions, rather myths.⁵ It is mentioned earlier that 453 of the total 956 persons in Khawjapur are women. 261 of these 453 females are 'working women'. 257 of the 261 'working women' in Khawjapur are doing household chores, and only four are in 'service'. Two of these four women work in the Family Planning Department of the Government of Bangladesh and the other two in a cigar factory in Comilla. The women who work mostly outside their homes and earn cash are considered as earning women by the men, in the village. The women doing household chores are not considered as earning members by men. Men think household chores to be the normal duty for women. Women themselves also think the same. Although men do not consider the women doing household chores as earning members of the household, they realise the importance of women's domestic work. They realise it all the more during the long term absence of the women from the home (e. g., when a man's wife dies). In this connection the villagers mention a proverb which says that one realises the worth of the teeth when he loses them.

The women doing household chores help the earning of the household in a number of ways. Firstly, domestic chores themselves are important tasks. Secondly, a number of women in the village occasionally help their men in the fields nearer their homes. These women are, in most cases, from the Gaihashta and Kamla (low status Muslims) households. They do part of the agricultural work, such as thrashing and husking of paddy. Thirdly, vegetable gardening is done mostly by the women in the plots of land adjacent to their homes. They also raise chicken in the home and sometimes look after the cattle. Kabir, *et al* have rightly stated :

Rural women in Bangladesh are responsible for grain processing and storage ; they grow most of the family's fruits and vegetables ; they care for poultry and livestock ; they supplement family's nutrition and incomes through kitchen garden and cottage industry. In weaving and fishing communities women contribute substantially to the work load by making nets and spinning thread. Yet women's contribution to agricultural and household production receives less recognition than their domestic and child-rearing chores (also economic tasks in our view)⁶.

The women of all status categories of people in the village do not enjoy the same economic position. For example, the Khandan and Bhadra-

5. For a discussion of these myths see Kabir, Khushi, Ayesha Abed and Marty Chen, *Rural Women in Bangladesh ; Exploding some Myths* (Mimeo). Dacca : the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), 1976, pp. 3, 12.

6. *Ibid*, P. 4.

lok (high status Muslims) women do not normally work outside the fenced portion of their home. They mostly do household chores and never work in the field. Even the heavy work in these household, such as that of husking of paddy is done either by the maid servants or by the hired *kamla* women. Bertocci has rightly stated :

what little evidence there is available suggests considerable variation in sex role behaviour along class lines ... that the poor peasant women play greater roles in subsistence activities than do rich peasant ones, by virtue of their being required to work in the homes of the rich as agricultural labourers in order to support their own families.⁷

The Grihastha and *kamla* (law status Muslims) women have thus more economic responsibilities and consequently more independence in economic sphere than the Khandan and Bhadrak (high status Muslims) women.

It is generally believed that rural women in Bangladesh do not handle cash and do not have much control over the purse of the household. It is true that the household purse is in the hands of the head of the household who is, in most cases, a man. But all households are not headed by men. In Khawjapur, 12 of the total 157 households are headed by women. 11 of these 12 women are widows, and the other one is separated from her husband and resides in a separate household in her natal home. Some women are not heads of household, but senior and respected member of it (e. g., Households of widowed mother and her married son (s)). However, it is also true that even the cash earning women give a substantial part of their earnings to their men. But all these should not be taken to mean that women do not handle cash at all, or that they do not have a say in the income and expenditure of the household. The men of the household often consult their women in taking decisions regarding the major purchases and sales. For example, a man may discuss the purchase of a cow or the sale of land with his mother and sometimes even with his wife. In the absence of the father, the advice of the widowed mother is obeyed by men. Again, a wife with a few children has much influence on her husband on a number of issues, such as schooling of children and buying clothes for members of the household.

7. Peter J. Bertocci, "The position of Women in Rural Bangladesh." Paper presented at International Seminar on Socio-economic Implications of Introducing HYVS in Bangladesh, (Mimeo), Comilla : Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, 1975, p. 10.

A number of villagers told that women in general, and especially mothers-in-law in complex households and wives in simple households, have a 'secret fund' of their own. They accumulate this fund by selling vegetables, chicken and grains. Usually, the men of the household are not aware of it. The women keep this fund as contingency money. There are many stories in the village about the women's secret fund and its use as a last resort in times of emergency by the men of the household. Sometimes the women purchase things of their own liking from their money. For example, nowadays most of the village women wear *churis* (bracelets made of glass). The women buy them from the gipsy women who come to the village to sell *churis*, toilet articles and crockeries. These gipsy women come to the village at such a time when men are usually out of their homes, because the gipsy women know that they can sell more during the absence of men.

Women in general do not own any immovable property, such as land, building, etc. Men purchase property in the name of men only. For example, a man may purchase land in his own name or in the name of his sons, but he will rarely purchase it in the name of his daughters or his wife. Only a man without any son may purchase land in the name of his daughters and a childless person in the name of his wife. However, it would be incorrect to say that women do not possess any thing at all. Women possess most of the items of their jewellery. Of course, their men can demand the jewellery from them in times of need, and women are obliged to give it to them.

The women of Khawjapur, like other women of Bangladesh, have the principal political right, namely, the right to vote. They can vote in the elections of different local bodies, such as Union Parishad, and in national elections. Roughly, women constitute fifty per cent of the total number of voters in the village. But the women of Khawjapur are not politically organized. They are not members of any political organization. In the elections (both local bodies and national) many women, especially the Khandan and Bhadrak women, do not cast their votes, because they observe *purdah* more strictly and their men do not like them casting votes. Even the women who cast their votes—mostly Grihastha and Kamla women—do not cast them in most cases according to their own choice. The choice of their men prevails over them in casting their votes. In fact women have hardly any choice. Usually they do not know the names of the parties and the individual candidates contesting in an election, not to mention their ideologies and programmes. In the village the election

campaign is confined primarily to men. Whatever little information a woman may get about an election, she gets it only from the men of her family. There is also not a single woman holding an office either in the local bodies or in the national polity from the village. In fact, no woman from the village ever contested an election.

In the local politics of the village also women do not take part. They have no role in the functioning of the *samaj* (council of village elders). They do not attend meetings of *samaj*. The Matabbars (Village elders) are always men. The office of the Sardar (headman) of a *reyai* (informal social groping) is held by a man.

The *pardah* separates women from men. Women are not expected to take part in activities outside their homes. They should remain inside their homes. They do not take part in *Jumma* prayer (congregational prayers held in the mosque every Friday), Idd prayers (held in the open field called *idgah* on Idd days), and *namaz-e-zanaza* (funeral prayer for the dead). The very fact that no *azan* (call for prayer) is given after the birth of a girl shows the attitude of the Muslim towards women.

Inside the home, men and women are treated differently. From their childhood women know that they are inferior to men. Girls are regarded as vulnerable, needing protection from men. "The women of Bangladesh are raised as dependents and learn to fear independence, as well they might. The only relatively independent women is the middle aged or elderly widow, divorced, or abandoned women without adult male sons to support her."⁸ The girls know that their brothers are 'assets' and they are 'liabilities'. In the household, brothers are given preferential treatment in respect of facilities, such as food and clothing, and in respect of opportunities, such as education.

All these, however, should not be taken to mean that girls are not loved by men. Every couple want to have at least one daughter. When asked why they want a daughter, the villagers say that a garden does not look nice with one kind of flowers only. So, a family with sons only or with daughters only is not nice. It may be mentioned here that girls are often referred to as 'guests of the home' and therefore they do not get as harsh punishment from the parents as their brothers sometimes get. A nubile daughter gets special treatment in many respects. Things of her own choice, such as clothes and toilet articles, are brought for her. The

8. Jean Ellickson, "Observations from the field on the Condition of Rural Women in Bangladesh," Paper presented at International Seminar on Socio-Economic Implications of Introducing HYVS in Bangladesh, (Mimeo), Comilla: BARD, 1975.p. 1

villagers say that a daughters desire for things should be met by her parents before she joins husband's family, because she may not get the things of her own choice in that "unknown family." After their marriage, the daughters get preferential treatment from their parents. For example, when a married daughter comes on a visit to her natal home, she, her husband and their children are well taken care of. Often food of her choice is prepared in her natal home, because she may not be getting such food in her conjugal home.

To understand the institution of *purdah*, it is necessary first of all to understand the ideals and norms regarding it. The basic point in the observance of *purdah* is that an adult woman should not only not be seen by an unrelated man but should also avoid facing some of her men relatives. I shall, however, discuss this point later. The *purdah*, in general has two aspects, As Jahan has stated :

The first one is spatial, i. e., women have to be confined within the four walls of their homes. There would be a separate women's wing in the house, separate tank for women's bathing and cleaning facilities, and separate toilet facilities for women. The second type of restriction allows a woman to move out of her home, but only if she is veiled in a *burqah* or travels in veiled transports, i. e. carts, boats and rickshaws with heavy curtains drawn around them.⁹

As mentioned above, during the journey a woman should wear an overgarment called *burqah* which covers her body from head to foot. It has embroidered eye pieces to allow vision. *Burqah* is an important aspect of *purdah*. If a woman does not have a *burqah*, she should cover herself with a *chaddar* (long cloth). A woman, however, may not wear a *burqah* if she travels in a veiled vehicle. The institution of *purdah* also demands that a woman's voice should not be heard from outside the home, especially by an unrelated man. That is why women talk in a low voice if there is an unrelated man in the home or when such a man passes through the courtyard of their home. Besides the above mentioned aspects of *purdah*, the villagers say that a woman should keep her head covered with the end of her *saree* (Bengali women's standard dress). If she is found keeping her head uncovered, she may be rebuked for this lapse. A woman who moves leaving her head uncovered is thought of as "shameless" by the villagers. She may, however, keep her head uncovered in the presence of other women, except, preferably in the presence of elderly women, such as *sasuri* (husband's mother).

