

# Role Of Opposition In Bangladesh Politics: An Assessment

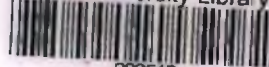
Ph.D. Thesis

By

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman

GIFT

Dhaka University Library



382518

382518

ঢাকা

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

গ্রন্থাগার

Department of Political Science  
Dhaka University

1995

ROLE OF OPPOSITION IN BANGLADESH POLITICS:  
AN ASSESSMENT

PH.D. THESIS

BY

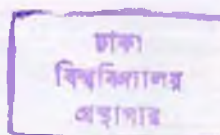
AL MASUD HASANUZZAMAN

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA  
1995

382518

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:

PROFESSOR EMAJUDDIN AHAMED  
VICE-CHANCELLOR  
DHAKA UNIVERSITY



A THESIS SUBMITTED TO DHAKA UNIVERSITY

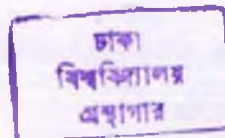
in fulfilment of the requirement  
for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By

AL MASUD HASANUZZAMAN

Department of Political Science  
Dhaka University  
1995

382518



Dedicated to my parents



Contents

Preface	I
Acknowledgment	III
Introduction	1
Chapter-I	
Significance of Opposition in Democracy	6
Chapter-II	
Quest for Democracy in Bangladesh and Opposition under Mujib Rule	61
Chapter-III	
Opposition and Its Role during Zia Regime	99
Chapter-IV	
Ershad Regime and Opposition	142
Chapter-V	
Parliamentary Democracy and the Role of Opposition under the present BNP Rule	184
Chapter-VI	
Summary and Conclusion	232
Appendices	247
Bibliography	259

## Preface

The people of Bangladesh for very many years struggled against the foreign rule and fought the War of Liberation in 1971 with the objective of establishing democratic society and practicing democracy. In the post liberation period as per the Constitution of 1972, democracy in the form of parliamentary system was introduced. But the country faced various limiting factors to work with the system and fell prey to authoritarianism and rule by the military since 1975. With the overthrow of authoritarian rule by a mass upsurge in 1990 the people of this country obtained yet another opportunity to establish their long cherished democratic system anew. The parliamentary election of 1991 paved the way for establishing representative system and brought a strong organised Opposition in the legislature as well as in the country's political scene. The burden of the great task of nurturing the nascent democratic order fell on both the Treasury and the constitutional Opposition. Like the party in power Opposition in a parliamentary democracy has a significant role to play both inside the legislature and outside the parliament. While participating in the governmental and political processes the Opposition makes constructive criticism and exposes the weaknesses or faults of the ruling party. To enable the Opposition to perform its constitutional role properly parliamentary system offers various legislative devices and mechanisms at its disposal. Opposition is also looked upon as an alternative government to which the electorate may turn to and give their verdict in the next elections.

Considering the prime importance of constitutional Opposition in a parliamentary democracy I became keenly interested in opposition



politics and role in the context of Bangladesh situation. While doing my own research as a senior Fulbright Scholar in the department of Political Science at Columbia University, New York, U.S.A. during 1991-92 academic session, I had also gone through various books and materials on the above area of study. As such I decided to take up the field as a topic of my Ph.D. research. Immediately after returning from Columbia University in 1992 I discussed my plan with my teacher Professor Emajuddin Ahamed, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University who kindly agreed to supervise me in my Ph.D. research. This is in short the background of my Ph.D. work. I hope that this research on the Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics would help bridge the gap in the existing scanty literature on this particular area of study in our country. Opinions and observations expressed in this thesis are entirely mine and I alone take all the responsibility for any failings or shortcomings.

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman

Dhaka

April. 1995

Acknowledgment

First of all I express my immense debt of gratitude to my teacher and Ph.D. supervisor Professor Emajuddin Ahamed. Being the chief executive of Dhaka University, Professor Emajuddin Ahamed took the trouble of offering me his patient supervision, guidance and help at every stage of preparing my Ph.D. thesis. His valuable assistance and necessary suggestions have been of great help to complete my work. I also owe indebtedness to my other teachers of Political Science at Dhaka University and my former course teacher and supervisor of my M.Sc. dissertation Dr. Geof. D. Wood, University of Bath, U.K. for encouraging me to pursue doctoral research. I am also grateful to Jahangirnagar University for granting me permission to do Ph.D. at Dhaka University. I am particularly thankful to the Librarians and staff of the Jatiya Sangsad Library, Dhaka University Library, Jahangirnagar University Library and USIS Library for the assistance they offered during my going through the relevant materials, books and documents. I must also express deepest gratitude to my parents and my wife whose constant support and encouragement enabled me to complete my Ph.D. work.

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman

Dhaka

April, 1995



## Introduction

In today's democratic world the Opposition is considered as an indispensable part of the political system. As an alternative government, the Opposition has a significant role in the governmental and political processes in a democratic polity. This is more so in a parliamentary form of government where the party in power headed by the real executive and the elected opposition political parties sit in the legislature and participate in the rule-making process; in case of failure of the government in the parliament the Opposition may be asked by the titular head of the state to form the cabinet. Needless to mention that in all democratic systems the major role of the Opposition is to criticise the actions of the government and identify the faults of the party in power. The Opposition does this through well planned manner and tries to project the feelings of the citizens over the policies and programmes taken by the government. Under such vigilant eyes of the Opposition, the ruling party has to pursue its policy options with due caution. While criticising the government policies the Opposition presses for their necessary modification. Opposition also presents its own policy programmes to the electorate as an alternative government. One great contribution of the Opposition in democratic political system is that it acts as an important mechanism for imparting political education among the masses. As such people become aware of the rule of the game of politics and accordingly form their own opinion and get involved into politics.

It is worth mentioning that the above role of Opposition

is more a characteristic feature particularly of the developed democratic polities. On the other side in many underdeveloped societies which adopted democratic set up following the type of their colonial rulers in the post independence period, both the party in power and Opposition are not found performing their constitutional role. Although the existence of Opposition political parties are recognised officially yet the government is intolerant of Opposition and often adopts various repressive measures to suppress them. The Opposition, in a similar manner, resorts to extra constitutional methods against the government and in many instances its major objective is to unseat the party in power through political agitations and revolutionary activities. In the post liberation period countries like Bangladesh badly need consensus on state fundamentals and concerted efforts to formulate and implement national economic planning and select priorities. But the common thing is that such needs are greatly lacking in these countries as both the government and Opposition have opposing views on fundamental issues. Both sides often violate their constitutional role and fail to remain sincere to democratic norms and practices. Thus they invite instability, political chaos, confusion, crises and in extreme situation military intervention in politics.

Different eminent political scientists and scholars have made studies on Opposition politics. Extensive works dealing with the role of Opposition in different countries were incorporated in the two important volumes edited by Robert A. Dahl, namely



Political Opposition in Western Democracies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) and Regimes and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). Opposition's behaviour and role in politics as sketched by other known scholars are included in the works of Edward Shils' Government and Opposition (London: McMillan, 1971); K.C.Wheare's Legislatures (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Rodney Barker's (ed) Studies in Opposition (London: McMillan, 1971); A.S.Burger's Opposition in a Dominant Party System (Bombay: Oxford Univ.Press, 1969); Barbara N.McLennan's (ed) Political Opposition and Dissent (New York: Dunellen Pub.Co.Inc, 1976); J.A.Naik's The Opposition in India and the Future of Democracy (New Delhi: S.Chand & Co, 1983); R.Saxena's The Role of Opposition in Indian Politics (Delhi: Anmol Pub, 1986); and D.S.Ram's Role of Opposition Parties in Indian Politics (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992). Besides the above works the writings on democracy of the leading theorists like A.D.Lindsay (1929), S.M.Lipset (1959), Ernest Barker (1942), H.B.Mayo (1960), Geovanni Sartori (1965), Jack Lively (1975), and David Held (1987) also highlighted the position and role of Opposition in democracy. Various articles touching Opposition politics are also found in reputed international journals of political and social sciences. In Bangladesh, numerous books and articles have been published on politics and society of the country incorporating Opposition party politics but studies exclusively on Opposition and its role both inside and outside the parliament are very scanty.

In view of the above this study intends to analyse and assess the role of Opposition in Bangladesh politics with an

examination of the following questions: What has been the role of Opposition in the political system of Bangladesh since independence? What role it has played both inside and outside the parliament? What was the performance of the Opposition when this country was under parliamentary, presidential, and army's autocratic rule? What has been the mode of action and role of the Opposition under the present parliamentary system of government? How far the Opposition has been able to uphold the cause of democracy? While investigating the above queries this study has concentrated on the role of major opposition parties which were represented in the parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) from First to Fifth.

✓ Methodology: This work is both descriptive as well analytical and evaluative. In order to collect necessary information this study has depended on both secondary published materials and primary sources. Secondary sources include books of reputed political and social scientists, concerned journals, periodicals, weekly magazines, and newspapers published at home and abroad; publications and printed materials of different political parties; various research and study reports; proceedings of the Jatiya Sangsad; reports of the various parliamentary committees; and various publications and documents of the Government of Bangladesh. Primary sources include the information gathered through discussion with prominent politicians both from the government and major opposition political parties; and observation of this researcher through watching parliamentary functions of the major parties and their activities outside the Jatiya Sangsad.



Chapterisation: This study has been divided into the following broad chapters. Chapter-I deals with theoretical discussion including role and significance of Opposition in democracy, scholars' viewpoints, Opposition both inside and outside the legislature, Opposition in developed and developing democracies, and socio-political scenerio of Bangladesh. Chapter-II traces the quest for democracy in Bangladesh and Opposition in the parliamentary system under Mujib rule. Chapter-III illustrates the revival of Opposition and its role during Zia regime. Chapter-IV examines the Opposition activities during Ershad rule leading to Mass Upsurge and election of 1991. Chapter-V analyses transition towards democracy and the role of Opposition in the reintroduced parliamentary system including its performance both inside and outside the legislature. In the concluding Chapter-VI overall summary and concluding remarks have been furnished.

## Chapter I

Significance of Opposition in democracy:

Definition and Scholars' Viewpoints

-----

Definition of the term 'Opposition' can be found in the encyclopedias, dictionaries, books and scholarly writings of the thinkers and theoreticians of political and social science. According to Grolier encyclopedia<sup>1</sup> in politics, the name Opposition is given to a party that is out of power and that exists mainly for the purpose of criticising the party in power and if possible supplanting it. Opposition has been defined in the Universal Dictionary of English Language<sup>2</sup> as a body of individuals who hold opposing views to a decision or policy and as part of parliamentarians they are opposed to the party in the government. Oxford Advanced Dictionary<sup>3</sup> regards Opposition as MPs of the political party or parties opposing the government. The Dictionary of American Politics<sup>4</sup> considers Opposition as the majority and minority members of a political party in the Congress holding political views opposed to the President and his executive department; in the context of parliamentary system it mentions that Opposition includes the political party who either singly or collectively oppose the party in office. Opposition is regarded in the Webster's Third New International Dictionary<sup>5</sup> as political party opposed to the government and offers itself to replace the ruling party whenever necessary. According to the Penguin Dictionary of Politics,<sup>6</sup> an Opposition is political grouping, party or loose associations of persons who wish to change the government and alter its policy decisions. It elaborates that in democratic states the



Opposition has a formal position and is expected to offer itself as an alternative government both by challenging the government's measures or policies between elections and by presenting itself as a potential ruling party at an election.

Robert A Dahl<sup>7</sup> noted that the right of an organised Opposition to turn to the voters and seek their vote against the government in elections and in parliament has been one of the great milestones in the development of democratic institutions. But as observed, legal, orderly and peaceful mode of political oppositions are rare throughout the recorded history. Since differences of opinions and conflict of views are unavoidable in human affairs, governments and political societies have always had to deal with the fact of opposition; but the form of opposition as it is familiar now-a-days appears as a radical break and significantly differs with the kinds of opposition existed in the older days.