9. Rounaq Jahan, "Women in Bangladesh," in *Women for Women*. Dacca : University Press Limited, 1975, p. 6.

As mentioned earlier, a woman is required to observe *purdah* with some of her men relatives. This has two aspects: firstly, she should cover her head with the end of her *saree*, and secondly, she should avoid facing such relatives. The girls in the village start observing *purdah* from around the age of twelve. Before marriage, a girl should observe *purdah* with these men relatives of her preceding generation who normally stay outside her own home, such as *mama* (mother's brother) and *phupa* (father's sister's husband). Her observance of *purdah* with these relatives, however, is confined to the first aspect of *purdah*, i. e. covering her head with the end of her *saree* as a mark of her modesty, in no case should she avoid facing these relatives. Even this kind of *purdah* is not observed strictly by the girls in Khawjapur, because of urban influence in the village. In the urban area, the girls do not observe *purdah* with such relatives. However, all that is required on the part of girl, while facing such relatives is to show some sign of modesty. She does not observe *purdah* with those relatives of her preceding generation who are members of her natal family, such as *chacha* (father's brother).

After marriage, a woman is required to observe *purdah* with her husband's senior men relatives, within as well outside the family, such as *sasur* (husband's father), *bhasur* (husband's elder brother), *phupa sasur* (husband's father's sister's husband), etc. She should avoid facing such relatives, cover her head in front of them, and speak in a low voice with them. That is, she should observe all of the above mentioned aspects of *purdah*.

The Khandans and Bhadrалoks in Khawjapur fence the inner part of their homes with bamboo and thatch to meet the spatial demand of the *purdah*. Their women are confined with the screened portion of the home, so that outsiders cannot see them. A few of the Khandan and Bhadrалok households have also separate tanks and toilet facilities for their women. Those who do not have a separate tank, make collectively a separate bamboo fenced *ghat* (bathing place at the bank of a tank) for their women. When their women go out they go in veiled vehicles. If they go on foot they will be *burqah* clad. Some people known for their religiosity and strictness about *purdah* do not allow the travel of their women during the day time. They allow them travel only during the night.

Some Grihasthas have also screened a portion of their homes, but the extent of observance of *purdah* by their women is less than that of Khandan and Bhadrалок women. Sometimes Grihastha women are required to come out of the screened portion of their homes for doing some

chores, such as drying of paddy, looking after cattle, etc. Usually they do such work in the open courtyard in front of their home, but if they find an unrelated man passing by a village street running through the front of the home, either they run into the fenced portion or draw the end of their *saree* to cover their head and face.

The small Grihasthas and Khandans do not have the screening in their homes the way the Khandans and Bhadrals have it. They also do not have separate tanks and toilet facilities for their women. Their men and women may use the same toilet. For bathing and washing they use the same tank. If a household does not have a tank in its own home its men and women may go to the tank of other households. It should be mentioned here that nowadays the villagers drink water from tubewells. As the small Grihasthas and Kamlas do not have tubewells inside their homes, their women fetch water from the tubewells outside their homes. When the women of these two categories of people go outside the village, usually they go in veiled vehicles, although they are not very strict about it. For example, while the Khandan and Bhadrals women do not travel by autorickshaws because there is no provision to curtain an autorickshaw, the Grihastha and Kamla women occasionally travel by autorickshaws. When the latter go on foot they cover their body with a *chaddar* (long cloth) because many of them do not have *burqah* as do the Khandan and Bhadrals women.

The degree of observance of *pardah* varies with the woman's age. The nubile daughters and young house wives are expected to observe it strictly, while the aged women may relax its observance. As McCarthy has stated, "In general, the need of observing strict *pardah* decreases with age."¹⁰ The degree of observance of *pardah* also depends on the place of residence of a woman. If she is in her husband's home she is required to observe it more strictly than if she were in her natal home. As McCarthy has rightly observed, "variations in the *pardah* system and consequent patterns of interaction are found to depend on whether the woman is in her father's *bari*, a daughter of the village, or in her husband's village, a daughter-in-law."¹¹

It is clear from the above description that the women of all the status categories of people do not meet all the norms of *pardah* equally. The Khandans and Bhadrals can afford to keep their women in *pardah*,

10. Florence E. McCarthy, *Bengali Village Women* (Mediators between Tradition and Development). Unpublished M. A. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967, P. 48.

11. *Ibid*, P. 142.

while the Grihastha and Kamla women do not observe *purdah* strictly.

Despite status differences, the people in the village in general believe in the culture of the *purdah*. "To villagers, *purdah* is a symbol of family respectability. If a family can keep its women in *purdah*, it gains respect. Therefore, as soon as a family improves its financial condition, it immediately wants to keep its women in *purdah*."¹²

The position of women in the village in general is unequal to that of men in certain respects, such as with regard to ownership of property and divorce. But it cannot be said that women of all status categories of people enjoy the same position. For example, the Khandan and Bhadraklok women are more tied down by the norms of *purdah* than are the Grihastha and Kamla women. Again, the Grihastha and Kamla women are less dependent on their men in comparison with the Khandan and Bhadraklok women, because the former play a greater role in subsistence activities than do the latter.

Glossary of local words

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <i>azan</i> | — | call for prayer |
| <i>bari</i> | — | homestead |
| <i>bhasur</i> | — | husband's elder brother |
| Bhadraklok | — | literally, gentleman, man of respect ; in social context, a category of people with a particular life-style. |
| <i>burqah</i> | — | an over garment used by the Muslim woman as a veil to cover her body from head to foot, with two netted holes for the eyes. |
| <i>chacha</i> | — | father's brother |
| <i>chaddar</i> | — | a long cloth |
| <i>churi</i> | — | bangles made of plastic or glass |
| <i>ghat</i> | — | bathing place on the bank of a tank or a river. |
| Grihastha | — | one who owns and cultivates land ; law status Muslim. |
| Idd | — | literally, happiness ; a Muslim festival |
| <i>idgah</i> | — | field for saying Idd prayers. |
| <i>jumma</i> prayer— | | congregation prayer held in mosque every Friday |

12. T. A. Abdullah, *Village Women as I saw them* (Mimco). Dacca : The Ford Foundation, 1974, P. 25.

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Kamla | — | landless labourer, daily wages earner, a low status Muslim. |
| Khandan | — | One who has long standing in the village and who can be distinguished from Grihasthas and Kamlas by a particular style of life; a high status Muslim. |
| mama | — | mother's brother. |
| Matabbar | — | village leader, head of powerful family. |
| namaz-e-zanaza | — | funeral prayer |
| purdah | — | literally, screen, partition, veil; social reference is to the practice of seclusion of women. |
| phupa | — | father's sister's husband. |
| reyai | — | literally, those who are under the domain of others; i. e., proteges; informal social groupings. |
| samaj | — | literally, society, informal council of village elders. |
| sardar | — | headman of a <i>reyai</i> or of a village. |
| saree | — | Bengali women's standard dress |
| talaq | — | divorce |
| wali | — | lawful guardian |

A Study of the Constraints of Service Delivery System in Bangladesh

Md. Ali Akbar.

Over the years, the population control efforts of Bangladesh had grown into a diverse set of activities and programmes operated by at least ten public and a large number of small and several large private agencies. The Division of Population Control and Family Planning (DPCFP) under the Ministry of Health and Population Control was responsible for organizing, administering and coordinating all population control activities in the country. It covered the country with service networks and had deployed a "small army" of field workers down to the village level. In a way, the country was saturated with the slogans of family planning and had been "innundated" by contraceptives. It was also not difficult to obtain "free" fertility control services if a couple *really* wanted to limit its family size or to terminate further child-bearing.

But the increase in the percentage of acceptors was very disappointing. There was a sense of urgency and impatience about the low performance of the population control programme. The experiences suggested that efficient programme management and improved services were likely increase the number of acceptors and the prevalence rates. It was not so much as ignorance or lack of motivation or non-availability of services as it was the low quality of services that determined the low level of performance of the population control programme in Bangladesh. It was felt that instead of concentrating attention on increasing motivation and changing attitude through propaganda and face-to-face individual communication, much better results could be expected by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery system at the field level.

1. OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

Objectives and framework of the study

Accordingly, the study was designed to identify and examine the constraints of the field organization at the thana level. Constraints were

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defined as those socio-economic, administrative, and programme factors that significantly affected the field organization's ability to reach, recruit and retain acceptors needed to realize the acceptor-targets assigned to it.

The thana organization was the field unit of a hierarchically structured national programme. Using a *holistic approach*, the study focused on the field organization as a *system* having vertical and horizontal links. It examined the constraints of the field organization in terms of (a) its client system, (b) its ability mobilize and use its own resources and manpower, and (c) the way it was related to and supported by vertical superordinate administrative units and relevant horizontal public and private agencies and leadership.

Scope and procedure of the study

The unit of study was the thana level field organization. The performance of the field organization was viewed as the aggregate performance of field workers. The unit of investigation was the performance of individual field workers and of the field organization as a whole.

The study was confined to 6 out of 30 thanas of Rajshahi district. The thanas were selected on the following manner: (a) 2 thanas reporting higher than the average district level performance, (b) 2 thanas just around the average district level performance, and (c) 2 thanas reporting below the average district level performance. Because of unreliability and inconsistency of the available service statistics, the ranking and the selection of the thanas were later found to be inaccurate. The selected thanas were however reasonably representative of the thanas of Rajshahi district.

The data collection for the study was completed in three stages during 1979-80. In the first stage, a general description of the working of the field organization was prepared by examining official records and through discussions with field personnel, other local officials and leaders. On the basis of the information of this stage, we selected 2 unions of each selected thanas for detailed investigation.

In the second stage, by administering a mailed questionnaire, we ascertained the opinions and suggestions of the field workers of all 30 thanas of the district. The response rate was about 72 percent. An analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaire, helped us to specify the nature of data to be obtained in the third stage.

In the third stage, we obtained required information through questionnaires from all field personnel of the selected thanas and a random sample of local officials and leaders. We also interviewed a random

sample of women selected from the couple registers of 12 unions of 6 selected thanas.

Limitations of the study

The performance data available at the district office were inconsistent with the data given by thana offices. The information available at thana offices were inconsistent with the reported performance of the field workers. The district office did not even have the number of fertile couples registered in different thanas. The estimates of the fertile couples supplied by thana offices did not tally with the estimated given by field workers. Similarly, the estimate of acceptors supplied by the district office, the thana offices and the field workers substantially differed. Our own estimate of acceptors obtained by interviewing a random sample of the fertile women had some obvious famine-bias. We did not know how reconcile all these inconsistencies. The study therefore had to limit itself to the identification and analysis of the constraints, indicating their obvious and implicit impact on the performance of the field organization and field workers. The constraints were of interacting nature and did not operate in isolation but affected the field performance in an interacting way. Some of them were remediable and some must be taken into consideration in formulating policy and programme strategy.

II. CONSTRAINTS INHERENT IN THE CLIENT SYSTEM

Costs of an additional child

About 80 percent of the households in Bangladesh were living below poverty-line. Avoiding an extra pregnancy had no noticeable effect on the economic well-being of their families. They were poor and were expected to remain poor, whether or not they had another child. Raising an additional child did cost them much. They were neither *seriously* affected by an additional child nor did they gain much accepting birth control. The acceptance of birth control might be hazardous to their health and physical ability to earn a living. Their major anxiety in life was not family size but day-to-day survival. But they were neither indifferent nor totally ignorant of the availability of fertility control means. But their expressed desire to have no more children was not consistently reflected in their family.

TABLE—1

Desire for No More Children and Family Planning Practice Status

| Name of Thana | % Desiring No More Children | Current Users | Drop-Outs | Never Users |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
| Nawabganj | 57 | 22 | 9 | 69 |
| Shibganj | 57 | 21 | 20 | 59 |
| Mohadevpur | 64 | 20 | 12 | 68 |
| Niamatpur | 49 | 26 | 9 | 65 |
| Baraigram | 49 | 18 | 4 | 78 |
| Mohanpur | 45 | 10 | 8 | 82 |
| All thanas (N=1784) | 55 | 19 | 10 | 71 |

planning practice status. The women gave various reasons for not yet accepting family planning: method not acceptable (43 percent), less than desired number or sex-composition of living children (35 percent), not yet given importance (19 percent), and family planning was against religion (2 percent). Although religious beliefs were viewed as a major obstacles, only 2 percent of the women pointed out religious objection for not yet using any methods of birth control.

Nature of demand for fertility control services

About two-thirds of the never users were either unwilling or not sure whether they might use any of the available methods in the near future. Only about 9 percent of them indicated that they might use any of the programme methods, and about 19 percent said that they might try injection if it were without side-effects. Their opinions suggest that it would be

TABLE—2

Opinions of Never Users Whether They Might Use Any Method

| Name of Thana | Might Use | Injection if Acceptable | Don't Know | Never |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|-------|
| Nababganj | 9 | 43 | 16 | 32 |
| Shibganj | 12 | 24 | 24 | 40 |
| Mohadevpur | 8 | 14 | 42 | 36 |
| Niamatpur | 10 | — | 42 | 48 |
| Baraigram | 11 | 12 | 37 | 40 |
| Mohanpur | 4 | 10 | 27 | 50 |
| All thanas (N=1791) | 9 | 18 | 31 | 42 |

difficult to recruit a significant number of never users without substantially improving the quality of the services offered through the programme.

Acceptability of the available methods

An analysis of the responses of the field workers, fertile women, local officials and leaders indicated that most women knew that it was easy to obtain and take pill but the daily pill-taking was not only bothersome to them but it also made them sick. The field workers could not provide any acceptable advice or services for the treatment of the side-effects. We found that pill was distributed and sold in the market without any discrimination. Naturally, there were widespread cases of drop-outs. The IUD was not acceptable to most women because, it was against the modesty of the village women and most of them knew or heard about cases where the IUD insertion had resulted in serious side effects and complications. The ligation was acceptable to many women but they were either afraid of the "operation" or were hesitant to accept a permanent method which was rumoured to affect women's ability for hard work. Moreover, it required travelling to operation camps or to clinics but the follow-up care was very unsatisfactory. The women were reluctant to discuss about condom, and expressed doubts whether their husbands should / would accept vasectomy which might affect their ability for hard work and sexual potency. As a result, wherever it was known, the women wanted to try the new method, injection. Most of the local leaders and officials were male and economically well-off, and they indicated preference more frequently for condom

TABLE—3

Acceptability of Available Methods of Birth Control

| Method | Fertile Women (N=1778) | Local Official and Leaders (N=361) | Local FWAS (N=164) |
|-----------|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Pill | 11 | 16 | 7 |
| Condom | 5 | 22 | 12 |
| IUD | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Ligation | 12 | 47 | 61 |
| Vasectomy | 1 | 30 | 38 |
| None | 78 | 33 | 20 |

and vasectomy than the common village women. It should be noted that despite negative opinions, the prevalence rates among the local officials and leaders was quite high (58 percent). This indicated that motivated couples were willing to tolerate some of the difficulties and discomforts of the available methods.

Reasons for negative opinions about available methods

Widespread negative opinions and dissatisfaction were created by pressure tactics, over-selling and malpractices. It was re-inforced by the inability of service delivery system to ensure credible information, acceptable services and follow-care. The motivating efforts by field workers were taken as mere "sale-talks", to be verified by views and opinions reliable friends and "knowledgeable" neighbours. As a result, it was as much a social climate of opinions as it was the opinion of individual couple that the available methods were not acceptable for the poor who must use their physical labour to survive. A face-to-face individual approach alone was not effective in dispelling the doubts and fear of the target population about the methods. Under the circumstances, we cannot expect to find a high level of "natural" motivation among the target population to use the available means of birth control. We must conclude that most of the couple were neither ignorant nor totally indifferent. They were at different levels readiness. The lower the general level of effective demand, the better must be the quality of services and follow-up care.

III. INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE FIELD ORGANIZATION

The structure of the field organization

At the time of the field investigation for the study, the thana level field organization was headed by the Thana Family Planning Officer (TFPO). He had the support of : (a) a clinic for IUD insertion, operated by a female para-medical worker (LFPV), (b) one part-time medical officer (c) 3 thana level family planning assistants, retained from earlier field structure and were used mainly to look after the office administration, (d) 9—12 male Family Planning Assistants (FPAs), one from each union, and (e) 27—36 female Family Welfare Assistants (FWAs), 3 from each union, one from each ward. There were several *dais* and male Organizers (CMOs) retained from the earlier field structure. For our study, the field workers referred to the FWAs and their immediate supervisors, the FPAs.

Characteristics of field workers

The field workers were comparatively young local men and women—the median age of FPAs was 26.6 years and that of FWAs was 23.1 years. Many of them felt embarrassed to talk about family planning with their know seniors who saw them growing up in villages. The majority of the FWAs were high school graduate but about 5 percent of them had only

primary level of formal education which must be inadequate even for keeping necessary records. A significant number of FPAs and FWAs were unmarried. In rural areas, unmarried girls working with bachelor young men in family planning led to malicious rumour which had stigmatized some of them. It was not surprising that some of the field workers were often taunted and ridiculed for being "shameless." Their middle class background was also a handicap in creating mutual trust and understanding with lower class illiterate women. They usually approached their target population as illiterate and superstitious. They viewed their work as a way of educating the target population about what was right and what they should do. But village women were not totally ignorant of what the family planning had to offer; they had their own sources of information and wisdom.

Work-load and field visits by FWAs

The median number of couple per FWA was 1006 but the range varied from only 168 couples to about 2,400 couples. Almost none of the FWAs however complained about the size of the target population. But most of them complained about the geographical area they had to cover; the mean number of village per FWA was more than 7 villages. Most of them said that it was difficult to visit some of the villages, and most of the villages in some thanas became inaccessible during and immediately after the rainy season. But the reported number of monthly home-visits during these difficult months of the year, was the same as in other months. This obviously raises the doubt about the accuracy of the reported number of home-visits. We could not directly verify their reports. But our field investigators reported that the number of reported home-visits by FWAs was highly exaggerated. This was indirectly confirmed by other evidences. About 25 percent of the women we interviewed for the study reportedly did not know the local FWA. Only about 50 percent of the women were contacted last within 4 months of the interview. The age and parity as well as the practice status of the women did not indicate any priority in visits or any plan in visiting different villages. About half of the women did not have Couple Cards. The available Couple Cards, in most cases, did have any reliable information about visits or practice status. Our field investigators noted that the FWAs usually did not go to "distant" villages and avoided the non-acceptors. About 27 percent of the local officials and leaders reported that the FWAs were doing their work well about 33 percent said that they were doing their work not so well, and the rest, 40 percent said that they were totally inactive.

Nature of local supervision of the work of FWAs

The work of the FWAs was directly supported and supervised by FPAs. The FPAs reportedly met the FWAs 5—6 times in each month in the field. But the conflicting dates and places of meeting reported by the FPAs and the FWAs indicated inaccuracy of many of these meetings. We were told by the local people that the FPAs themselves being inactive did not report lapses of the FWAs. A significant number of the FWAs were their own or fellow-worker's relatives. The FWAs who had influential local backing were left alone and the FPAs themselves went to their houses to prepare the monthly progress report.

The TFPOs complained that, on the average, they had to stay in the thana office for 12—15 days each month to take care of the administrative duties. They could not devote enough time for field supervision. They had to depend on the FPAs. In 1979, TFPOs of 6 selected thanas visited 82 percent of the unions and only 36 percent of the wards. According to our field investigators, since the TFPOs were 'outsiders' and transferables they did not create "unnecessary" difficulty, for field workers having local influence or influential backing. Some of the local people and a few field workers had complained that some of the TFPOs were not only inactive but also corrupt; they received a "percentage" from the salary of the field workers and did not take any interest in field supervision. It was not verifiable.

Dedication and commitment of the field workers

The laxity of the system could have little impact if the field workers were dedicated and had lasting commitment to their job. We asked them to indicate 4 good and 4 bad aspects of their work. Their responses indicated that they liked the secured and non-transferable government job which they could have living in one's village home to take care of the domestic duties and commitments. Most of them however did not like the door-to-door visit every working day, working in the same villages and meeting the same clients, and then face ridicule and harassment by fellow-villagers. They did not mention the difficulties of field work or their own inability to deal with needs and problems of their clients. They liked the job but not the nature of work they were required to do. This did not indicate any significant level of commitment and dedication to their job.

Skill and ability of field workers

The field workers did not have any office. They operated from own homes and were not pressed to maintain any specific hours of field work.

It was therefore natural that they should pay more attention to domestic duties and commitments and less to their less appealing official duties. In comparison with other government jobs, the field workers' job was locally viewed with low esteem and received less acceptance.