In Athenian democracy one of the cardinal principles was active citizen participation in the Assembly in deciding the political commitments. The great Athenian statesman Pericles while mentioning the characteristics of democracy said 'we decide or debate, carefully and in person in matters of policy, holding...that acts are foredoomed to failure when undertaken undiscussed.'<sup>8</sup> While unanimity was always sought in the Assembly, the possibility of differences of opinion and conflict of individual interests was clearly recognised.<sup>9</sup> Scholars traced that factions, alliances or coalitions of one form or another existed both in and outside the popular Athenian Assemblies.<sup>10</sup> A.H.M. Jones mentioned that 'There was no practice in anything like the modern sense, either among the politicians or the general public; at one end of the scale there were groups or cliques among the politicians. But

such alliances were probably based on personalities rather than principles, and seem to have been temporary.<sup>11</sup>

Referring to Lily Ros and F.E. Adcock, Dahl mentioned that during the late Roman Republic, political alliances sought votes and support both for laws and for candidates in the different popular assemblies. But evidently all such groups or alliances were never well organised as they had no stable or permanent structure and they even lacked definite names.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, factions like the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Medieval Italy or the Piagnoni and Arrabiati of Savonarola's Florence, typically settled their differences sooner or later, as they used to do by bloodshed during the last century of the Roman Republic.<sup>13</sup>

Peaceful opposition among factions and legitimately organised groups and political parties for either criticising the government or ousting the ruling regime remained unknown or unfamiliar for a long period till recent times. As such one great human social invention in recent ages has been the procedure of settling social conflicts and political differences by recognising the existence of organised opposition parties within the political system and allowing them to present themselves before the citizens as alternative government. Now-a-days one considers Opposition as the most distinctive feature of democratic politics and any absence of it is regarded as an evidence for the absence of democracy itself.<sup>14</sup>

The system of organised opposition political parties alongwith the recognition of legal action against the government has been a recent phenomenon and confined mostly to the western world. Michael Curtis<sup>15</sup> noted that the existence of a legal and constitutional Opposition



that is 'His Majesty's Opposition' was first used in Britain in 1826: it depends on its loyalty to the system and its acceptance of the rules of the political game; it agrees not to sabotage the work of government, limits its opposition to pacific political activity rather than overt action, and does not attempt to do any conspiracy against the government.

There has been emergence of constitutional Opposition with the development and flourishing of democracy. Great many scholars and political scientists are of the opinion that democracy offers more opportunities and presents greater scope for the Opposition compared to any other system of rule. Side by side enough arguments have been placed for the importance and significance of Opposition in practicing democratic politics.

Lane and Ersson opined that democracies not only offer freedom of thought, speech and contract but foster the autonomy of organisation and political institutions.<sup>16</sup> S.M. Lipset remarked that democracy implies government as well Opposition; democracy works nicely when there are enough cleavages to create space for contention and opposition.<sup>17</sup> Both the government and the Opposition in a democratic polity function on the basis of a clear understanding that it should be the right of the majority party to rule the country for a fixed term and the minority party or the Opposition should have the right to discredit the party in power in the eyes of the citizens and to open to them that the government is unfit to rule. Thus the Opposition endeavours to convince the masses in its favour vis-a-vis the government and attempts to gain office in the next term. As such the practice

involves building procedural consensus and convergence of opinions of both the government and the Opposition on state fundamentals.

Guglielmo Ferrero<sup>18</sup> pointed out that in democratic countries the Opposition is an organ of popular sovereignty just as vital as the government; to suppress the Opposition is to suppress the sovereignty of the people. A.D.Lindsay<sup>19</sup> noted that good representative system requires not only a strong Opposition; it needs also that the Opposition should be an alternative government; thus representative political democracy involves difference and Opposition. While commenting on the importance of Opposition in a democracy H.B.Mayo<sup>20</sup> observed that the existence of political opposition by persons and groups, by the press, and above all by organised political parties has been the litmus paper for democracy. Thus the liberty to criticise and oppose the government and to organise against it in a party to make the voting and Opposition effective has in fact no substitute. He elaborated that the cardinal feature of Western democracy and the characteristic which gives any reality to the choice at an election has been the existence within the state of an organised Opposition recognised as an important element in the country's political life, and left so free to develop its programme, its organisation and its resources that it can take over the party in power at a moment's choice. Jack Lively<sup>21</sup> opined that responsible and democratic government depend to a great extent upon the existence of, and free competition between political parties. It is mostly through the political parties that coherent activities can be offered to a wide electorate and the voter can discern the relation between



his vote and possible government action or policy. The degree to which political parties alone can perform these functions varies with the type of government system. In a presidential system the individual candidates do the job of creating alternatives in election. In the systems where the election confines to a number of persons or representatives of different areas the creation of alternative depends upon the organised parties. //

Political scientists thus sketched the importance and urgency of political parties both as government and opposition in democratic political system. S.M.Lipset<sup>22</sup> noted that there is a need to institutionalise in democracy peaceful struggle among competing elites that offer the citizenry the chance to choose between alternative programmes even as they expose one another's failings and weaknesses. He emphasised that a crucial condition for a stable democracy is the presence of major political parties with vast and permanent support bases among the electorate and with such loyalty parties always supply a basis for effective opposition. In democratic set up voters and citizens of a country know that if they turn against the ruling party they can replace it with the opposition. In pointing out the conditions of stable democracy Lipset stressed the importance of party in office and the opposition and illustrated that democratic system is characterised by a value system allowing peaceful play of power and the adherence by the 'outs' to the decisions made by 'ins' and the recognition by the 'ins' of the rights of the 'outs'.

Democracy theorists opine that democracy is by its nature a system of institutionalised competition for power and as such

without competition and conflict of opposing forces there can be no democracy. Thus one important element of democratic political culture has been the tolerance of Opposition and dissent in the political order.<sup>24</sup> Scholarly interest has also paid attention to the question whether toleration is there about political activity by the most hated political opponents. James L. Gibson et al<sup>25</sup> stated that tolerance is typically thought to be an essential ingredient of democratic politics. Without toleration of Opposition widespread contestation is impossible, regime legitimacy is imperiled and no conformity prevails. Democratic regime guarantees opportunities for Opposition to compete for political power and remain vigilant about its rights and challenge the actions of government or dissent from those it finds objectionable.

According to Ernest Barker<sup>26</sup> democracy liberates opposition and that the essential feature of democracy is the presence of Opposition which may be in the electorate, in parliament and even in the anti-cabinet which confronts and challenges the cabinet. An organised Opposition which is free enough to express its opinion is the safety valve of the political system. Barker cautioned that an Opposition should not be equated with something entirely negative, obstruction or delay; Opposition is never utterly negative or entirely critical; in the process of democracy the function it discharges is fundamentally positive. Opposition greatly contributes to the making of that majority-minority agreement which is the aim and end of the democratic process. With regard to parliamentary democracy Barker opined that a cabinet is strengthened rather than weakened by the existence of



an organised Opposition and thus the requirement for ready provision of leadership is mostly satisfied when there is a coherent group of alternative leaders well prepared to supply an alternative guidance. Balanced and effective Opposition is indeed a powerful instrument to achieve the goals of an effective government.

The following observation of Edward Shills indicates the importance of organised, responsible and coherent Opposition in a political democracy: ' the effective and continuous existence of political democracy requires a fairly coherent and responsible Opposition to the ruling party working within the rules of the parliamentary game. This Opposition should not simply interest itself in the obstruction and depreciation of the majority. It should be capable of criticising the majority's measures on the basis of detailed and realistic information about the situation in the country and the performance of the executive. The Opposition should be sufficiently coherent to control or to isolate extremists who do not wish to work within the constitutional system. The Opposition must be able to resist the temptations of conspiracy and subversion, and the governing party must likewise avoid the idea that Opposition is in itself a step in the direction of subversion.'<sup>27</sup>

A. Lawrence Lowell is of the opinion that the principal precondition for the success of the democratic party system and popular government have been the official recognition of Opposition which is legitimately allowed to obtain power by persuasion.<sup>28</sup> Referring to

British parliamentary system Professor Lowell commented that His Majesty's Opposition embodied the greatest contribution of the nineteenth century to the art of government.

K.C.Wheare<sup>29</sup> noted that the chief part of performing the function of making the government behave falls to the Opposition and its leader; it is the Opposition members who are charged with the job of criticising and examining the governmental proposals and doings; Opposition in parliamentary democracies carries on its functions through questions to ministers in the legislature, motions of censure, no-confidence, debates involving the passing of bills and the like. The leading idea upon which the Opposition is organised has been its presence as the alternative government; it is through this process responsible government and responsible Opposition can be established.

Michael Curtis<sup>30</sup> observed that the crucial element in a parliamentary democracy is the existence of a legal Opposition which is not only tolerated but sometimes may select the subjects and opportunities for debate and provide an impact on the governmental actions and decisions.

While writing on federalism and Opposition C.J.Fridrich<sup>31</sup> mentioned about temporary Opposition. By temporary he means an Opposition which on the personal side is carried forward by persons who regard themselves as an integral part of the general constituency and as such expect to become the government by converting them to majority from minority. On the impersonal side, it is an Opposition whose beliefs, values and interests may become those of the majority of the



citizens. Both these aspects thus make an Opposition dynamic rather than static; in opposing, it likes to alter the political situation in order to enable it to govern rather than oppose. Therefore in order to achieve its central goal a dynamic Opposition marshalls all the resources of propaganda and persuasion.

It is indeed a crucial requirement of a democratic political system that the right of the existence of Opposition is guaranteed and it is allowed to be organised not only to criticise the government but to appeal the electorate for their mandate during elections. Two opposingsides e.g., the ruling and opposing parties are therefore greatly essential for efficient functioning of a democracy. One scholar has explained the role of democratic Opposition in the following manner: 'No real democracy can function without a strong vigilant and vigorous Opposition. It is an integral part of the democratic structure and the conscience-keeper of a democratic society. An effective Opposition restrains the party in power from transgressing its functional limits, constantly reminds it of its responsibility, keeps it responsive to popular demands and poses a challenge to its position by promising better performance. It is the responsibility of the Opposition to inform the nation in time the defects and dangers in the official plans and policies and to mobilise public opinion to get them suitably modified. It educates public opinion on the issues facing the country and brings them before the legislature to activate the process of discussion and debate and enforce the right of being consulted. It organises social power to check official power from becoming arbitrary and acts as a vigilance force for the safety of the democratic order.'<sup>32</sup>



Alfred Stepan<sup>33</sup> presents the following multiple tasks of democratic Opposition against any authoritarianism: 1) resisting integration into the regime; 2) guarding zones of autonomy against it; 3) disputing its legitimacy; 4) resisting the costs of authoritarian rule; and 5) creating a credible democratic alternative. He opines that the more the Opposition is able to carry out the above tasks the less space is left for the implantation of authoritarian institutions.

It is worth mentioning the important roles to be performed by constitutional Opposition as explained by eminent theorist Juan Linz<sup>34</sup>: total commitment to obtain power only by electoral means; uncompromising rejection of the use of violent means to obtain and maintain power; rejection of any unconstitutional appeal to the armed forces to gain power; unambiguous rejection of the rhetoric of violence to mobilise supporters in order to achieve power; commitment to involve in the political process, election and parliamentary activity without setting up conditions beyond the guarantee of the necessary civil liberties for reasonably fair democratic political process; and rejection of secret contacts with disloyal opposition and a rejection of its support when offered in exchange for toleration of its anti-democratic activities. Needless to state that in order to ensure proper constitutional order and democracy the above mentioned constructive role of Opposition is greatly called for.

Marxian View:  
-----

Views of Western liberal theorists on constitutional Opposition and democratic politics came under severe attack and challenge by the writings of Karl Marx, Engles, Lenin and their followers. Marxism regards modern representative state as a force of repression for the regulation of society in the interests of the dominant economic class.<sup>35</sup> The liberal democraic state creates an illusion that society is democratically organised; for the exploitation of wage-labour by capital is secured within the framework of liberal democracy; periodic elections do not change this process at all. Orthodox Marxists are of the opinion that as the state can not simply be taken over and contained by a democratic movement so its coercive structure has to be smashed and conquered by a cadre of revolutionaries.<sup>36</sup> Marxian theory therefore rejects the Western liberal democratic system which offers special privileges to the capitalist class and upholds the interests of this class only. In liberal bourgeois democracy there exist, among others, freedom of thought, expression, association and organised opposition political parties, but in actual practice this system does not enable the working class to obtain benefit from the prevailing situation. The existence of bourgeois political parties both in the government and in Opposition is of no use for the oppressed classes. The working poor in such a system can not capture political power through elections where money and influence of the rich play the most vital part. The political superstructure of the bourgeoisie thus can not be made to serve the interests of the oppressed common people. The working poor are however allowed to



use their vote every certain intervals to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class will represent in the parliament and continue their repression over them. Thus Lenin remarked that parliament was given up to talk for special purpose of fooling the common people. Marxists however maintain that the institutions of liberal democracy offer an opportunity for the oppressed class to increase their class consciousness and organise social revolution against the capitalist state to achieve their real freedom first under socialism through the dictatorship of the proletariat and ultimately under communism through the withering away of the state itself. Marxist philosophy of dictatorship of the proletariat considers it as a democratic political system of the working class. According to this view proletarian democracy acts for the interests of the majority working class against the bourgeois minority and as such no organised Opposition is required under this system.