Apparently, the field workers shared with their target population some of the apprehensions and misgivings about the available methods of birth control. The short-term training of 5-6 weeks did not change their values, attitudes and basic orientation to the problem. It would be unrealistic to expect that they would be able to dispell doubts and fear of the target population or to persuade them to accept a method which they themselves considered to be hazardous to an acceptor's health and well-being. Only a few of the women said that the FWAs were not welcome or their advice was not reliable. But the "acceptance" of the workers did not mean acceptance of the fertility control means because, the majority of them were dissatisfied with the available methods, adequacy of follow-up care and advice for side-effects. When asked about the difficulties the FWAs faced in persuading the target population, the difficulties mentioned were : fear of side effects (70 percent), religious objection and excuses

TABLE—4

Nature of Difficulties Faced by FWAs to Persuade Couples to Accept

| Nature of Difficulties | Percentage of FWAs (N=152) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Fear and doubts about side-effects | 70 |
| 2. Religious objection and excuses | 60 |
| 3. Ignorance and illiteracy | 37 |
| 4. Indifference and apathy | 33 |
| 5. Opposition/objection of husbands | 24 |

(60 percent), ignorance and illiteracy (37 percent), apathy and indifference (33 percent) and opposition of husbands (24 percent). About 90 percent of the FPAs and 78 percent of the FWAs reported that their training was inadequate to deal with clinical aspects of their work. Since they could not offer "guaranteed service", their major skill was word of mouth in which very few clients were interested.

Limitations of the emphasis on women

About 70 percent of the FWAs reported that even if they could persuade a woman to accept, she often refused to accept any method without

"permission" of her husband. They suggested that more attention should be paid to man with whom they had little direct contact. Women might be more inclined to accept but the husbands made the final decision.

The field workers were not supplied with any "authentic" documentary evidences to convince the religious leaders that family planning was not against religion.

Limitation of motivation efforts

The majority of the field workers indicated that until the clinical facilities were significantly improved and/or a better method (without side-effects) could be introduced, intensified motivation campaigns and home visits would have little impact on the programme performance.

Suggestions for improving performance of the field organizations

The following specific suggestions emerged from our discussions and interviews with the field personnel, local leaders and eligible women :

1. Improve local supervision by appointing 2—3 assistants to TFPOs, by involving local leaders, by scrutinizing field reports and delegating more "power" to TFPOs and FPAs.
2. Improve clinical aspects of the programme by ensuring measures for treatment of side-effects, follow-up care, by setting up union clinics, by organizing regular sterilization camps, by providing further training to field workers, and by introducing injection.
3. More intense publicity and educational efforts involving local leaders to dispell widespread doubts and fear, to stop rumour and to organize local level concerted efforts.
4. Increase material incentives to acceptors, "penalize" those who oppose or harass field workers' efforts, and employ depot-holder.
5. Improve service condition of field workers and made the job of the FPAs transferable and/or set union office.

IV. CONSTRAINTS IN HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE FIELD ORGANIZATION

Since the success of the population control programme depended on the decision of millions of individual couples scattered all over the country, effective support and participation by all government departments, private agencies and people in general, were deemed essential to make it a *social movement* rather than a routine government programme imposed from above.

Nature of efforts to obtain people's participation

Since the beginning, the population control programme could draw strength and support from other department, civil administration and private agencies. During 1965—70, an autonomous organization and a separate field structure of the programme had reduced the sense of commitment and cooperation of other public and private agencies. But too much pressure on reaching quantitative targets without supportive clinical facilities, follow-up care and effective supervision, had led to the widespread rumour and dissatisfaction about the safety and efficacy of the available methods and the credibility of field workers and "agents" employed by the programme. The population control programme had remained isolated at the field level and its credibility was in serious doubt. As a result, there was no grass-roots support. The Coordination Committees at different levels had remained totally inactive. During 1973—76, the population control efforts were integrated into a comprehensive health and family planning delivery system. It was a government service of a single department, and there was no provision for people's participation. During 1976-80, the population control programme was reorganized into a separate Division (DPCFP) and initiated a multi-sectoral approach.

Limitation of multi-sectoral approach

A multi-sectoral approach was introduced in order to obtain support and involvement of relevant public and private agencies. The Coordination Committees were revived. During this stage, although several public and a large number of private agencies had initiated a diverse set of population control schemes and projects of their own, the population control programme of the DPCFP, at the field level, had remained isolated, a sectoral programme with its own targets, organization and field personnel. The participation and involvement of other departments and private agencies in collective efforts, at the local level, had remained confined to a few small-scale experimental programmes. Moreover some of the local leaders were given orientation and short-term training courses; and a large number of seminars/workshops were held in different parts of the country but we found the lack of appreciation of the links in similar activities of local public and private agencies and leadership. Each local agency was found to be "jealous" of the other, vigilant in protecting its "domain" and critical of the way others were operating. The field organization had neither enough authority nor required resource-base to attract other public and private agencies to initiate collective efforts. The Coordination Committees remained ineffective or were abandoned.

Participation of local officials and leaders

The level of participation and involvement of the local officials and leaders in population control efforts was very low. There was no consistent policy or programme around which the local leadership could be mobilized for population control efforts. Most of the local leaders however expressed their verbal realization of the gravity of the population problem.

TABLE—5
Expected Role of the Local Leaders in Population Control

| Expected Role | Leaders' Opinions (N=361) | FWAs' Opinions (N=163) |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Provide support and cooperation | 33 | 28 |
| 2. Participation in motivation efforts | 25 | 64 |
| 3. Participate in group meetings | 21 | 15 |
| 4. Persuade friends and neighbours | 38 | 25 |

The expected role of the local leaders appeared to be in the areas of information, education and communication. But most of the couples were no longer ignorant of the availability of birth control measures and most of the leaders had similar level of knowledge and misgivings about different methods. Thus, whatever role may be carved out for the local leaders, the quality of services must improve. The fusion of the health and population control at the field level into a single service proposed in the Second plan, may improve the clinical aspects of the programme. But the health infrastructure at the local level was so inadequate that it was doubtful whether it would improve the field situation to the required extent.

V. CONSTRAINTS IN VERTICAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE FIELD ORGANIZATION

Since the field organization was the implementing unit of a hierarchically organized national programme, and did not yet deal with the felt-needs of the majority of the target population, its effectiveness depended on a comprehensive system of support, incentive, supervision and feed-back mechanism. The vertical constraints of the field organization were identified in the way tasks were allocated, supervised, supported and evaluated by super-ordinate administrative units at district and national levels.

Assignment of targets

The population control policy persued by the government since 1965, was time-bound target-oriented. Specific demographic and acceptor targets for the field organization and field workers had remained suspended during 1972-75. The 1976 population policy had again translated the national demographic target into acceptors of different methods and allotted them to the field organization and field workers for the period of 1976-80. It was decided to reward the workers for exceeding the targets and to penalize those who would fail to reach at least 60 percent of the assigned targets.

The targets were not however emphasized any more from the end of 1978. It was apparently replaced by occasional special "drives" and sterilization camps in which the field workers were required to bring in specific number of clients for sterilization. The decision about special campaigns originated in the *personal* inspiration of the Minister or other high officials.

At the field level, there was confusion about the nature and the number of specific annual targets. Most of the field workers however viewed the targets in terms of acceptors for sterilization. The targets for other methods were "adjusted" with made-up figures which could not be checked. Thus, during 1977-78, only 36 percent of the sterilization targets were realized whereas the targets for other (unpopular) methods had exceeded by more than 12 times. This was highly unusual and could not have been accurate.

Our discussion with the field personnel indicated that targets were assigned arbitrarily without any assessment of the local demand, size of the target population, initial number of acceptors and facilities for target realization. The majority of the field workers however agreed that the assigned targets could be fully or substantially realized with required official support, facilities and clinical back-up. It seemed obvious to us that without required clinical facilities at local level and effective supervision and monitoring measures, arbitrarily imposed targets would increase dissatisfaction, frustration and further falsification of the service statistics.

Autonomy of field organization

The field organization had to implement decisions as per procedures formulated at national levels. It had no autnnomy and resources to take initiative. Whatever initiatives were observed at the local level depended

on the personal enthusiasm of the TFPO and his staff. The field workers did not know how the tasks were allotted or how their performance was being evaluated. Some of them did not care because, there was no incentive or prospect of promotion through better performance. Most of the field workers appeared frustrated at the way they were being abused and castigated by the higher officials and the people they served. The field workers did not believe that higher officials understood the field problems or the difficulties they had to face. The higher officials had no confidence in the sincerity and dedication of field workers. There was mutual distrust.

Supervision of the field organization

Two methods were used for supervision and evaluation of field workers : (a) reporting system and (b) occasional field trips by higher officials. An elaborate monthly progress report, in prescribed form, was prepared by the FPAs. It could have been an effective built-in means of supervision and evaluation. But due to the lack of local supervision and scrutiny, the progress reports were highly inaccurate and, often inconsistent. It was known to the supervisory officials at all levels but no question was asked about facts and figures supplied through these reports. Apparently, thana and district offices were satisfied once they had the reports to prepare and aggregate report of "performance" of the thana and of the district. There was no evidence that the national office ever used the monthly reports to scrutinize the performance of the field organization or field workers.

It was not possible to estimate the number (or percentage) of the current users from the progress reports which simply added the monthly acceptors into an aggregate total without subtracting the drop-outs or discounting for the multiple counting. The annual report did not account for acceptors who had received supplies and services from non-programme sources. As a result, we were given differing, often inconsistent, figures of acceptors by field workers, by the thana and district offices. There was no reliable, even reasonable, estimate of drop-outs. The Couple Register did not have upto date demographic information required. In most cases they were never used after the registration.

Since the figures supplied through monthly and annual progress reports were never checked for accuracy, or used for evaluation of performance, the records were kept in a very haphazard way. Many of the reports were missing. How the national estimates were made from the service statistics was a mystery to us.

The field visits by superior officers were very irregular and uncertain. On the average, the district and national officers together visited the thana offices 3—4 times a year. Inaccessible thanas were visited less frequently. In most cases, such visits were confined to the thana head-quarters and the inspection was limited to superficial examination of files and records. Supervision often meant advising the field workers to be more active. On rare occasions, a few field workers were suspended for neglect of duties. Such irregular visits by superior officers were inadequate not only for field supervision but also for understanding of the field problems required for the administrative decision-making.