There have been criticisms against the Marxian view on the ground that it does not make any provision to establish limited government or government by criticism. As such any system which denies rights to all sections excepting the working class can not be truly democratic. Absence of opponents against the absolute rule of the government and lack of tolerance of dissent, only lead to totalitarianism. In the communist countries based on Marxian ideas as represented by the former Soviet Union, East European states and the People's Republic of China there had been the creation of single party government with the Communist Party as the sole political party with all others

absorbed, outlawed, liquidated or eliminated. Michael Curtis<sup>37</sup>, however, noted that absence of Opposition political parties in communist countries does not necessarily mean absolute monopoly of one group only; here pluralistic pressures take a form different from that of the liberal democratic systems; such pressures arise not only from non-party groups like the state apparatus, secret police, military leaders, and control commissions, but also internally from contending factions within the Party based on personal loyalty to an individual or territorial group or on shifting alliances in the struggle and maintenance of power or on different approaches to the solution of problems. But in any way one party communist regimes only rarely allow the luxury of free expression and different opinions. Scholars opine that such systems are incompatible with responsible government since they do not allow for creation of alternatives. What would be necessary for a communist or one party states to qualify as truly democratic? In replying to this question Jack Lively<sup>38</sup> mentioned that the party would have to be completely open and comprehensive; no individual or group could be excluded from membership and no political viewpoint denied expression within it; the party would have to be perfectly eclectic in terms of both persons and opinions; factionalism would have to be allowed within the party; groups within the party would need to be free to organise themselves and to press their policies within it; these groups would have to be capable of presenting different candidates in extra-party elections. For otherwise the leadership would be responsible only to party members and not to all competent citizens or people.



Although the concepts of constitutional Opposition and the existence of organised Opposition as alternative government are not compatible with the Marxian view yet the writings of Karl Marx, Engles, Lenin, Mao Tse Tung and their followers have come up with new thoughts of democracy of the oppressed and the main thrust being total welfare and economic emancipation of the majority working poor.

With the disappearance of Marxist-Leninist one-party rule in the former Soviet Union and the communist East European states there has been introduction of Western type of liberal democracy in these countries alongwith the recognition of free play of Opposition parties in the political order. There has also been as S.P.Huntington<sup>39</sup> states third-wave transition to democracy in which many of the less developed societies formerly under the control of authritarian regimes have opted for participatory democratic politics characterised by the presence of constitutional and legal Opposition.

Pattern of Opposition:

Pattern or kind of Opposition depends on a number of factors like constitutional structure, party system, social and economic differences, electoral system and the like. There has been difference with regard to the nature of activities of Opposition in parliamentary and presidential systems. Parliamentary Opposition assumes greater and concrete role compared to Opposition in presidential democracies. Unlike presidential type Opposition in a parliamentary system has an official status with its formation of a shadow cabinet. The Opposition leader obtains privileges with a special rank in the system. Again, Opposition has different sorts of strength, status and position in two-party and multi-party systems. In two-party systems Opposition is much stronger and capable and appears as a clear alternative government. In multi-party systems there is absence of viable opposition political parties and because of lack of electoral strength, coalition governments become more common. Dodd<sup>40</sup> mentioned that governments in multi-party parliaments must be minority cabinets, coalition cabinets or both occurring in socially fragmented societies. Powell<sup>41</sup> noted that majoritarian political systems tend to bring about two-party competition that leaves no space for extremist parties in Opposition whereas representative party systems, multi-party systems, characterised by fractionalisation offer a real opportunity for such parties. It has been observed that in systems with very many political parties Opposition is often characterised by shifting of loyalty,



factional trends or factionalism. According to Dahl<sup>42</sup> in at least six important ways Oppositions may differ. These include: a) organisational cohesion or concentration of the opponents; b) competitiveness of the Opposition; c) site or setting for the encounter between Opposition and those who control the government; d) distinctiveness or identifiability of the Opposition; e) goals of the Opposition; and f) strategies of Opposition. The important conditions that assist to explain patterns of Opposition as identified by Dahl are as follows: constitutional structure and electoral system; widely shared cultural premises; specific sub-cultures; the record of grievances against the government; social and economic differences; specific patterns of cleavage, conflict and agreement in attitudes and opinions; and the extent of polarisation.<sup>43</sup> It is believed that in societies differences in economic status, social position, linguistic and ethnic groups, religious and regional gaps and the like have a strong bearing on the behaviour and pattern of opposition political activity. In categorising Opposition Sartori<sup>44</sup> identified the following: constitutional and responsible Opposition; constitutional but non-responsible Opposition; and Oppositions which are neither responsible nor constitutional. For even further classification of Opposition the following are also mentioned: active Opposition, passive Opposition, sectional Opposition, closed Opposition, persistent Opposition, formal Opposition and informal Opposition.

Opposition inside the legislature:  
-----

The role of Opposition in the legislature is rather formal. Through different legislative techniques, Opposition tries its best to make the government behave. The common parliamentary devices as used by the Opposition are as follows:

Speech and Debate: These are the essence of parliamentary activity and are effectively used by Opposition to express its opinion and views different from that of the party in power. In course of parliamentary transactions through debates, Opposition tries to advance its arguments and presses for their acceptance by the House. Constructive debates of the Opposition members have some effect on the government and certainly serve to inform the government as to opinion in the legislature.

Interpellations and Questions: These have been regarded as vital legislative tools for securing redress from administrative errors as well as important occasion for embarrassing the ruling party. Opposition tries to make questions the starting point for extensive newspaper and media discussion which may in turn lead to parliamentary and governmental action. Interpellations and asking of questions are greatly useful in obtaining information from the ministers, exposing faults and serving as an indirect means of criticising the policies or programmes of the government. If the answer of a question from the government side does not satisfy the questioner, there are provisions in parliamentary system to ask supplementary question which often makes the question hour a sort of chess game and the Opposition takes every opportunity to bring forward many oratical questions to dramatize a point. Such supplementary questions of course strengthens the position



of Opposition members as they provide real tests of knowledge, competence and verbal skill of ministers and are quite effective in bringing possible alteration in administrative behaviour. Carl J. Fridrich<sup>45</sup> noted that when a minister is asked to look into a complaint of a constituent he becomes much more concerned; for the minister who neglects to attend to such matters is likely to find himself embarrassed by a question in the parliament.

In addition to interpellations and questions the Opposition in the legislature may bring forward the devices of adjournment motion and vote of censure against the ministers for their deeds and against any government decision or policy. Adjournment motion is moved by the Opposition to seek attention to a specific question or a matter of public importance and demand detail discussion on floor of the House on that issue forthwith by adjourning the business before the House. Opposition also tries to bring up cut motion to reject or reduce any proposal for financial approval of government bills. The Opposition members sometimes employ another tactic of walking out from the House to show their protest against any indifferent attitude or stubbornness on the part of the government.

Vote of No-Confidence: In parliamentary systems the Opposition has the right to bring this motion to challenge the party in power. Such a motion can be brought either against a single minister or against the whole ministry. The government faces the problem of quitting office if the motion of no-confidence is accepted by the House. One of the effective mechanisms to maintain governmental responsibility is the vote of no-confidence or any threat to use it by the Opposition.

Committee System: One important innovation in the working of the representative assemblies of the democratic polities has been the committee system. In order to save valuable parliamentary time and to fruitfully utilise the capacities of the people's representatives legislators, both the government and Opposition members are divided into several committees and sub-committees to perform specific function as referred to them by the House from time to time. In order to make their actions more meaningful and criticism against the government more effective, legislatures require some independent means through the legislative committees. Cummings and Wise<sup>46</sup> mentioned that committees serve as forums for legislative compromise and political bargaining and act as arenas where both the government and Opposition resolve their difference on various issues. The Opposition in fact makes every use of the committee as effective instrument to demand transparency of the government and get accountability from the executive. In the parliamentary systems like U.K. and India, of the committees the committee of public accounts has a special significance. Headed by an Opposition member this committee inquires into public expenditure as sanctioned by the parliament and through its investigations this committee is known as a watchdog of the legislature to make the government responsible. In the United States of America Congress performs most of its functions in the committees. Michael J. Remington<sup>47</sup> noted that the congressional committee system is indeed the legislative workshop of the institution where policy options are debated, developed and translated into legislative action. Thus in today's democracies



Oppositions have a significant role in the committee system and through investigation, hearing, and detail scrutiny in the committees demand transparency and accountability of the government.

Opposition Outside the Legislature:  
-----

The prime function of Opposition to criticise the party in office and scrutinise governmental activities and to offer itself as an alternative government is performed not only inside the legislative assembly but also outside the legislature.

Like the legislators of the government party, Opposition legislators also have a role of maintain unreserved communication with their constituents. A legislator whether from government or Opposition would try his best to seek and franchise and do his utmost to maintain the confidence of his constituents. In Britain every MP often visits his constituency and keeps in close touch with his supporters through different devices like social get-togethers; his important task is to forward the interests and support the opinions of as many of his constituents as he can. In the American system the legislators keep and maintain offices in their constituencies and they are assisted by staff who try to answer every question made by the constituents.<sup>48</sup> Opposition members are especially concerned to ventilate grievances of their own constituencies in order to make them acceptable to the voters in the future elections.

Opposition parties, in order to extend their bases of support against the government, aggregate the interests, demands and claims which have been articulated by the interest groups and such aggregation is accompanied by means of preparing or formulating general policies

in which interests are combined and accommodated.<sup>49</sup>

One important role which the Opposition takes up very seriously in democratic polities has been to form public opinion in favour of its alternative policies or programmes and in doing so Opposition remains ever active of acquainting the citizens of the issues of state affairs and the major problems of the country. The Opposition also exploits every opportunity of pinpointing the failures of the government to keep election promises and public assurances. The citizens become mobilised on political issues and get enlightened about the game of politics through the activities of organised opposition parties and as such the educative value of Opposition's role can hardly be overemphasised.

In order to alter or modify government policies and to create pressure upon the ruling party to accept certain popular demands, Opposition adopts various strategies and tactics. Most common tactics include: using political platform, press and media; calling strikes; organising processions, demonstrations, public rallies and political movements; protesting through blockade; and in extreme cases adopting the strategy of total non-cooperation with the government. However the tactic of organising agitational politics and using students as foot soldiers by the Opposition is a phenomenon more common in less developed polities.

Opposition has the most significant role to play on the eve of popular elections. By formulating well prepared election manifesto, Opposition makes vigorous campaign for it and



tries to attract the electorate and mobilise the voters to vote for its candidates. Opposition also keeps its eyes open about the uncommitted floating voters who could be convinced by the propaganda, programmes and personality of the contestants. Since this type of voters often become instrumental in determining the victory, Opposition employs all out efforts to capture the minds and win over the floating voters.

Needless to mention that in a democratic system, in order to keep the government within the bounds of constitutional limitations and legal authority, strong and responsible Opposition is greatly required both within and outside the legislature so that ruling party becomes responsive to public grievances, respectful to the views expressed by the opposition members, and be democratic in its attitudes and actions.

Opposition in Developed and Developing Democracies:  
-----

There have been differences with regard to the evolution, existence and role of Opposition in the politics of developed and underdeveloped world. In the following paragraphs Oppositions in these two worlds are taken for discussion.

Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in U.K., In England transformation of absolute monarchy into limited government took great many years and centuries. The Magna Carta of 1215, the Petition of Rights of 1628, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Bill of Rights of 1869, Act of Settlement of 1701, the Reform Act of 1832 and the like contributed to the transformation of parliamentary democracy and recognised constitutional Opposition in Britain. From 1826 onwards His Majesty's Opposition became known to all. Dahl<sup>50</sup> noted that in the period between the First Reforms Acts which led to the transition to responsible government and the Second Reforms Acts which led to the development of disciplined two-party system, it came to be accepted that neither His Majesty's Government nor His Majesty's Opposition was at least in theory any more or less the Queen's friends than the other. Absence of simple two-party system meant that His Majesty's Opposition was not the alternative government unlike now. With the development of strong, disciplined and organised two party-system, Opposition came up as effective alternative. The leader of the Opposition in U.K. holds an official position and leads the parliamentary opposition party and the shadow cabinet in the parliament. S.E.Finer<sup>51</sup> mentioned that Opposition in Britain is well organised to pose a challenge to the government in the parliament. It is continuous and as such



permanent; it is representative with its party followers; it is alternative government as it takes over with the fall of the government and it is a participant in the governmental performance in the legislature. . . . It has been observed that His Majesty's Opposition is an essential part of the British government; its purpose is to criticise and scrutinise and not to hinder or obstruct the government. Thus the two front benches that is the government and the Opposition set between them the great majority of topics of parliamentary debates and discussion. William Livingston<sup>52</sup> mentioned that the job of holding the government responsible, which was once said to be done by the House of Commons, is now performed, if at all, by the Opposition. It is in the competition between the two political parties that the government is held accountable -- a condition manifested at question time, in the character of debate in the House, and in the competition on the hustings, in the press and in the polling booth. The essential fact about governmental accountability in U.K. is that the party in power must always defend itself before a skeptical Opposition. Curtis<sup>53</sup> stated that Opposition in British political system attempts to amend or moderate the policy and legislation of the party in office. It uses the parliamentary arena as a forum for appeal to the people and tries to woo the citizens to their opinions so that the government majority will disintegrate. K.C. Wheare<sup>54</sup> illustrated that Opposition in Britain means that it is constitutional as well as 'loyal'; that though the Opposition may have disagreements with the party in power on certain important issues, it agrees with the government on the rule of the game of

politics. This implies that both sides agree about the form of governance and regime and thus the questions on state fundamentals remain outside the party struggle.

Scholars maintain that parliamentary system and democratic structures work better in two-party systems and British system represents a unique example of working of parliamentary democracy alongwith the two major parties, one in the government and the other in Opposition.

Opposition in American Political System:

The United States of America is a democracy with presidential form of government based on the principles of federalism and separation of powers as contained in the Constitution which was adopted in 1789. Although the three organs of the U.S. government namely the President, the Congress, and the Judiciary, are independent of one another yet the whole process works on an elaborate system of checks and balance. The framers of the American constitution made a delicately balanced machinery of the government and created provisions for elections of a President and Congress at regular intervals but nothing was mentioned by them about the system of political parties which did not exist before President George Washington's administration (1789-1797). Parties originated during that administration largely in support of or in opposition to its policies.<sup>55</sup> Over the years their development has been marked by two-party competition led by the Republican and Democratic parties.

American system provides orderly institutional arrangement for the transfer of power. All executive powers are vested in the



presidency and the U.S. President is elected as a nominee of a political party. V.O.Key<sup>56</sup> noted that American party system performs an essential function in the management and succession of power. They serve as a vehicle for choice offering the voters competing candidates for public office and thus alternative policies and programmes. The party in power defends its record while the party out of power suggests for a change. The U.S. parties therefore do the vital tasks of managing the transfer of power; placing a choice of rival candidates to the electorate; serving a link between the government and the public; reconciling conflicting interests in society; staffing the government; and linking various branches and levels of government.<sup>57</sup>

While commenting on the Opposition in the United States K.C.Wheare<sup>58</sup> stated that there is a government of the U.S.A. and there is plenty of opposition to it and there is plenty of people to lead this opposition. America has a two-party system; one party has the presidency and the other party offers itself as an alternative; thus in U.S.A. opposition is permitted and legal. Both parties are united in reverence for the constitution yet there is no leader of Opposition; in its place there is plenty of Opposition in Congress to what the government proposes and does. Unlike Britain congressmen of both parties in the United States are free to vote against the President's proposals and oppose his actions. Because of fundamental difference with the British system, existence of a official leader of Opposition is constitutionally impossible in the U.S.A.

Alongwith a stable support base and loyalty among the voters U.S. parties supply a basis for opposition. If such loyalty

exists parties can never be totally wiped out. The Republican Party in the depression era, though declining sharply in electoral support remained a major opposition party despite the hard times that began on its watch. A similar process of delegitimization in the wake of early seventies Watergate Scandal did not prevent a Republican comeback in the elections of eighties.<sup>59</sup>

Dahl mentioned the following normal patterns of oppositions in the United States: Oppositions seek limited goals that do not directly challenge the major institutions or prevailing American beliefs; Oppositions employ a wide variety of strategies combining a heavy emphasis on winning presidential and congressional elections with an equal emphasis on bargaining and pressure group activities in policy formulation; Oppositions are not usually very distinctive and are not even clearly identifiable as oppositions; they are thus melt into the system; Oppositions are not combined into a single organisation; they usually work through one or both major parties; these parties are highly competitive in national elections but in Congress they are both competitive and cooperative; Oppositions try to gain their objectives by seeking out encounters with decision-makers at different bureaucratic, judicial, congressional or local levels.<sup>60</sup>

It appears from the writings of the scholars that the functions of Opposition in the U.S.A. are confined not only to the party out of presidency but the congress members of both major parties may have opposing stand vis-a-vis the President in running the state business.



As can be seen from the above discussion that Britain and the United States have different constitutional structures as exemplified by their parliamentary and presidential systems. But both these countries represent classic example of two-party system where the majority party runs the administration and the party which is out of office clearly offers itself as the alternative government and in both these democracies Oppositions are legitimately institutionalised in the political system although in different forms.

Among the developed systems, Australia and Canada are the examples of two-party systems and parliamentary democracy alongwith their official responsible Oppositions. Unlike the British and American patterns the countries of Western Europe like Italy, France and Scandinavian nations have multi-party systems with no clear cut alternative government. Lane and Ersson noted that the political parties of Western Europe may not be as stable as the famous stability hypothesis claims but in any case the major parties in these societies take a positive view on system persistence in the sense of democratic rule; the strength of anti-system parties has declined although that discontent parties attracted interest in the seventies; some of the large parties have developed into a kind of government party as guarantees of system maintenance and these parties tend to participate frequently in government formations with moderate programmatic orientation.<sup>61</sup>

Opposition in Underdeveloped Democracies:  
-----

Unlike Western liberal democratic systems a quite different and sometimes opposite picture is observed in developing societies with regard to practicing democracy as well as the role of constitutional Opposition in the politico-governmental process. Many countries of the underdeveloped world adopted the path of their colonial powers in establishing liberal democratic set up in the post-independence period. The political establishment and institutional arrangements of the Western colonial powers came as an ideal for the leaders of the underdeveloped societies to achieve speedy modernization, stability, integration and development. But as has been observed many of these societies have encountered great many difficulties in practicing the above set up in a dissimilar environment.

In analysing the erosion of parliamentary democracy, and for that matter democracy itself, in many Afro-Asian countries, it has been remarked that democracy is an essentially Western concept adopted by the new nations just as they have adopted a number of other Western ideals and achievements; neither a government based on republican form nor democratic institutions based on elected representation had a genuine local tradition in any of the societies where they were thus transplanted; the living condition of the East practically knows nothing about democratic institutions and there is hardly any exception to the general eastern heritage of authoritarian rule.<sup>62</sup>

It is now worthwhile to point out the factors and realities of the Third World societies which have direct influence on the



functioning of democracy and performance of constitutional Opposition.

Socio-economic structure: Most underdeveloped countries are characterised by massive poverty, illiteracy, low per capita income, overwhelming dependence on agriculture, lack of industrialisation, urban bias, high rate of growth of population, highly unequal class structure, strong network of patron-client ties and the like. Many of these societies are plural with different language, culture, race, religion, region and ethnic groups and they are beset by very many socio-economic and political problems. Scholars commented that nationalism in these countries was a movement more against Western colonialism than for a coherent national identity. These societies found their mixed seeds of their nationalisms planted in essentially diverse social soils.<sup>63</sup> Rupert Emerson<sup>64</sup> noted that the new states of Asia and Africa are not nations in being but only nations in hope. Because of fragmented political culture and poor integration in developing societies there have been diverse loyalties among the population. The problems of social integration in such societies are deeply rooted and are embedded into the age-old socio-cultural and economic institutions.<sup>65</sup> Group cleavages in these countries may be either at the horizontal and vertical levels: at the horizontal level cleavages include gaps between tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional groups and at the vertical level this involves differences between the educated and illiterates, rich and poor, class, caste, and rural-urban places.<sup>66</sup> Arend Lijphart<sup>67</sup> mentioned that deep division between segments of the population and the absence of a unifying consensus lead to enormous political problems in a number of developing countries. Lucian Pye<sup>68</sup>

observed that in non-western societies political sphere is not clearly differentiated from the sphere of social and personal relations and communal identification strongly influences the political behaviour.

Political parties and institutionalisation: ----- One of the modernising elements of the new nations have been the political parties organised during the colonial days. In the countries of Asia and Africa the movement against the colonial masters provided the setting for the creation of nationalist parties. With the aim of achieving independence such parties were able to act as umbrella organisations to mobilise popular support overriding ethnic and regional loyalties. The Congress Party of India, The Tanganyika African National Union of Tanzania, the Convention People's Part of Ghana are well known examples of this kind. In many instances the unity formed during the nationalist movement gradually eroded and bitter political struggle between the groups and parties became more common in the post colonial period.

It has been observed that political parties of developing societies lack the following characteristics which are common to western developed democratic parties: a) organizational continuity, a life span that outlasts the life of the current leadership; b) an organizational structure that is permanent and that extends down to the local level; c) a leadership determined to capture and hold decision-making power, not simply to influence the exercise of such power; and d) an effort to persuade voters to vote for their candidates.<sup>69</sup> Political Scientists commented that Third World political parties are organised around personalities and not on policies or principles. Some are only personal



creations of a specific individual or family and many others have ideological base but lack the organisational basis to carry through the periods out of power; most parties are understaffed and under-financed and suffer from a lack of experienced personnel who can manage complex bureaucracies.<sup>70</sup> Lipset said that in new political systems parties do not command firm allegiance and some can be easily eliminated.<sup>71</sup> In many new nations the factors like presence of schism, lack of political tradition, and lack of organisational strength of political parties often encourage factional trends and shifting of loyalties. Professor Emajuddin Ahamed<sup>72</sup>, eminent Bangladeshi political scientist, noted that in countries like Bangladesh 'the endemic poverty of the people, intense factionalism among the various social groups and classes, and a network of patron-client ties, reaching from the grass roots to the central politico-bureaucratic elite at the national level, have resulted not only in organizational weakness and a very low level of institutionalization in the polity, but also institutional fragmentation.'

Due to the above mentioned problems and weaknesses of the political parties and low political institutionalisation, party in power and the Opposition in many new countries fail to remain sincere to democratic norms and constitutional role.

Political leadership: A great many developing societies suffer from a lack of strong and effective leadership. Although the political leaders, in the post colonial situation, start with optimism and high hopes but in many instances end up with frustration and failures. It has been observed that the elites often underestimate and ignore

the necessity of strengthening the political process due to their overemphasis on the need to concentrate political authority, maintain law and order, establish effective administrative apparatus and bring speedy socio-economic development. As such the political leadership finds difficulty in sharing concentrated power and becomes reluctant to accept newly mobilised groups into the political system. Such intolerance leads the elites to control Opposition political activities and put undue restrictions on exercising democratic rights. Christopher Clapham<sup>73</sup> commented that 'governments the world over have difficulty in disguising between their own interests and those of the people whom they rule'. Third World governments often add to this natural authoritarian tendency the awareness that -- in countries where education is generally limited -- they have a special intellectual right to decide what should be done. Government is the haunt of the educated, the governed, correspondingly are overwhelmingly the ignorant. In this, the nationalist leaders easily take over the attitudes characteristic of colonial administration, and add to them a sense of their own special status as the elect of the people. In the process, the pre-independence relationship between leaders and people is reversed. It is no longer the leaders who seek support from the mass of the population, but the population which must adapt itself to the dictates of the leaders.

Of the major obstacles standing in the way of Opposition exercising a more effective role in politics are the tendency to look for seats of power as the be-all and end-all of political activity, and the traditional respect for and fear of those in authority and these



Give the rulers an added edge over the Opposition.<sup>74</sup> N.H.Morrisjones mentioned that 'the circle is the most vicious one; you can't be taken seriously by the local men who matter until you are the government, but you can't be the government until you have been taken seriously.'<sup>75</sup>

In a number of developing societies there has been the emergence of charismatic leadership.<sup>76</sup> Much depends on the able guidance of the charismatic leader to solve the crises of identity, legitimacy, integration in the new nations alongwith quick transition to modernisation and institutional development. But as has been observed in these societies, in stead of strengthening political institutions the charismatic leaders have developed personalisation of power leading to authoritarian practices in the polity, making routinization and democratic peaceful succession difficult.