Support, supplies and facilities

The field organization was dependent on the district and national offices for support, supplies and facilities. Most of the field workers were dissatisfied at the way the tasks were allotted and their performance was evaluated. They had complained about the inadequacy of their training to deal with needs and problems of their clients. They asked for more frequent local publicity campaigns and required religious literatures in support of the family planning programme. They were also dissatisfied with the quality of contraceptives and the adequacy of clinical back-up. They suggested that they need more facilities for sterilization at the union level. As an alternative, more frequent local camps could be useful for their clients. They suggested that the major difficulty was not lack of motivation of their clients or the inadequacy of their efforts but the lack or inadequacy of the supportive facilities and supplies which in turn affected the quality of the services and their own credibility and acceptance to the clients they had to serve,

Concluding remarks

The findings tend to support the government's decision to integrate population control and health into a single service. But are the local health facilities and the young (often bachelor) physicians who are appointed at the thana level, adequately prepared to deal with field population control? The earlier attempts to integrate did not work well. The demand for health care was so pressing in rural areas that the population control, not being a felt-need, may get only secondary importance in a health service dominated field structure. We of course cannot ignore or downplay the need for effective cooperation and support of the health facilities in population control. At the field level, it is not the structure but the process of integrated work that will influence the performance.

Because of widespread rumour and complaints, each individual client and acceptor will have to be carefully examined and advised regarding choice and use of birth control methods in order to minimize the general complaints and to stop rumour through dissatisfied drop-outs. An adequate training of field workers, and the provision of required facilities seem to be the most urgent need for accelerating the population efforts at field level. Alternative to decentralized bureaucratic system is not yet feasible.

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Popular Beliefs, Rituals and Religious Practices in a Bangladesh Village

A.B. Sharfuddin Ahmed

In this article we intend to discuss the popular beliefs, rituals and religious practices of the people of Bizna.¹ We have confined our discussion on the beliefs and rituals among the Muslims. We have found some popular beliefs and rituals which are not prescribed by the religious codes of Islam but are mostly rooted in the indigeneous culture. These popular beliefs and rituals exercise no less influence on the life of Bengali Muslims than the Islamic injunctions. Some of the beliefs and rituals here verge on primitive animism while some others merge with the developed form of monotheism of the Islamic type.

The rituals begin to exercise their influence from the very day when a baby is born in a Muslim family of Bizna. The baby is offered the invitation of Islam through *azan*.² Both sexes are equally treated in the matters of offering *azan*. This *azan* can be offered by any body irrespective of sex and status whereas in normal situation it is offered only by a Muslim male. In the case of a newly born boy, *azan* is given at the top of one's voice whereas in the case of a girl, it is said softly into her ears. This ritual is performed by the Muslims under the belief that the newly born baby will grow-up to become a *Mumin* (pure) Muslim. It should be mentioned that *azan* is offered loudly in the case of boys under the belief that the child will become straight forward, intelligent and religious and softly into the ears of a girl under the belief that she will grow to be a traditional woman, will observe *purdah* and will speak softly, as prescribed in the Islamic codes, so that her voice is not heard outside the house.

The most important ceremony after the birth of a child is the naming ceremony which is often associated with *akika*.³ This is generally performed on the seventh day after the birth of the baby. The mother is bathed even though she continues to remain impure upto the end of forty days from the date of child's birth. The child's head is shaved and it is put in a cradle. The *akika* following the Islamic rules may be performed on this

¹ This article is the outcome of a field research conducted in a village fictitiously called Bizna, in the district of Comilla, in Eastern Bangladesh.

² *Azan* means an invitation and reminder to the people of the timing of *namaz* (prayer). It is offered by a person who is known as *Moazzen*.

³ *Akika* is prescribed in the books of Islam. At the *akika* of a female baby, one goat, and in the case of a male baby, two goats, are required to be sacrificed.

occasion or it may be deferred to a future date. Friends, relatives and well-wishers are invited to participate in the naming ceremony.

Maulavis are specially invited because the name of the child is compulsorily an Arabic one and Maulavis know correct Arabic names. Several names will be suggested by different persons (including Maulavis) and generally the elder members of the child's family make the final choice. In some cases (e.g., illiterate families), the Maulavi is requested to make the final choice. Maulavi conducts the prayer, wishing good health and prosperous life for the baby.

Nabanna is a ceremony which is performed by the Muslims to mark the beginning of a child's rice-eating. This ceremony is conducted when the child attains the age of six months or so. Friends, relatives and neighbours will be invited to watch the *nabanna* ceremony.

The wedding ceremony begins with the ceremony of *gaihalod* (putting turmeric on the body) in which the bride and bridegroom are pasted with turmeric in their respective homes. The women folk of the two sides grind turmeric in their respective homes and playfully throw turmeric and coloured water on each other within the family. It should be mentioned that the materials for *gaihalod* for the bridegroom are supplied by the bride side and vice versa. The female relatives and sisters of the bridegroom carry turmeric and other necessary materials to the house of the bride in the morning of the day of *gaihalod* and in the afternoon the girls'side come with the same to the house of the groom. The night of *gaihalod* is spent without sleep in both the homes on account of the fear of ghosts. There exists a popular belief among the villagers that if the bride and the bridegroom are left alone in their respective homes on the night of *gaihalod* then the ghosts will possess them.

On the second day, in the evening, the bride and the bridegroom take bath in their respective homes. Before this the groom's people go to the bride's house with sarees, blouse, cosmetics etc., and the bride's side goes to the groom's house with payjama, panjabi, lungi, ganji, gamsa, towell, soap, etc., so that both of them can use these after their bath. In case of marriages where the two parties live in different and distant places, the equivalent price for these materials and articles are borne by the respective parties and the payment is made in this regard immediately after the fixation of the date of marriage.

After bath both the bride and the bridegroom wear thread on their wrists. In the night *mehdi* (henna) will be put on their hands as an aspect of marriage rituals.

On the third day, the groom's side will visit the house of the bride with various items of sweet preparation and will feed the bride with each of these items. Similar is the case with the groom who will be treated by the members of the bride's side.

On the wedding day, the wedding party starts in a procession consisting of the friends, relatives and wellwishers of the groom. On the eve of

his departure his mother or another female relative will offer a glass of milk to him. Milk is given to the groom by the mother so that the son does not forget the mother after his marriage. The marriage party takes fish, *pan* and betelnuts as a sign of good beginning. The suit-case full of gifts such as ornament, sarees, blouses, petticoats and cosmetics for the bride are kept in the bridegrooms carriage. Then the wedding party proceeds. The groom leads the procession. His carriage is decorated with colourful flowers and papers. He is dressed in groom's clothes. When the bridegroom and the party reach the house of the bride, they find the main entrance closed. It is opened by the youngsters of the bride's family, both boys and girls, when small gifts are offered to them.

The groom's people then hand over the articles and the suit-case, carried by them, to the bride's party. The Kazi solemnizes the marriage by reading the prescribed words of *nikah*. The signature of the bridegroom is obtained on a document which embodies all the terms of the marriage contract, including the *meher* which he will have to pay if he discontinues marital relation with his wife. The illiterates put their thumb impression. While this is being done the bride remains inside. Her father and some responsible elders from both the sides then go to her and say, "You are being married to X, with a *meher* fixed at such and such amount. Are you willing to be his wife?" Her consent is necessary although very often she indicates it not by saying 'yes' but by crying. This is the final ritual of marriage and then the matrimonial relationship is established between the two.

The wedding party is then entertained with delicious food. The grandeur of the marriage ceremony depends on the economic conditions of both the sides. After the dinner the final stage of marriage ritual in the house of bride, known as *Ander Mahal*, remains to be performed by the newly married couple. *Ander Mahal* is largely filled with persons with whom the couple maintains joking relationships which includes grandmother. Traditionally mother and aunts remain far from the celebration of *Ander Mahal*. The period inside the *Ander Mahal* is crucial for both the boy and the girl but to be specific, it is more crucial for the boy. The boy, accompanied by his friends, proceeds towards *Ander Mahal* while in a room the bride is seated, dressed in her bridal dress. On reaching the door of the *Ander Mahal*, they find the door closed. In order to make the door open they are again required to pay some money to those who have closed the door. And, finally, being satisfied with the money, the door is let open by the youngsters for the groom and his companion. Fun and fooling then follow on a grand scale. The bride and the bridegroom are seated on a decorated bed, but a screen is held between them as partition. They exchange sweets between themselves. The groom is asked to see his wife's face in the mirror and so is the bride. They exchange garlands made of coloured papers and flowers. Later the bride is ceremonially given by her parents to the bride-groom. After this the procession is for-

med by the groom's party for going home where few more rites await the couple. The newly married couple are taken in a decorated carriage. When the wedding party is back in the house of the groom the groom's mother, with some other elderly women, come with a branch of flower in hand and *Durba* (grass) and *Dhan* (paddy) on the *kola* (a bamboo-tray on which rice is cleaned) to welcome the newly-married couple. The grass and paddy are put on the head of the bride by her mother-in-law and wives of groom's brothers sprinkle water on her face. This is the welcome to the newly-married couple.

Custom demands that sexual intercourse be avoided for first three days after marriage and this is communicated to the newly-married couple by some one (usually elder brothers' wife) before they meet in the bridal chamber. It is important to mention here that many of these rituals connected with a Bangalee Muslim marriage are drawn from the indigeneous customs which find no sanction in the Islamic codes.

The news of the first pregnancy is hurriedly despatched to the girl's father and there is always much enthusiasm on such occasion. There is a popular belief in the rural areas that unless the girl becomes a mother, her position in her father-in-law's house remains insecure and this is also one of the reasons why the girl's side is happy to hear the news. The pregnant woman is sent for her first confinement to her parents but subsequent deliveries generally take place in her husband's home. During her confinement, much care is taken. The pregnant woman wears a *Tawiz* (amulet) in which verses from the Quran has been written by the Maulavi so that the child remains safe and sound in her womb. Many a time she drinks water on which the Maulavi has read out verses from the Quran in order to help her have a good progeny. In most families, ceremonies and payers are held in the expectation of a male child. Again, the popular belief is that the position of a mother of a son is more secure in the father-in-law's house. Few days before the expected date of delivery a separate house, known as *Aturghar* is constructed by those who can afford it. The pregnant woman is required to remain in the *Aturghar* till the child is born and 40 days after that. After the birth of the child none but only the members of the family can have easy entrance to the *Aturghar*. Restrictions on entry are imposed for weeks after the child is born so that the baby is not sighted by the ghosts. To keep away the evil spirit from *Aturghar*, every evening *Agarbati* and *dhup* (perfumed incense) is burnt.