Lack of nourishing democratic norms and political process, concentration of authority, lack of participation of opposing parties or groups into the system, rise of narrow sectoral and parochial interests, factionalism, instability and overall crises have led the political elites in a number of new states to introduce single party rule. Rupert Emerson<sup>77</sup> thus noted that the acute legitimacy crisis stemmed from the inability of the ruling elites of the newer nations to integrate the greater demands for participation of the new groups prompted them to opt for one-party rule in their political systems.

Civil society: Effective civil society is an important requirement for strengthening democracy. Civil society consists of the 'building blocks e.g. voluntary associations, political groups, public participation, political awareness etc. which are essential for liberal democracy.'<sup>78</sup> McMullen and Norton<sup>79</sup> defined civil society as a melange of associations, movements, political parties and other organisations that allow people peacefully to transcend ties of blood and kinship. Lipset<sup>80</sup> pointed out that as opposed to democracy, authoritarian or totalitarian systems seek systematically to eliminate groups mediating between the state and the individual and have left their successors without civil societies; this reduces the possibility for organised Opposition by reducing group effectiveness generally, leaving individuals ill-suited for innovative activities like entrepreneurship or anything else that Tocqueville included under the heading of civil partnerships.

Larry Diamond<sup>81</sup> observed that a vigorous civil society enhances not only accountability but also vitality and representativeness of democracy. Voluntary associations provide a crucial institutional supplement to democratic political parties; these not only check or scrutinise governmental power but also enhance the legitimacy of democracy by providing new means to express political interests; increasing political awareness, confidence, and efficacy of citizens and recruiting and training new political leaders. With the exceptions of few countries like India where democratic set up has been functioning for four decades, many of the developing societies lack a dense network of autonomous voluntary associations and mass media and fail to provide solid foundations for democracy through effective civil society.



The tendency of Opposition political parties in the less developed countries including Bangladesh has been to try quick way to get power rather than improving the quality of debate or deliberations or educating the civil society and this often hampers Opposition's quality of operation and destroys democratic norms and principles.

Overdeveloped bureaucracy: In many developing societies bureaucracy occupies a significant position in the political system. Legacy of colonial rule, fragile consensus on state fundamentals, loosely organised political institutions and above all weak political leadership have led the permanent state apparatus, the bureaucracy, to assume greater role in state management with increasing powers. Bureaucracy has thus been overdeveloped and its de facto assumption of political power has played a negative role and presented a formidable obstacle to the process of establishing democracy or political development.<sup>82</sup>

While writing on relative autonomy of state in Pakistan and Bangladesh Hamza Alavi<sup>83</sup> mentioned that, as the superstructures of the colonies rest in the metropolitan structure, they become overdeveloped compared to the structures; the result is that even after independence the state apparatus remains <sup>overdeveloped</sup> in comparison to the socio-economic structures of the new states. John Saul<sup>84</sup> also talked about relative autonomy of the state in the post colonial situation; the degree of autonomy of the state instrument is influenced by the absence of strong indigeneous classes. Thus the state bureaucracy remains very central between indigeneous and metropolitan forces.

The bureaucracy in most developing nations is the successor of colonial administration and appears as the first large organised

group at the time of independence. A tradition of high degree of centralisation, strict adherence to rules, and exercise of discretionary powers gradually developed in the ranks of the bureaucracy which enabled them to enjoy great prestige and considerable freedom from political interference. Unlike the West where rational bureaucracy emerged with the advent of capitalism, the bureaucracy in the Third World did not develop in the same manner. In a number of these societies the bureaucracy remains unaccountable and out of control as no national class or powerful political institutions has yet developed to exert much influence. Fred W. Riggs<sup>85</sup> illustrated that in developing societies the extent of bureaucratic involvement in the political process is extremely high. This<sup>is</sup> not because the bureaucracy is fully developed in the Weberian sense, but because of the weakness of the extra-bureaucratic political institutions and the ineffectiveness of the parliamentary bodies.<sup>86</sup>

It has been observed in the new states that bureaucratic constituencies are created and nurtured through the enlargement and proliferation of the state instruments but very few corresponding development has taken place in the political sector and this has been responsible for the bureaucratic overparticipation in both input and out put functions. There seems to be a correlation between the extent of accumulation of state power by the bureaucrats and the degree of their involvement in the political system. In any way bureaucratic overdevelopment appears as a major hindrance to an effective political growth.



Politicised army and Praetorian society: In several developing countries the failure of the political structures to offer able leadership and steer the wheel of the state has led their military to get politicised and take over power. Intervention and role of the armed forces in the politics of the developing areas have aroused much attention of many scholars as a fascinating area of study. Well known theoreticians like Finer<sup>87</sup>, Morris Janowitz<sup>88</sup>, S.P.Huntington<sup>89</sup> and a host of other writers have analysed the causes of military intervention in Third World politics. Finer's study of the level of political culture, Janowitz's explanation of the structure and organisation of the army, Huntington's analysis of the nature of political structure and inadequacies of the society greatly explain the root causes of military take over in developing nations. There have also been attempts to analyse army intervention in new nations from political-economic perspectives. Thus Hamza Alavi, James Petras, A.G.Frank, Jack Woodies and others have emphasised on the economic and class underpinnings of the military's political involvement. They analysed army's role not only in the national context but also in relation to international economic factors and explored the relationship between the military and class structure in post colonial societies.<sup>90</sup>

Whatever may be the real causes and intentions of military intervention in politics, many Third World societies have experienced politicisation of army, continuation of its rule and persistent praetorianism in their polities. In a praetorian society, military attempts to exercise political power through the real or threats of using its force.

In a country subject to praetorianism, Huntington noted that 'social forces confront each other nakedly; no political institution; no corps or professional political leaders are recognized as legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflicts. Equally important, no agreement exists among the groups as to the legitimate and authoritative methods for resolving conflicts...in a praetorian society...each group employs means which reflect its peculiar nature and capabilities. The wealthy bribe, the students strike, mobs demonstrate and the military (stages) coup.'<sup>91</sup> Rahman<sup>92</sup> summarised the main characteristics of praetorian society including: lack of consensus among the dominant groups of the society; feeble political structures with authoritarian nature; dominance of the military and its political role playing; and erosion of the strength of political organisations. All these contribute to a chronic vulnerability of the political system to instability.

With regard to analysing the consequences of praetorianism in developing societies scholars like Johnson<sup>93</sup>, Pye<sup>94</sup>, Daadler<sup>95</sup>, Pauker<sup>96</sup>, and Halpern<sup>97</sup> provided their theoretical explanations. These scholars opined that military take overs in these societies left a new impetus to the process of political development and modernisation; since the military possesses a modern structure, its technical skills and organisational capability could be successfully transferred to sectors of civilian administration and government. Such positive views have, however, been challenged by other political scientists like Eric Nordlinger<sup>98</sup> who in his empirical investigation on a couple of less developed nations observed a negative connection between socio-economic modernisation and political strength of the military. T.M.Zaman noted



that army regimes perform little better than the civilian counterparts in bringing about social and economic development; in countries where a comparatively higher rate of economic growth has achieved under army governments, development is not the outcome of military regime per se but of some fortuitous factors, such as a massive infusion of foreign aid (as in case of South Korea under Park and Pakistan under Ayub Khan), availability of a valuable natural resource like oil (like Nigeria, Libya or Indonesia) or the sudden increase of prices for some exports (like tin and copper in Zaire). Even then, the type of development strategy followed in many of these countries has resulted in a skewed distribution of wealth and income; the resultant factor is the emergence of strong regional and social tensions forcing the nation into socio-political turmoil and washing away the economic achievements.<sup>99</sup>

Civil-military partnerships in the new nations gives the military an upperhand because of their dominance in such partnership. Army intervention in many instances leads to political decay in a society which often fails to reconstruct a civil government.<sup>100</sup> Writers have agreed that whenever the military has once captured power, the most common subsequent pattern of politics has been the alternation between the military and a facade of civilian regimes, with the soldiers almost always remaining close to the echelons of power or authority; indeed the aftermath of military intervention is most often fresh army involvement creating a vicious circle. The political process through the intermediation of political parties thus tends to stagnate and the prospect of its normal functioning systematically erodes; the political parties of such societies have been subjected to this unfortunate syndrome.<sup>101</sup>

The preceding paragraphs have identified the major features and realities common to most of the Third World societies. As has been observed, these countries, unlike the West, encounter very many limiting factors either to carry through the democratic set up or to establish responsible government and Opposition. It has, however, been noticed that there is resurgence of democratic order in a number of developing nations which have experienced authoritarianism. S.P. Huntington has cited the following major factors contributing to transition to democracy: the deepening legitimacy problems of authoritarian regimes; the unprecedented global economic growth raising living standards and expanding urban middle class; changes in policies of external actors; and 'snowballings' or demonstration effect of transitions earlier in the third wave in providing models for efforts at democratisation.<sup>102</sup> Bangladesh is one of the Third World societies which remained under authoritarian rule for years has once again opted for democracy within the framework of parliamentary system of government after the anti-authoritarian Mass Upsurge of 1990 and the general election based on universal adult franchise of 1991.



Bangladesh Society and Polity:

Socio-economic, political and cultural context:

Bangladesh with a territory of 55,598 square miles came into being as a sovereign nation state in December 1971 breaking the chains of internal colonialism of Pakistan. As a part of South Asian Sub-continent this country is situated in a part of Bengal delta and has influences of foreign rulers for centuries. Bangladesh is inhabited by nearly 110 million population. Of which approximately 85 per cent are Muslims and the rest are Hindus, Buddhists and Christians; there is also an insignificant number of tribal population living mostly in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Bangladesh is overwhelmingly a rural society and as such majority of its population live in the countryside. Only about 15 per cent of the population are urban residents. Bangladesh is a country with a very low per capita income. The present GNP per capita is 220 dollars<sup>103</sup> which is one of the lowest in the world. In spite of very slight improvement in recent years in per capita income the distribution of income is skewed in favour of higher income groups both in urban and rural areas. It has been noticed that about 85 per cent population of this country live below poverty line. High incidence of landlessness and surplus labour are greatly persistent in Bangladesh. Poverty situation in the country is deteriorating with the rapid growth of population, unemployment, underemployment, land scarcity, illiteracy, lack of access of the masses to resources and the means of production, natural calamities, so on and so forth. The great majority of the population of this country are highly dependent on

agriculture and agricultural related operations which is the dominant sector of the economy and contribute a substantial portion of GDP and rural employment. Poverty creates very many socio-economic problems including increased migration of the rural poor into the urban places resulting in unemployment and other related problems in the cities and towns. There has been acute shortage of skilled and technically qualified persons alongwith a lack of jobs in the labour market for the educated sentions concentrated in the urban areas.

Bangladesh is a society characterised by a sharpening inequality both in the rural and urban areas. In the rural areas the distribution of landownership is highly unequal as nearly 50 per cent of the land is owned by the top 10 per cent of the landowners and the bottom 10 per cent of the landowners occupy only 2 per cent of the land. Similar inequality is seen in the distribution of income and other resources.<sup>104</sup> The average income of the urbanites is much higher than the incomes of the rural residents. But it can be said that although the conditions of the urban population are comparatively better than their rural counterparts yet there are sharpening inequalities in the urban areas among the affluent rich, moderate to low income earned middle class and the impoverished poor.

The above socio-economic scenerio of Bangladesh clearly indicates the existence of unequal strata in the society. But the formation of any sort of class consciousness is non-existent here due to the nature of social organisation which is characterised by factionalism and a system of patron-client ties.<sup>105</sup> At the local level



the factions arise out of the patrilineal lineages or kinship ties. Rural affluents are normally the faction leaders and they perform the main political activities in the countryside. The faction leaders often involve in conflicts with each other for controlling local power and the resources offered by the state. The very formation of grouping or factions is greatly linked with the system of patronage and thus patron-client ties are essential in the creation of the foundation of factional politics. Patron-client ties indicate a relationship between the members of unequal socio-economic ranks and involve exchange of non-comparable goods and services between them.<sup>106</sup> Such relationship is an important mechanism through which the landed elites maintain their dominant position and keep their clients including kinsmen and poor peasantry dependent socially and economically on their favour. It can be mentioned that the socio-political cleavages and factional conflicts do not have an ideological orientation and are not organised on the basis of horizontal class antagonism. Thus the conflicts among the richer sections are operated on vertical lines within the existing socio-political framework which in the name of intra-class division strengthens class solidarity.<sup>107</sup>

The maintenance of an inter-class patron-client relationship with a general lack of class consciousness is equally observed in the urban set up of Bangladesh. Increasingly there has been a closer connection and alliance between the rural influential faction leaders and the urban rich to cooperate each other for their mutual interests of upholding the cause of those politicians, civil-military bureaucrats, businessmen, professionals and the like who control the state power.<sup>108</sup>

The above social organisation characterised by factionalism

and patron-client relationships indicates that the social and political organisations in Bangladesh always try to be associated with the patrons of the society for their strength. Consequently they lack proper institutionalisation and often suffer from organisational instability and factional splits within the institutions. Because of the inadequate institutionalisation, the socio-political organisations are unable in many instances to function as meaningful platforms for wider participation.