Members of the family coming from outside, after the end of day's work may enter into *Aturghar* by first spraying water on them from a pot in which gold and silver is put to purify the water. Purified water is sprinkled so that the visitor may not carry any elements harmful to the baby. The mother is thought to be 'impure' for forty days after the birth of the baby. During this period she can neither observe *Ramadan* (fast) nor perform her usual daily prayers. After forty days, by taking bath, she attains purity and can then devote herself to the usual routine.

Muslims, male and female, are expected to say prayer and observe *Ramadan* when they attain 12 years of age. Muslims are expected to say their prayers daily, five times, in the mosque in a group under the command of an *Imam* (a person who conducts the prayer). Every time the *Moazzen* calls the people by offering *azan* reminding people to attend the mosque to say the prayers in *jamat* (in group). There is also the provision to offer prayers outside the mosque. One can say his prayer at any place he likes or is convenient. But the place of prayer must be pure. Weekly Friday prayers are to be offered only in the mosque. It is believed that offering daily prayers in the mosque in *Jamat*, under the command of an *Imam*, carries 27 times more *soab* (virtue) than when prayers are offered outside the mosque. Women do not say their prayers in the mosque but offer them at home.

Fitra and *zakat* are the two distinct institutions of Islam which are performed by the wealthy Muslims for safeguarding their lives and properties. *Fitra* and *Zakat* have been made compulsory for the wealthy Muslims. The price of one seer of wheat for each member of the family is given to the poorer sections by the wealthy as *fitra* on the day of *Idul Fitar* which comes after *Ramadan*. 1/40th portion of one's movable and immovable property or its equivalent price is distributed to the poorer sections as *zakat* by those who have minimum savings of Taka 52 in cash or kind. It is to be pointed out that those in debt are exempted from paying the *zakat*. The poorer section, of course, cannot pay *zakat* and nobody expects them to do so.

Haj, i.e., visit to the Kaaba in Mecca, is by far the most important religious act for a Muslim. Every Muslim desires to do this pilgrimage at least once in his or her life-time. Of course, considering the cost, only a few are able to fulfil this desire. It is believed by the Muslims that all their sins will be washed away by a visit to the Kaaba and the Prophet will take them to the heaven. *Iman* (faith), *Namaj* (prayer), *Ramadan* (fasting), *Haj* (pilgrimage to Kaaba in Mecca) and *zakat* are the five pillars of a Muslim's belief in Islam.

Besides these, a Muslim performs other important festivals as sanctioned by Islam. They are *Shabe Barat*, *Shabe Miraj*, *Shabe Kadar*, *Meelad Mahfil*, *Moharram*, *Idul Fiter* and *Id-uz-Zuha*.

Shabe Barat is one of the important religious festivals that the Muslims observe every year on the night of the 14th day on the religious month of Shaban. To the Muslims, *Shabe Barat* is believed to be the holy night which determines the future course of their actions by Allah. The Muslims assemble on that night in the mosque to offer special prayers. Both men and women pass the whole night without any sleep by saying prayers and reading the Holy Quran and seeking Allah's blessings for their long life and welfare. It is believed that the spirits of the departed souls come out to see their relatives and the Muslims also pray for the salvation of the soul of their deceased relatives.

On this night children also go to the mosque and ask for Allah's blessings so that they grow to be virtuous, happy, wealthy and successful.

Shabe Barat also brings excitement to the monotonous life of the villagers. The Muslims prepare sweets of various kinds. They also prepare *roti* out of rice. Rich people offer food and clothes to the poor in the name of Allah for the salvation of the soul of their deceased kin. They also visit their graves and offer *fateha* and special prayers.

Shabe Kadar is another important religious occasion for the Muslims. Generally the Muslims observe the night of the 26th day of *Ramadan* as *Shabe Kadar*. It is believed that on this night, Prophet Mohammed (Sm.) received the Holy Quran from Allah. On the night of *Shabe Kadar*, all Muslims offer special prayers to Allah and remain without sleep for the whole night which gives them the benefit of thousand night's prayers' *soab* (virtue). Delicious food and sweets of various kinds are also prepared for distribution among the poor.

Shabe Miraj is the another important religious occasion. This is observed on the 26th day of *Rajab* month. It is believed that on this day Prophet, accompanied by an Angel, visited Allah and had a conversation with Him. It is also believed that the Prophet visited all heavens and hells. The celebration of this day brings peace and blessings of Allah to the Muslims. The Muslims pass this night at home or in the mosque in meditation and prayer and ask for Allah's blessings.

The 10th day of *Moharram* is the day of mourning for the Muslims all over the world. On that day one grandson of the Prophet of Islam and some of his followers were killed brutally in the battle-field of *Karbala*. The Muslims observe this day to commemorate the tragic death of Imam Hossain and his associates. However, the observance of this day is followed differently by the two sects of Muslims, Sunnis and Shias. The Sunnis observe the day as the day of mourning while the Shias re-enact the battle of *Karbala*. There are only Sunnis in *Bizna*.

Melad Mahfil is an occasion when Muslims assemble to discuss the virtuous life of the Prophet. It generally comes on the twelfth day of *Rabiul Awwal*, when the Prophet was born. From one point of view, the ceremony is taken to be the observance of Prophet's birthday. From another point of view, celebration of this day carries significance of *soab* (virtue) and salvation from misdeeds. *Melad Mahfil* can be held at any time of the year on any auspicious occasion.

On this day people meet each other in an open field in a pendal where religious leaders deliver speeches on the life and teachings of the Prophet. Sweets, food and clothes are distributed in the name of the Prophet.

Id-ul-Fiter is an auspicious and joyous occasion for the Muslims; the very word 'Id' means merriment. After the fasting of one month, with the end of *Ramadan* when the Muslims see the new moon, called *Shay-awal*, *Id-ul-Fiter* is celebrated the following day offering joy and happiness to all Muslims.

Muslims assemble either in the mosque or in the *Idgah*, excepting women, for offering special prayer of *Id-ul-Fiter*. It is believed that on this day Almighty Allah grants *soab* and happiness to those who have observed fasting for the whole of *Ramadan* month. Men, women and children wear new clothes. They prepare sweets and many delicious food items. The richer section offer *Zakat* and *fitra* to the poor.

Id-uz-Zuha, called *Bakrid*, is another occasion for rejoicing. This festival is celebrated on the 10th day of *Zilhaj* month. *Id-uz-Zoha* teaches the Muslims the spirit of sacrifice in the name of Allah.

On the day of *Id-uz-Zoha* the Muslims sacrifice cattle in the name of Allah. This is compulsory for those who can afford to do it. A big animal like cow, buffalo, ox can be sacrificed by seven persons and animals like goat and sheep can be sacrificed by one person.

The villagers, on the day *Id-uz-Zoha*, assemble in the *Idgah* (field for prayers) for prayers. As mentioned above, after the completion of prayers, they sacrifice cows, buffalos and goats in the name of Allah.

A Muslim, like all others, ultimately come to the end of life. The deceased is given a final bath by the Imam. The Imam is assisted by some relatives of the deceased. It should be mentioned here that a dead woman is washed by women only. After the formal washing of the body, the *zanaza* (prayer for the peace of the soul of the dead) will be offered and then the body would be carried on a bier to the grave. The body would be covered by earth. The people, in general, believe that for about 40 days after the death, the soul of the deceased would visit the spot. The family members are particularly careful during those 40 days and would abstain from all kinds of untoward acts which might offend the feeling of the soul of the dead person. *Fateha*, verses of the Quran and special prayers are arranged for the peace of the departed soul. Finally, at the end of 40 days, a feast is held for the good of the dead person to which the Imam, Maulavis and all those who have read verses from the Quran and said special prayers are invited. The poor is also given food on the same day for the good of the dead person.

Patterns of Student Leadership in Rajshahi University*

Habiba Zaman

1. Introductory

In virtually all underdeveloped areas, writes Myron Weiner,¹ students have played an active role in politics. Lipset² observed that students have almost invariably been more responsive to political trends and social change than any other group in the population, except possibly intellectuals. The sources of student activism, Lipset continues, are to be found in a combination of political trends, personal psychology, family background and university atmosphere.

Student activism in Bangladesh may be traced back to the British period when student activities were directed against the British policy in general and for nationalist movements in particular. After the partition of 1947, student agitation in Pakistan first began on the issue of state language of Pakistan.³ The fall of President Ayub Khan in 1969 marks the point of highest prestige for the student community of Bangladeshi (then East Pakistan), the time when Ayub's image was almost completely accepted in Pakistan.⁴ The nature and extent of the participation of the student community in the War for Bangladesh in 1971 is well known, although least documented. Since then, student political activities have continued and student "indiscipline"⁵ has increased, possibly beyond con-

* An earlier draft of the paper was read by Mr. M. Q. Zaman. I am grateful to him for some valuable criticism which helped improve it. The errors and flaws are, however, mine. My thanks are also due to my students, who volunteered their services as investigators and collected data for the research reported here.

¹ Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 158.

² S. M. Lipset, "Student Activists" in *Dialogue*, vol. 2, 1969, No. 2, p. 5.

³ For details, See Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasa Andolan O Tatkalin Rajniti* (Dacca: Mowla Brothers, 1978); S. A. Akanda, "The National Language Issue: Potent Force for Transforming East Pakistani Regionalism into Bengali Nationalism" in *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, vol. I, No. 1, 1976.

⁴ The student community of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) started a militant movement against President Ayub Khan in 1968-69. The Mass upsurge of 1969 was entirely led by the student community under the banner of All Party Student Action Committee (SAC). For details, see Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (Dacca: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁵ The most common form of "student indiscipline" is student strike, boycotting examinations and other activities which generally are directed against both government and university authorities. Also see, Weiner, *op. cit.*

trol. Large-scale disturbances led to the closing down of University of Dacca twice in 1974⁶, Bangladesh Agricultural University and Universities at Chittagong and Rajshahi several times during recent years.⁷ The problem of student indiscipline has caused interruption of normal academic life and has become a major headache for guardians, educationists, university authorities and the government.