As the political parties are clustered around personalities they are seldom organised for wider national interests. There has been a mushroom growth of political parties but a great majority of them have not developed long term political programmes or policies along with a well network of grass roots extensions. Overwhelmed by the presence and dictates of their leaders, Bangladeshi political parties lack democratic set up and functioning of democracy within their organisations. Due to the legacy of British colonialism and internal colonialism during Pakistan days characterised by an absence of free political activity and democratic functioning, since then political parties are accustomed to indulge in activities behind the scenes and often resort to agitational politics and even conspiracy. Such tendency has led to the development of suspicion, mistrust, structural distortion, negative criticism, and lack of confidence and efficacy among the politicians and political parties of this country. As such the party in power hardly tolerates any Opposition and the Opposition employs its total energy to unseat the government, and engages in actions which can not be termed as constructive criticism.



The political culture and political institutions of a country are in fact closely inter-connected. Zaman and Rahman<sup>109</sup> noted that a national community represents the institutionalisation of trust and one main function of political parties is to carry and increase mutual trust in the society as a whole; but the chief element of Bangladeshi political culture is treatment of each other more with suspicion and jealousy than with broad based liberal trust; it thus emphasises personal virtue rather than collective wisdom and these combine to create serious consequences for political parties leading to intense factionalism and personalisation of loyalties.

Rise of charismatic leadership in Bangladesh could not however become successful to overcome the above deficiencies or to institutionalise political organisations for practicing democratic politics. Personalisation of power on the part of the leadership weakened drastically, party discipline and organisational capability. As such Bangladeshi political parties lack the qualities of adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence which are regarded by Huntington as the most important criteria for institutionalisation of a party.<sup>110</sup>

Because of the overall weakness of the political institutions the overpowering trend of the bureaucracy in Bangladesh accelerated further with the capture of state power by the military which deemphasised the role of political parties in managing the state affairs. The soldier-turned-politicians were greatly successful in using the weakly organised and fragmented political parties as the instruments of civilianising army's authoritarian rule. In such

arrangement politicians were relegated to the background and the dominance of the civil-military bureaucrats led these elements to become the dominant elite and key figures in the political system.

The people of this country struggled against their foreign rulers and fought the War of Liberation with the aim of establishing democratic society and practicing democracy. To this end Bangladesh started its journey with the westminster type of parliamentary democracy. But like other societies of the Third World the practice of democracy in Bangladesh faced the various limiting factors as depicted earlier and the country fell prey to authoritarianism and army rule. But the cherished desire of the people for establishing democracy in the country <sup>was</sup> once again revealed through the spontaneous Mass Upsurge against the authoritarian rule in 1990 and subsequent option for parliamentary democratic system which has been working for more than three years since the general elections of 1991.

Keeping in view of the above mentioned scenerio and realities of the Third World societies in general and Bangladesh in particular, in the following chapters, an attempt has been made to assess and examine the role of Opposition in Bangladesh politics with an investigation of the questions posed at the introduction ...



Notes:

1. Grolier Encyclopedia, (New York and Toronto, The Grolier Society Publishers, 1958 ) p.139
2. The Universal Dictionary of the English Language, p.803
3. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1974)p.589
4. Dictionary of American Politic , 2nd ed, (New York, Barnes and Boble Inc, 1968)p.269
5. The Webster's Third New International Dictionary, (U.S.A. William and Benton Publishers, 1966)
6. Dictionary of Politics, (London, Penguin Books, 1986)p.243
7. Robert A. Dahl ed., Political Oppositions in Western Democracies (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1966)
8. Peter M. Merkl, Political Continuity and Change ( Bombay, Allied Publishers Pvt.Limited, 1967)
9. David Held, Models of Democracy ( Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987)p.21
10. Robert A. Dahl, op cit.
11. in Ibid.
12. Ibid
13. ibid
14. Ibid
15. Michael Curtis, Comparative Government and Politics 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978) p.212
16. Jan-Erik Lane & Svante O. Ersson, Politics and Society in Western Europe ( London: Sage Publications, 1987) p.16
17. Ibid , p.17
18. Giovanni Sartori, Democratic Theory ( New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965) p.239
19. A.D.Lindsay, The Essentials of Democracy (London: Oxford University Press, 1929, Sixth impression, Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1967)

20. H.B. Mayo, Introduction to Democratic Theory ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1960) p.149
21. Jack Lively, Democracy ( Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975) pp.44-45
22. S.M.Lipset, "Reflections on Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" Journal of Democracy Vol.4, No.2, April 1993 pp.47-50.
23. S.M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy" American Political Science Review, Vol.53, 1959. pp.103-4.
24. Larry Diamond, "Three Paradoxes of Democracy" Journal of Democracy Vol.I, No.3, Summer, 1993, pp.48-49.
25. James L.Gibson et al, "Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union" the Journal of Politics Vol.54, No.2 May 1992
26. Ernest Barker, Reflections on Government (London: Oxford University Press, 1942, 1967) pp.202-203.
27. Edward Shills, "Political Development in the New States-II" Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol.II 1959-60, p.384
28. A.Lowell, The Government of England, (New York, 1924,) p.452
29. K.C.Wheare, Legislatures (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) p.77
30. Michael Curtis , op cit. p.212
31. Carl J. Fridrich, Constitutional Government and Democracy 4th ed. (Calcutta, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. 1966) p.208
32. D. Sundar Ram, Role of Opposition Parties in Indian Politics The Andhra Pradesh Experience (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992) p.25
33. Alfred Stepan, "On the Tasks of a Democractic Opposition" Journal of Democracy Vol.I, No.2, Spring 1990. pp.42, 44-45.
34. J. Linz, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).p.36
35. George H.Sabine, A History of Political Theory 3rd ed.(London: George G. Harrap & Co.Ltd, 1968)



36. Davis Held, op cit., p.134
37. Michael Curtis, op cit., p.192
38. Jack Lively, op cit., p.45
39. S.P.Huntington, Journal of Democracy vol.2, No.2, Spring 1991,p.13
40. C.Dodd,Coalitions in Parliamentary Government (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)
41. Powell in Lane and Ersson, op cit., p.36
42. Robert A. Dahl op cit., p.332
43. Ibid. p.348
44. Sartori in D. Sundar Ram, op cit., p.30
45. Carl J. Fridrich, op cit., p.340
46. Cummings and Wise,Democracy Under Pressure An Introduction to American Political System 4th ed. ( New York: Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich Inc.1981)
47. Michael J. Remington,"The Committee System in the U.S.Congress: an American Perspective for the Pakistan Parliament" Key note paper presented to the National Assembly Seminar, Islamabad, Feb.20,1993 (mimeo)
48. Dilara Choudhury,"Political Accountability of a Parliamentarian as an Individual" (mimeo) p.3
49. Almond and Coleman,The Politics of the Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1960, 1971)
- 50 R.A. Dahl, op cit.,pp.7-8
51. S.E.Finer in D.Sundar Ram,op cit., p.37
52. William Livingston in Christian Soe,Comparative Politics 86/87 (Connecticut: The Dushkin Pub.Group, 1986) p.117

53. Michael Curtis, op cit., p.212
54. K.C. Wheare, op cit. , pp.77-96
55. Stephen J. Wayne, "Political Parties in the United States," (mimeo) p. 3
56. V.O.Key Jr., Politics , Parties, and Pressure Groups 5th ed. ( New York, Crowell, 1964) p.9
57. Cummings and Wise, op cit., p.221
58. K.C. Wheare, op cit. ,
59. S.M. Lipset, Journal of Democracy Vo.4, No.2, 1993, pp.47-50
60. R.A.Dahl, op cit., p.34
61. Lane and Ersson, op cit... pp.131-132
62. S.A.H. Haqqi ed. Indian Democracy at the Crossroads ( Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1986) pp.1-12
63. M.Weiner, "Politcal Integration and Political Development" the Annals of the American Academy of Politcal and Social Sciences Vol.358, 1965
64. Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nations ( Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960)
65. S.M.Nurul Alam, "Problems of Social Integration: Main Issues Concerns and the Tasks for the Future" Paper presented in a Natonal Seminar on Social Development: Bangladesh Perspectives organised by SSRC, Planning Division Dhaka, Oct.4-5, 1994.
66. Ibid.
67. Alan Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies A Comparative Exploration ( Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1989). p.16
68. Lucian Pye, "The Non-Western Politcal Process" Journal of Politics 20, no.3 Aug. 1958, p.469
69. Bertsch G.K. et al, Comparing Political Systems: Power and Politics in Three Worlds 2nd ed. ( New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978)p.433



70. Ibid . p.434
71. S.M.Lipset, Journal of Democracy vol.4, No.2, 1993
72. Prof. Emajuddin Ahamed, "Neo-colonialism: Centre-Periphery Relations Developing Countries and Political Development" Dhaka University Patrika, Vol.10 Dec. 1979, pp.189-191
73. Christopher Clapham, Third World Politics: An Introduction (London: Croom Helm, 1985) p.64
74. Haqqi, op cit
75. N.H.Morrisjones, The Government and Politics of India New Delhi, 1971
76. D.A.Rustow, A World of Nations (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1967)
77. R.Emerson, Political Modernization ( Denver: Iniversity of Denver Press, 1963)
78. See M. Rashiduzzaman, "Bangladesh: The Civil Society and the New Equilibrium" Asian Studies No.13, 1994, p.4
79. Ibid.
80. S.M.Lipset, op cit.
81. Larry Diamond, op cit.
82. Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, "Overdeveloped Bureaucracy and Political Development in Bangladesh" ed. Bangladesh: Crisis of Political Development, (Dhaka: Publisher, Deptt. of Govt & Politics J.U. 1988)
83. Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh" New Left Review Jul/Aug, 1974.
84. John Saul, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Tanzania" The Socialist Register, London. 1974
85. Fred W. Riggs, "Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical View" in La Palombara ed. Bureaucracy and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) p.121
86. Prof. Emajuddin Ahamed, Bureaucratic Elites in Segmented Economic Growth: Bangladesh and Pakistan (Dhaka: UPL, 1980)p.14

87. Finer, The Man on Horseback (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969)
88. Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier ( Illinois: Glencoe, 1960)
89. S.P.Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968)
90. Naim Sultan, "Intervention and Role of Military in Third World Societies: Theoretical Perspectives" Asian Studies No.13, 1994 . pp.58-63
91. Huntington, op cit.
92. Mahbubur Rahman, "Dysfunctional Aspects of Political Order in Bangladesh" The Jahangirnagar Review Part II Soc.Sc.Vols XI & XII 1986-88, pp.49-62
93. J.J.Johnson ed. The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962)
94. L.W.Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization" in Ibid.
95. Daadlier, The Role of the Military in the Emerging Countries (The Hague: Mouton, 1962)
96. Pauker G.J., "Southeast Asia as a Problem Area in the Next Decade" World Politics 11 (2) April, 1959.
97. M.Halpern, "Middle Eastern Armies and the New Middle Class " J.J.Johnson op cit.
98. Eric Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in Non-Western States" American Political Science Review 64 (4) December, 1970.
99. Talukder Maniruzzaman, Military Withdrawal from Politics A Comparative Study ( Dhaka : UPL, 1988) p.3
100. Ibid.p.216
101. Iftekharuzzaman and Rahman, "Study on Public Representation System in Bangladesh", CDRB, Dhaka, August 1989, p.20
102. S.P.Huntington, Journal of Democracy Vol.", No.2, Spring 1991, p.13