It may well be assumed that in none of the universities do all students participate in demonstrations, strikes and other political activities. With regard to participation, following Hamilton, three broad categories of students can be defined:⁸ the militants, the sympathizers, and the non-participant. The militants, may be defined as active members of a political party holding office in student organizations and are employed in the organizational and propaganda efforts of the party on campus, sometimes to the partial or complete exclusion of their studies. The sympathizers agree with and generally tend to support the position of one of the parties active on campus, attend meetings, support strikes and other political activities, although they may not be members of the party. The non-participants may be defined as those who do not take interest in student political activities and may even disagree with the positions of active parties on campus.

1.1 Objective and Review of Literature

Systematic effort to understand students political behaviour, activities and leadership in Bangladesh has not been taken to the extent it deserves. Afsaruddin⁹ made a study on student problems at the University of Dacca. In a study¹⁰ of four major state Universities in Pakistan (Dacca, Karachi, Lahore and Peshwar), it was reported that the students at the University of Dacca were more interested in politics and most frequently held leftist view, while those at Peshwar were least politicized and least leftist. Jilani's study¹¹ on Dacca University students revealed that seventy-five

⁶ Several students were killed by brush-fire in Dacca University in 1974 and 1975 which led to the closure of the university for long many days.

⁷ Universities of Dacca, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong and Mymensingh were closed down on several occasions due to student indiscipline in 1978, '79 and '80.

⁸ William Hamilton, "Venezuela" in Emerson (ed.) *Student Politics in Developing Countries* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1968), p. 352.

⁹ M. Afsaruddin, "Notes on Research About Student Problem at the University of Dacca" in P. Bessignet (ed.) *Social Research in East Pakistan* (Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1960).

¹⁰ "Aspirations and Attitudes of University Students in Pakistan" (mimeo: USIA, Research and Reference Service, Washington D. C. December 1963) cited in Emerson. *op. cit.* p. 405-6.

¹¹ Golam Jilani, *Teacher-Student Relation at the Dacca University* (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1961).

per cent of his respondents has lost their respect for teachers, while in another study¹² he mentioned that seventy-seven percent were quite decided in their views that the students were being exploited by the politicians to serve their own self-interests. A recent study on Dacca University student has focused on the socio-economic background only.¹³ Talukder conducted a survey on socio-economic conditions of Rajshahi University students and the nature of their participation in the War of liberation and the loss of life and property sustained by them.¹⁴ Thus it appears that none of these studies mentioned above have dealt with student activists who organize meetings and are largely responsible for mobilizing supporters in favour of their issues, both academic and political. At the centre of student political activity anywhere is the student leader. This study is, therefore, devoted to the socio-economic background of student leaders and their attitudes to student and national politics and problems. By student leader, I refer here anyone holding an office in any unit of his student organization, largely within the campus of the university.

1.2 Data Sources and Limitations of the Study

The survey was carried out through a questionnaire by six of the author's students who volunteered their services as investigators for collecting data. In all, 130 questionnaires were distributed at random by the investigators to student leaders of the following student organizations : Bangladesh Chatra League, Kader-Chunnu (BCL, K-C) ; Bangladesh Chatra League, Manna Group (BCL, M) ; Biplobi Chatra Union (BCU) ; Bangladesh Students Union (BSU) ; Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS) ; Jatiyo Chatra Andolan (JCA) ; Bangladesh Jatiyo Chatra Dal (BJCD) ; and Jatiyotabadi Chatra Dal (JCD).¹⁵

The survey was started in mid-February (1979) and was completed in July, 1979. The investigators finally returned 106 questionnaires. The remaining 24 respondents were not available in the campus due to unscheduled closure of the university during the period of the survey. In the following table the distribution of respondents is made on the basis of category of leaders of different student organizations.

It appears from Table 1 that different categories of leaders of all active student organizations in the campus are fairly represented. Out of the total number of student leaders interviewed for the survey, 25 (23.59%)

¹² Golam Jilani, *An Inquiry into the Factors Influencing the Academic Atmosphere of the Dacca University* (Dacca : Pakistan Institute of Human Relation, 1956).

¹³ Ellen Sattar, *Socio-Economic Background of Dacca University Students*. (Dacca : University Grants Commission, 1975).

¹⁴ A. H. Talukder, *Rajshahi University Students and the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle—A Survey Report*, (Rajshahi : Rajshahi University, 1972).

¹⁵ For details about these organisations, please see the glossary at the end of the paper.

are president/convenor, 5 (4.72%) are vice-president, 12 (11.32%) are general secretary, 14 (13.20%) are joint secretary/assistant general secretary, and 50 (47.17%) are other category of leaders. The "others" category include organizing, publicity, cultural and literary secretaries and so on.

The survey was carried out among student leaders of different student organizations in the campus. Leaders of formal student bodies like

Table 1
Distribution of Student Leaders by Organization and Category of Leaders

| Category of leaders/ Student organization | President/ Convenor | Vice-President | General Secretary | Joint Secretary/ AGS | Others | Total |
|--|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| BCL (K-C) | 6 (35.30) | 0 | 3 (17.64) | 1 (5.88) | 7 (41.18) | 17 (100) |
| BCL (Manna) | 5 (16.66) | 3 (10) | 4 (13.34) | 4 (13.34) | 14 (46.66) | 30 (100) |
| BCU | 2 (50) | 1 (25) | 0 | 0 | 1 (25) | 4 (100) |
| BSU | 4 (16.67) | 0 | 3 (12.50) | 4 (16.67) | 13 (54.16) | 24 (100) |
| ICS | 0 | 0 | 2 (33.33) | 0 | 4 (66.67) | 6 (100) |
| JCA | 3 (43.86) | 1 (14.28) | 0 | 0 | 3 (42.86) | 6 (100) |
| BJCD | 2 (22.22) | 0 | 0 | 1 (11.11) | 6 (66.67) | 9 (100) |
| JCD | 3 (33.33) | 0 | 0 | 4 (44.45) | 2 (22.22) | 9 (100) |
| Total : | 25 (23.59) | 5 (4.72) | 12 (11.32) | 14 (13.20) | 50 (47.17) | 106 (100) |

Note : Figures within parenthesis are percentages.

Rajshahi University Central Students Union (RUCSU) and other hall unions have not been included in the survey, because elections to these bodies were suspended since 1974. Inclusion of the leaders of these for-

mal bodies would have definitely enriched the study. However, the respondents of the present survey may be considered activists who really matters in what we have defined as student "indiscipline". Furthermore, the findings of the study, though may be difficult to generalize, will help us to understand the socio-economic background of student leaders and their opinions about certain academic problems, reasons of student indiscipline and their relation to national politics.

2. Socio-Economic Background of Student Leaders

This section is concerned with the presentation of data pertaining to the socio-economic background of student leaders. Out of a total of 106 respondents interviewed, 72 (67.92%) student leaders have come from rural areas, while 34 (32.08%) are from urban areas. This is very much expected because rural areas of Rajshahi and the neighbouring districts contribute majority (69%) students to Rajshahi University.¹⁶ Among the respondents, there were nine female student leaders also.

2.1 Age Background

Table 2 below represents age background of the respondents.

Table 2
Age Distribution of Student Leaders

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|---------------|--------|------------|
| Upto 20 years | 10 | 9.43 |
| 21—25 „ | 86 | 81.14 |
| 26—30 „ | 10 | 9.43 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

It is found that large majority (81.14%) of student leaders belong to 21-25 years age group. Ten (9.43%) respondents are found to be upto 20 years of age and another 10 (9.43%) in between 26 to 30 years of age.

2.2 Educational Background

In order to assess educational background of the respondents, a total score of 9 was calculated according to the following formula : Score 3 for First Division, 2 for Second Division, and one for Third Division/Pass from Secondary Certificate level upto B.A. (Honours)

¹⁶ Talukder, *op. cit.* p. 21.

level.¹⁷ Thus the score ranged from 3-9 in the direction of lower to higher level of academic background. For the convenience of analysis we have divided the score as follows : 3 low, 4-6 medicore and 7-9 high. Table 3 reveals that majority (73.75%) of the student leaders of almost all student organisations are medicore student followed by low and high calibre—the percentage being 21.25 and 5 percent respectively. Twenty-six (25%) respondents did not mention their educational background.

Table 3
Distribution of Educational Score of the Student Leaders
by Student Organization

| Score/ Student organization | —3 | 4—6 | 7—9 | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| BCL (K-C) | 4 (30.77%) | 8 (61.53%) | 1 (7.70%) | 13 (100%) |
| BCL (M) | 6 (26.09%) | 16 (69.57%) | 1 (4.34%) | 23 (100%) |
| BCU | 0 | 3 (100%) | 0 | 3 (100%) |
| BSU | 2 (12.50%) | 13 (81.25%) | 1 (6.25%) | 16 (100%) |
| ICS | 1 (16.67%) | 5 (83.33%) | 0 | 6 (100%) |
| JCA | 3 (60%) | 2 (40%) | 0 | 5 (100%) |
| BJCD | 1 (11.11%) | 7 (77.78%) | 1 (11.11%) | 9 (100%) |
| JCD | 0 | 5 (100%) | 0 | 5 (100%) |
| Total : | 17 (21.25%) | 59 (73.75%) | 4 (5%) | 80 (100%) |

2.3 Annual Income of Guardians

The annual income of guardians of the student leaders as stated by them is given in Table 4. Annual income has been calculated as income from land, business, services and other sources.

¹⁷ It was found that student leaders were all within this range of scores. There was none found who completed M. A.

Table 4
Annual Income of Guardians

| Annual Income | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Upto Taka 5,000 | 5 | 4.71 |
| Tk. 5,001—10,000 | 14 | 13.20 |
| Tk. 10,001—15,000 | 23 | 21.71 |
| Tk. 15,001—25,000 | 22 | 20.75 |
| Tk. 25,001—35,000 | 11 | 10.38 |
| Tk. 35,001—50,000 | 9 | 8.50 |
| Tk. 50,001 and above | 22 | 20.75 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

It is evident from the above table that majority guardians of student leaders belong to moderately high income group. Out of the 22 (20.75) respondents whose guardian's income are above Tk. 50,000, eight respondents reported that their guardian's annual income vary from one lac to 3 lacs taka.