103. Asia Week , March 9, 1994
104. Choudhury and Hasanuzzaman, "Women's Participation in Bangladesh Politics: Scope, Nature and Limitations," A Report prepared for CIDA, October, 1993
105. A.M.H.Zaman, "Problems of Rural Politics in Bangladesh " Bangladesh Political Science Association Journal, 1986
106. B.K.Jahangir, Ruarl Society, Power Structure and Class Practice (Dacca: CSS, 1982)
107. A.M.Hasanuzzaman, op cit.
108. Rounaq Jahan , Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues ( Dhaka: UPL, 1980, 1987)
109. Iftekharuzzaman and Rahman, op cit. p.18
110. S.P.Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) p.408

Chapter-II

Quest for Democracy in Bangladesh and Opposition  
under Mujib Rule  
-----

The ideal of democracy all along remained a source of great inspiration among the people of this country and as such the people struggled against the foreign rule with the aim of establishing democratic society and polity. The people of Bengal contributed significantly to the democratic movements launched against the British rule from time to time. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 aroused a tremendous enthusiasm among the people of East Bengal who were attracted by the views of the rights of self determination and recognition of democratic ideals as contained in this great Resolution. The important reason behind their total and wholehearted support to the creation of Pakistan on the basis of Lahore Resolution was to translate the ideals of democracy in their lives and socio-political system. From the beginning of Pakistan days till the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 all the political movements organised by the people of East Bengal had a democratic connotation. The Language Movement of 1952 which later developed into linguistic nationalism commanded great sympathy and mass appeal since this movement was organised to establish fundamental democratic rights of the people over their own language, culture and tradition. The United Front formed by the vernacular elites of East Bengal in 1954 against the ruling Muslim League became victorious with its popular Twenty One-Point Election Manifesto which foreshadowed later political movements in this country. It may be mentioned that



of the 21 points seven points namely, fifth, seventh, eleventh, fourteenth, fifteenth, twentieth, and twenty first dealt directly with the working of parliamentary democracy in East Bengal.<sup>1</sup> The Six-Point Movement of 1966 which was transformed into a national autonomy movement of the people of East Bengal was organised to install democratic set up in the country. The very first point of the remarkable Six-Point document called for the establishment of a federation in Pakistan on the basis of Lahore Resolution and a parliamentary form of government alongwith supremacy of legislature to be elected directly on the basis of universal adult franchise. In the late sixties, the Six-Point programme was broadened to eleven-point demand in order to appeal to the workers, peasants and the left and became the programme of the popular demand in East Pakistan; inspired by this demand the People's Uprising toppled the autocratic rule of Field Martial Ayub Khan in 1969. As a champion of the Bengali rights the major Bengali opposition party in Pakistan, the Awami League, fought the general election of 1970 with the pledge of regional autonomy and democracy of the people and won a landslide victory in East Pakistan. The rejection of the people's verdict as expressed in the 1970 election through military action by the West Pakistani rulers led to the disintegration of united Pakistan and the birth of sovereign and independent Bangladesh after nine-month long Liberation War on December 16, 1971.

During the Liberation War and after the independence of Bangladesh till the framing of the democratic constitution in 1972

the Proclamation of Independence as adopted on April 10, 1971 remained the source of all authority and the legal basis of all actions of the government. In order to be workable in a typical situation the Proclamation provisionally made the governmental system presidential with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the all powerful president and in his absence, the government-in-exile led by the Vice-President was authorised to manage the whole affair . A parliamentary system of government replaced the revolutionary government immediately after the triumphant return of Sheikh Mujib from Pakistani prison on January 10, 1972. As such Sheikh Mujib stepped down from the presidency and became the Prime Minister of the Republic side by side employing the former justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury as the country's President. The cause behind the alteration of the entire character of the government was indicated as the manifest aspiration of the people of this country to establish parliamentary democratic system and thus for achieving this objective such change was made.<sup>2</sup> In order to facilitate the framing of a democratic constitution for Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujib took a prompt step and promulgated on March 23, 1972, Presidential Order 22 which provided for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly comprising of the members elected in 1970 from East Pakistan to Pakistan's National Assembly and East Pakistan's Provincial Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly which was entrusted with the job of framing the long cherished democratic constitution of a sovereign state formed in its first meeting on 10.4.72 a Constitution Committee of



thirty four members with law minister Dr. Kamal Hossain in the chair. This committee accordingly drafted the constitution within a short span of time and the Constituent Assembly met on October 12, 1972 in its final session to discuss the draft constitution bill. The discussion continued with no provocative analysis for nearly three weeks and on November 4, the Constituent Assembly adopted a constitution for the country which came into effect from December 16, 1972. The high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism were included in the preamble of the constitution as the fundamental principles of the state.

The Constitution of Bangladesh introduced the westminster variety of parliamentary democracy making into reality the aspirations of the people who struggled to achieve such a democratic system during the days of united Pakistan. On the part of ruling Awami League it was a fulfilment of its commitment of establishing pure democratic order in the country; it is for this system it had been struggling since its birth in 1949. Taking lesson from the past experience the Awami League (AL) government was unwilling to leave any scope for undue exercise of power by the head of the state to disrupt the political process of the country; as a precautionary measure the president was made merely a titular head. It was noted<sup>3</sup> that in view of the bitter experiences with the system in Pakistan and the clear public commitment made, all necessary measures were made to pave the way for a parliamentary democracy to take its firm root in the newly born state of

Bangladesh. The organisational format therefore incorporated all the trappings of the parliamentary system as practiced in Britain like cabinet government, leadership of the prime minister, collective responsibility to the parliament, ruling party's enjoying of confidence of the majority parliamentary members, and the existence of an organised Opposition as alternative government. But the parliamentary system which started functioning in Bangladesh experienced from the beginning the brute majority rule and dominance of the ruling party. There was thus limited scope for establishing a government by criticism or cultivating a practice of constructive activities of the organised Opposition.

Rise of Opposition:  
-----

Opposing views and political controversy continued to occur in Bangladesh immediately after independence. Controversy arose with regard to the formation of the Constituent Assembly composed of the members elected for national assembly and provincial assembly of united Paksitan. One scholar mentioned<sup>4</sup> that anti-Awami League(AL) politicians and a section of the politically relevant strata challenged the authority of the newly composed Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for sovereign Bangladesh with the argument that the election of 1970-71 was held for the national assembly and provincial assembly of Pakistan which were to function under the legal Framework Order and the elected MNAs were voted by the people on the Six-Point programme to frame a constitution within the framework of united Pakistan; as such with



the creation of independent Bangladesh, the election of 1970-71 under the Legal Framework Order became infructuous and similarly the representative members became *functus officio*; under the new and changed circumstances it would be imperative to form a new constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for the nation, otherwise the authority of the constituent assembly so formed would remain illegitimate. The above argument was also raised regarding the legality of the actions of the AL during the Liberation War and its formation of the government after the independence of this country.

Thus after the emergence of sovereign Bangladesh the Awami League government not only faced the huge task of reconstructing the war ravaged country but also encountered challenges from the opposing groups and parties about its very existence as the government of the new state and its initiatives at constitution making. The opposition demand for the creation of a national government and a constituent assembly formed through fresh election gradually gained momentum with deteriorating law and order and economic scenerio of the country. Of all the opposing politicians, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani of the National Awami Party (NAP) was the most vocal and effective in raising the above demands through his public meetings and rallies. It was noted<sup>5</sup> that NAP leader, Bhashani led a procession on September 3, 1972 and demanded the formation of an all-party national government and resignation of the ruling Awami League and offered his own Twenty-Point programme to govern the new state; at one stage demands were made by Bhashani to arrange a national convention of students, youths, labourers

peasants, lawyers, and intellectuals to find out a formula to frame the future constitution of Bangladesh.

In spite of the above opposing stand there was hardly any viable opposition in the true sense of the term during the initial years of the Awami League government. The right wing Islam-pasand political parties were banned because of their alleged collaboration with the occupied Pakistani forces. The pro-liberation left wing parties were allowed to function in independent Bangladesh but far left armed opposition which the Awami League branded as naxalites were banned. Rounaq Jahan mentioned that in order to eliminate armed opposition Sheikh Mujib delivered a number of tough speeches where he termed both the ultra left and ultra right factions of armed groups as the enemies of the Bengali nation.<sup>6</sup>

Formation of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD):

In the initial years one of the major sources of opposition against the government was the dissidence within the Awami League party. During its autonomy movement in the 1960s Awami League came under pressure from some of the radical members of its student front to adopt a much tougher stand against the West Pakistani regime. Student leaders of this front led by Serajul Alam Khan, A.S.M. Abdur Rob and Shahjahan Siraj were strongly in favour of declaring the independence of Bangladesh after the overwhelming victory of the AL in the election of 1970 and introducing socialism in the new country.



These student leaders went to the extent of raising the flag of free Bangladesh and declaring a proclamation of independence in the presence of Sheikh Mujib in a gathering. They fought the Liberation War as leading members of the Mujib Bahini and favoured in establishing in independent Bangladesh a revolutionary government of the workers and peasants. But when Sheikh Mujib balanced in favour of the other moderate group of the Student's League led by Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui, the formal split in the Awami League's student wing became obvious. The division of Student's League into two groups chanting two different slogans of Mujibism and scientific socialism became formal on 23 July 1972 when the two groups held their conferences separately : while Siddiqui group's annual conference was attended and inaugurated by Sheikh Mujib, the conference of Rob-Siraj group was held at a different venue with a hint of floating a new political platform of their own based on the principle of scientific socialism.<sup>7</sup> This division in the Student's League had a chain reaction and there was consequent splits in labour front and Association of Freedom Fighters which were affiliated to Awami League. As such in support of the rebel group of Student's League, a peasant front and the Jatiyo Mukti Joddha Sangram Parishad were formed. Finally on October 31, 1972 in order to float a new political organisation, a convening committee of seven members was formed with Major (Retd.) M.A.Jalil and A.S.M.Abdur Rob as the Joint Conveners. With this/<sup>the</sup>new political party called the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was established with M.A.Jalil as the President and Rob as the General Secretary of the new party. Later on, on 24 Dec. 1972 an organising committee of the party with 105 members was constituted.

The JSD which was mostly an organisation of students and youths was of the opinion that the Liberation War of Bangladesh was manipulated and stopped at a time when it was about to be transformed into a war of the masses in true sense. JSD regarded Mujib's AL government as the representative of the bourgeois class and in its party Ghoshona Patra stated that Awami League represented only 8% of the people but possessed 85% of the total national wealth of Bangladesh.<sup>8</sup> As such one major objective of the JSD was to overthrow the anti-people ruling regime; it constantly opposed the Awami League government during the period Sheikh Mujib was in power, that is from 1972 till August 15, 1975.<sup>9</sup>

### II.3. Election of 1973 and Opposition:

The demands of the Opposition on the formation of national government and new constituent assembly was rejected by the Awami League regime on the grounds that it spearheaded the National Liberation Movement of Bangladesh and still enjoyed the total confidence of the people and as such fresh and costly election was unnecessary which could only delay the process of constitution-making. Moreover AL government's first priority was to present the nation a democratic<sup>constitution</sup> to avoid any possible uncertainty in the political process as experienced in the early days of Pakistan and at the same time it deserved the credit of framing the fundamental law of the state within a short span of time. There was, however, opposition remark against the moves through which the constitution was framed in a hurried manner. It was commented that if one considered the factors which frustrated the



attempts at constitution making in the days after the creation of Pakistan, then it could be easily seen that those problems were no longer applicable in the new situation of Bangladesh; there was no language difficulty, no cultural barrier, no disparity problem in the absence of provinces, and finally there was no difficulty concerning a necessary majority in the constituent assembly. As such there was no real validity of AL's ungrounded fear of lessons of the past and its claim that Bangladesh needed a constitution without any delay.<sup>10</sup>

The draft constitution prepared by the Constituent Assembly came under severe attack from the left political parties acting against the AL regime. Bhashani in a press conference rejected the constitution. The Communist Party of Bangla led by Abul Bashar criticised that the draft constitution was neither socialist nor democratic; although socialism was incorporated as a fundamental principle of state policy yet it did not guarantee the availability of food, housing, education or employment to the ordinary people and because of the recognition of private property it would not help transition to socialism. JSD remarked that the draft constitution had no real meaning in the sense that it failed to reflect the hopes and aspirations of the masses; the provision of imposing restrictions on the fundamental rights of the citizens alongwith dictatorial powers of the prime minister had made it undemocratic in nature; moreover there was lack of recognition of class conflict and provisions for establishing classless socialist society by removing exploitation and economic inequality. The Labour-Peasant Socialist Party rejected the type of socialism as proposed

in the draft constitution and termed it as socialism of abandoned property and opined that the existence of private property would legalise the rise of capitalists and lead the bourgeoisie to continue their class exploitation in the name of socialism.<sup>11</sup> In spite of the above opposition stand or views regarding the draft constitution, little efforts were, however, made by these political organisations to either mobilise the masses against it or organise political movement for an alternative constitution.