2.4 Land owned by Guardians

Ninety-nine respondents reported about the size of land owned by their guardians. Seven did not mention. The distribution of land is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Amount of Land owned by Guardians of Student Leaders

| Land owned by bighas | No. of students | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 20 bighas | 23 | 23.33 |
| 21—50 bighas | 42 | 42.42 |
| 51—100 bighas | 19 | 19.19 |
| 101—above | 15 | 15.15 |
| Total : | 99 | 99.99 |

It appears that majority (42.42%) of guardians have 21 to 50 bighas¹⁸ of land. Nineteen (19.19%) guardians have land between 51 to 100 bighas while 15 (15.15%) have more than 100 bighas. Overall it may be said that student leaders of Rajshahi University belong to "land-rich"

¹⁸ One bigha=33 decimal.

background, because only 23% have less than 20 bighas of land. Also, the guardians of Rajshahi University student leaders own higher amount of land compared to the guardians of Dacca University students.¹⁹

3. Politics and Political Ritualism

In this section an effort is made to discuss the processes of students' being political and their views on student politics and parties. It has been found in our survey that majority (59.43%) of the student leaders have been politicized at the school-level (see Table 6).

Table 6
Level of Education and Active Involvement in Student Politics

| Level of Education | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| School | 63 | 59.43 |
| College | 21 | 19.81 |
| University | 22 | 20.76 |
| Total | 106 | 100.00 |

Twenty-one (19.81%) student leaders at the college level and 22 (20.76%) at the University level got actively involved in student politics. Thus it may be said that active involvement of students in politics begin at an early academic life. Being asked, the respondents replied that they were influenced by a lot of persons to come to politics. The answers are categorized in Table 7.

Table 7
Influence of Persons in Coming to Politics

| Category of persons | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Senior student | 24 | 23.08 |
| Relations | 35 | 33.65 |
| Politician | 12 | 11.54 |
| Friends | 16 | 15.38 |
| Others | 17 | 16.35 |
| Total : | 104 | 100.00 |

Note : Two did not mention.

¹⁹ See, Sattar, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Table 7 shows that one-third (33.65%) of the respondents were influenced by relations (mostly father and elder brother) followed by senior students (23.08%), friends (15.38%) and politicians (11.54%). The others category (16.35%) include issues/ideologies, and not persons as stated by the respondents. In majority of such cases, respondents reported that national crisis, like 1968-69 movement and the war of liberation, attracted them to join politics and participate in national issues. Four respondents mentioned that the political personality of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman influenced them to be political while one reported that he was influenced by one of his school teachers.

The questionnaire for the survey contained a question as to the reasons for doing politics. As shown in Table 8, about half (47.88%) of the respondents replied that they got into politics for the greater interest of the country followed by 41.21% who claimed to have come to politics for solving student problems. Two (1.21%) reported that they are in student politics for better placement of life, yet another said he spends leisure time in politics. Those categorized as others (9.10%) said that they have joined politics, what they claimed, for the emancipation of the poor and the exploited in the society.

Table 8
Reasons for doing Politics

| Reasons | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| For greater interest of the country | 79 | 47.88 |
| To spend leisure time | 1 | 0.60 |
| For better placement of life | 2 | 1.21 |
| Solving student problem | 68 | 4.21 |
| Others | 15 | 9.10 |
| Total : | 165 | 100.00 |

Note : Some respondent mentioned more than one reasons.

In Table 9, it has been shown that majority (55.66%) of the student leaders feel that their involvement in politics do not affect their studies. Thirty (28.30%) respondents said that their involvement affect their study. Seventeen (16.04%) abstained from giving their opinions on it. It was also inquired whether the student leaders mutually respect each others's opinion and ideology.

Table 9
Effects on Study

| Category of replies | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes | 30 | 28.30 |
| No | 59 | 55.66 |
| No opinion | 17 | 16.04 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

Sixty-nine (65.09%) respondents as shown in the table below reported that they have regard for the opinions of other student parties. Twenty (18.87%) said no and seventeen (16.40%) gave no opinion.

Table 10
Respectful to other Party

| Category of replies | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes | 69 | 65.09 |
| No | 20 | 18.87 |
| No opinion | 17 | 16.04 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

Finally, it was also intended to know whether the leaders have changed their platforms or not. In Table 11, it is shown that more than three-fourth (77.36%) respondents said that they have never changed their party, while nine (8.49%) have changed once and fifteen (14.15%) have changed more than once. It may be mentioned here that when a student party becomes a divided house, dissidents of different groups claim that they represent the original organization and hence have not changed their platform.

Table 11
Party Change

| Number of changes | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Never changed | 82 | 77.36 |
| Changed once | 9 | 8.49 |
| Changed more than once | 15 | 14.15 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

As evident from the survey, this happened with many student leaders who claim to have never changed their platforms.

4. Politics : Future Profession ?

This section represents opinion of student leaders about the possibility of politics as their future profession and the basic problems of Bangladesh as viewed by them. In reply to whether they would like to continue in doing politics as profession in their later life, 78.30% replied positively. Twenty-two (20.76%) respondents were found uncertain on this issue and one replied in the negative.

Table 12
Opinion about Politics as Future Profession

| Categories of responses | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes | 83 | 78.30 |
| No | 1 | 0.94 |
| Uncertain | 22 | 20.76 |
| Total : | 106 | 100.00 |

The aspirations of the larger majority of students indicate that they would like to be future leaders of the nation through politics, because possibly this is the easier way to be established in life in under-developed countries like us.²⁰

In an open-ended question the respondents were asked to write some key-problems of Bangladesh. The answers, for the convenience of the study, are categorized in the following table. 23.68 percent respondents consider that economic problem, dependence on foreign aid and consequent dependent economy are the main problems of Bangladesh, followed by 15.13 percent who believe that political instability, political crisis, and parochial politics are the main problems. 12.5 percent consider food, clothing, shelter, medicine and illiteracy are the basic problems of Bangladesh. 10.53 percent opine that exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth are the roots of all evils of Bangladesh. Over population, poverty and unemployment has also been pointed out as problems of Bangladesh by 7.24 percent, 6.58 percent and 3.29 percent respectively. Lack of honest leadership and morality have been cited by 7.24 percent respondents. Other problems as mentioned by respondents are : lack of practical approach to national problems, absence of democratic values, national unity and patriotic sense, present socio-economic structure, property

²⁰ Also see Anil Baran Ray ; *Students and Politics in India* (Delhi : Monohor, 1977)

ownership and backwardness of agriculture, and industry, the present colonial system of administration and lack of political consciousness, lack of proper planning and contradiction in educational system and finally law and order problems.

Table 13

Basic Problems of Bangladesh as Viewed by Respondents

| Problems | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| Economic problems, dependence on foreign aid and dependent economy | 36 | 23.68 |
| Political instability, political crisis and parochial politics | 23 | 15.73 |
| Food, clothing, shelter, medicine and illiteracy | 19 | 12.50 |
| Exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth | 16 | 10.53 |
| Over-population | 11 | 7.24 |
| Lack of honest leadership and morality | 11 | 7.24 |
| Poverty | 10 | 6.58 |
| Unemployment | 5 | 3.29 |
| Others | 21 | 13.81 |
| Total : | 152 | 100.00 |

Note : Some respondents listed more than one problems.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring socio-economic background of Rajshahi University student leaders and their opinions about student politics and national problems. It has been found that majority of student leaders have rural background and are between 21-25 years age group having mediocre academic records. The student leaders also belong to typically land rich farm families of rural areas. This has been a characteristic of student politics and leadership in under-developed countries.²¹

It is evident from the survey that majority of the student leaders got politicized at the school level, mostly influenced by relations and senior students, and consider that by doing politics they would contribute to the solution of student problems, and also serve the greater interest of the country. The leaders opined that their involvement in active politics do not affect their studies. The majority of the student leaders expressed their opinions in favour of continuing politics as future profession. Dependent economy ; political crisis and parochialism ; food, clothing and shelter ; exploitation and unequal distribution of resources ; absence of

²¹ See Lipset, *op cit.*, Emerson, *op. cit.*, Ray, *op.cit.*

democratic values, national unity and patriotic sense ; the present colonial system of administration ; contradictions and lack of educational planning are the main problems of Bangladesh as viewed by student leaders.

It will possibly be not wise to generalize about patterns of student leadership in Bangladesh universities based on Rajshahi data. Still, this survey has led to some interesting findings about student politics and pattern of leadership of a university located in a rural setting. Inter-university study on student activism, politics and indiscipline might lead to a more useful research on this fascinating field of enquiry. This survey may be considered as a modest contribution to that end.

Glossary of Student Organization Names

BCL (K-C) : Bangladesh Chatra League (Kader-Chunnu Group). This is a student organization of Awami League (Malek group) which supports and work for the establishment of the ideologies of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The BCL (K-C) is one of the major student parties.

BCL (M) : Bangladesh Chatra League (Manna group). BCL (M) is a student organization of the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal which is a national political party and which was formed by dissident members of the Awami League in 1973. The party believes in class struggle and has the goal to achieve scientific socialism. BCL (M) is led by Mahmudur Rahman Manna. It is one of the major student parties of Bangladesh today.

BCU : (Biplobi Chatra Union). It is a revolutionary small party which apparently has many committed workers. This party is the student front of United Peoples Party (UPP) which is led by Kazi Zafar.

BSU : (Bangladesh Students Union). BSU is a student organization of the Communist Party of Bangladesh led by Moni Singh. This is a major student organization.

ICS : (Islamic Chatra Shibir). Islami Chatra Shibir is a conservative, religiously oriented Muslim party. This party is affiliated to Islamic Democratic League (Rahim group).

JCA : (Jatiyo Chatra Andolan) : JCA is a very small party. It is the student organization of Bangladesh Samyobadi Dal led by Nagen Sarkar.

BJCD : (Bangladesh Jatiyo Chatra Dal). Bangladesh Jatiyo Chatra Dal is a very small party affiliated to the National Awami Party led by Narur-Zahid.

JCD : (Jatiyo Chatra Dal). This is a very new student organization having direct link with the party in power—The Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

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