In its political moves Awami League was not alone; it obtained moral support from the Muzaffar's National Awami Party and Moni Sing's Communist Party of Bangladesh which were the advocates of introducing a socialist constitution in Bangladesh through peaceful means. With the framing of the constitution which came into effect on December 16, 1972, the Constituent Assembly ceased to function and was dissolved and the general elections were called on March 7, 1973. The holding of the election came at a time when the Awami League was still popular among the masses and it was obvious that no/other opposition political party would be able to come up as an alternative government. Yet the Opposition remained critical and active against the government and thus the general election of 1973 took place not without challenge.

In the Jatiya Sangsad election of March 1973, fourteen political parties and 1089 candidates contested. Of these parties excepting the ruling Awami League, its loyal NAP (M) and CPB, the rest contested the polls from the opposition side. In its election



manifesto the ruling Awami League regarded the general election as referendum of the people on the questions of supporting the four high ideals of state principles: nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism<sup>12</sup> and committed to establish socialist economic order through peaceful constitutional means. It was decided that Awami League and NAP (M) would contest the polls separately.<sup>13</sup> CPB contested only in the four seats and appealed the electorate to vote for the dedicated Awami League and NAP (M) candidates in order to unite all the patriotic forces of the country and implement domestic and international policies which<sup>would</sup> defeat the forces of American imperialism and their local supporters.<sup>14</sup> These two parties were thus identified with the ruling Awami League.

Although the opposition forces like NAP (Bhashani) and JSD were demanding the resignation and overthrow of the government yet with the announcement of election dates these parties showed their willingness to contest the general election under the provision of the newly adopted constitution and posed a challenge to the regime. NAP Bhashani came up with the promise of nationalisation of heavy industries and realisation of the basic needs of the people; it pledged for generating national capital through the introduction of production oriented economy in order to achieve self sufficiency and equitable distribution wealth and resources.<sup>15</sup> JSD in its manifesto declared its prime objective of establishing scientific socialism in Bangladesh. Although the ruling party had all advantages and upperhand in the electoral fight yet NAP (B) and JSD were trying

to exploit the public dissatisfaction on the issues like deteriorating law and order situation and growing price level of the essentials and were able to attract huge public in their political meetings and campaignings. The Opposition thus employed its all out efforts to discredit the ruling party and raised the following major allegations against the government: the failure of the party in power to restore law and order in society and check the price spiral of necessary commodities; its inability to curb huge smuggling in the borders, hoarding, black marketeering and other social menaces; mismanagement and corruption in administration; undemocratic measures of the government to suppress the opposition; involvement of the ruling party members in widespread nepotism and favouritism; and making this country a client state of India through the signing of so called Friendship Treaty with that country in March 1972.<sup>16</sup>

Rounaq Jahan<sup>17</sup> mentioned that in 1973 all the contesting parties including the ruling Awami League adopted a strategy of over-killing the opponents and among the major campaign issues 'conspiracy' featured prominently in the campaign; the government party AI branded the Opposition parties as agents of US-Chinese imperialists conspiring to undermine the integrity and sovereignty of the new state. Similar tones were also voiced by the Awami League's B team NAP(M) and CPB which attacked the Opposition as US-Chinese imperialist agents indulging in destroying Bangladesh's 'socialist' policy. In the same manner NAP(B) and JSD warned the public about the conspiracy of the Awami League,



NAP(M) and CPB which were acting as the tools of Soviet-Indian social imperialism.

Because of the organisational strength of the AL and the popularity of its leader Sheikh Mujib the results of the election were a foregone conclusion. In the election Awami League obtained overwhelming victory securing 292 seats while the Opposition including independent candidates secured only 7 seats which can be seen from the following table:

Table-I

Results of the General Election of March 7, 1973

Name of the Party	No. of seats contested	No. of seats won	% of votes secured
Awami League	300	292	73.17
NAP(M)	223	1	4.29
JSD	236	1	4.30
Jatiya League		1	5.42
NAP(B)	169		6.48
Independent & others	150	5	6.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The Bangladesh Observer, Dhaka, March 8-10, 1973.

The election results showed that the Opposition suffered very badly. Ahmed noted that one major challenger, JSD put up 237 candidates and secured 12,29,110 votes constituting 6.52% of the votes, while the other important challenger, a very old party, NAP(B) put up 169 candidates and secured 10,02,777 votes constituting 5.32% of the votes cast.<sup>18</sup> After their defeat a lot of noise and allegations were put forward by all sections of the electoral Opposition about election rigging and the ruling party's election manipulation. These parties tried to give impression that had the election been fair and free they would have won the game and formed the government. Thus their post election strategy was that by charging the party in power with vote rigging and widespread electoral malpractices they could winover the hearts of the general public.<sup>19</sup> The Opposition's marginal representation in the Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) had a dysfunctional effect on the working of parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh and it drastically reduced the strength and stake of the Opposition in the parliament.

Opposition's Legislative Role:  
-----

The Bangladesh Parliament officially named as Jatiya Sangsad met immediately after the election of 1973 and a government was formed under the Prime Ministership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The legislature consisted of 300 directly elected MPs and additional women members elected indirectly by the MPs in 15 reserved seats. Awami League's



dominance in the House meant that all the indirectly elected reserved women seats were to be captured by the ruling party. After the bye-elections the total strength of the members other than Awami League MPs stood at nine; of which JSD claimed 2 and Jatiyo League 1 and the rest were independents. This led AI leader Sheikh Mujib to boast that Opposition political parties did not win sufficient seats to be declared an official Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad.<sup>20</sup> But as mentioned earlier that one most distinctive feature of parliamentary democracy is the presence of a constitutional Opposition. In identifying the importance of the official Opposition scholars<sup>21</sup> maintained that an effective Opposition is very important for the right functioning of the parliamentary system. They elaborate that it is not the business of the Opposition to obstruct the government; as such its purpose is to criticise and not to hinder. In the legislature the Opposition exposes the government omission and opposes the measures contrary to public interests. The Opposition by its constant scrutiny and criticism of the government policy, makes the party in power a more useful instrument of democracy. An organised Opposition makes the use of various parliamentary methods to compel the government to admit its faults and adopt remedial measures.

The denial of the existence of Opposition in Bangladesh by the Prime Minister was opposed by the conscious quarters on the ground that it indicated a line of thinking concerning the methods of dealing with political Opposition to the regime. It was commented by an observer that if no Opposition was recognised as political

Opposition then it was most likely that Opposition to the party in power would be declared as anti-social, criminal or anti-people ; and once the government party adopts such decision about political Opposition then the ways of handling that Opposition would definitely follow a policy of suppression by the government.<sup>22</sup> It was further noted that when in any political system, the government party claims to be the only custodian of patriotism and declares other elements as disloyal to the state, constitution or the country then there could hardly be any environment or scope for constitutional politics in the country and such situation only leads to political confrontation between unconstitutional ruling party and unconstitutional Opposition.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of the Opposition's marginal presence inside the legislature one of the very few opposition members in the Jatiya Sangsad Bangladesh Jatiya League Chief Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan expressed his willingness to consolidate an Opposition in the Parliament. He was in fact the unofficial leader of the Opposition in the legislature aided by Mr. Abdus Sattar, the only JSD member elected and some independents.<sup>24</sup> These very few Opposition members tried to make use of the devices and mechanisms of the parliament to put forward their opposing view points in the House. Although this feeble Opposition was not a constitutionally recognised Opposition yet in several instances these members raised various issues, questions and objections through the parliamentary devices under the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad adopted on July 24, 1974.



The Opposition members and independent MPs most notably Ataur Rahman Khan, Abdus Sattar, Abdullah Sarkar, Ali Ashraf, M.N.Larma and S.Q.M.Salehuddin tried to make use of the Question Hour which is regarded as an important legislative activity of ventilating the grievances of the people. Of the eight sessions of the First Jatiya Sangsad, the Question Hour activity of the second session became lively alongwith the participation of above Opposition members. During the Budget session and the session which followed it in 1973 there were as many as 200 starred questions raised by the Opposition and independent MPs. Although most of the questions did not directly deal with the policies of national concern yet they reflected the sincere attempts of the Opposition MPs to represent their own constituencies. Ministers were thus questioned by these members regarding their doings and policies which affected the public. During the Budget session of 1973 the questions and supplementary questions of the Opposition came mostly from vocal member Ataur Rahman Khan and included among others the burning of raw jute at various places of the country after 16 Dec.1971 and the consequent government action; the state of jute cultivation and production and the amount of foreign currency received from this sector; the circulation of notes in the market and the printing of Bangladeshi currency notes in India; condition of the abandoned houses in Bangladesh; distribution of relief goods by the government; foodgrain production and its requirement in the country; transfer and promotion of employees in Telegraph department; the reemployment of 303 govern-

employees dismissed during Pakistan days.<sup>25</sup> Questions from independent MP Abdullah Sarkar also generated some interests in the House. Some of his important queries included the decision of the government on the trial of Pakistani Prisoners of War; the amount of loss of electric transmitters in Chittagong and Comilla; the amount of medical allowance given to the members of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>26</sup> Interrogations by the Opposition members were also made on the legal, industry, business, and transport sectors of the government.

It can be seen from the nature of questions raised by the Opposition MPs that there was no platform for debating on the issues of national importance. As such the general public were less interested about the legislative deliberations in the parliament. Without necessary party strength in the House, the feeble Opposition was not at all in a position to either insist the government to table adjournment or other motions or scrutinise properly the government actions through the weak committee system which was an important shortcoming of the First Parliament. The ineffectiveness of all the seven standing committees of the House meant that executive was all powerful and hardly any attempts were there to establish the tradition of examining the bills in the committee system or to employ legislative control over the executive through the Public Accounts Committee as practiced in other parliamentary systems like U.K. and India.

The influence of the First Parliament gradually declined with the assumption of the arbitrary powers by the executive through its intolerant attitude in dealing with the Opposition. The Opposition



members' presence in the House was noticed only through their participation in the Question Hour which was <sup>introduced</sup> not there in the eighth and final session of the First Jatiya Sangsad. In this parliament the existence of single dominant party, provision of strict party discipline, promulgation of ordinances by passing the House and above all the successive amendments of the 1972 constitution significantly reduced the power of the legislature which gradually emerged as the 'yesman' of the executive and was used as only a 'rubber stamp' to regularise the executive actions. As such effective check on the government by the parliament was greatly lacking during Mujib regime. Under such circumstances a very weak Opposition could play nothing but an insignificant role in the legislature.

The importance of the rule-making power of the First Parliament was greatly diminished with the promulgation of presidential ordinances which were later regularised by the House. It has been noted that in the First Jatiya Sangsad 110 acts were passed out of which 91 were ordinances.<sup>27</sup> Without systematic debate and proper discussion in the legislature, various crucial ordinances were approved in only a few hours time. The Opposition members participated and staged walk-outs in protest of passing the more controversial bills like the Special Powers Act, 1974, The Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini (Amendment) Bill, 1974, the Emergency Powers Bill, 1975, the Printing Presses and Publication (Amendment) Bill, 1974, and the Constitution Fourth Amendment Bill, 1975.

The curtailment of the power and position of the First Parliament became concrete with the passing of the Constitution Second Amendment Bill, 1973. This amendment was in fact introduced to legitimise the repressive measures of the government against the non-conformists. Thus number 33 article of the Constitution was amended which empowered the government to detain a person for six months and denied legal protection to individuals detained or arrested. It also empowered the chief executive to declare a state of emergency if deemed necessary and suspend fundamental rights of the citizens. Hakim and Huque<sup>28</sup> noted that 'apparently, the second amendment of September 1973 was a prelude to the declaration of emergency in December 1974 and fundamental rights were substantially curtailed in a bid by the regime to continue in power.' The Opposition members in the House Ataur Rahman Khan of BNL and Abdus Sattar of JSD staged walk-out raising their protest against the passing of the above Bill in only two hours time. The demand of the Opposition to refer the Bill to elicit public opinion was rejected by the party in power.<sup>29</sup> Opposition MP Ataur Rahman Khan made strong criticisms against the provisions of the Bill; he reminded the Parliament that over the last twenty five years Awami League was opposed to such kind of laws which were used against the political opponents; his argument was that Awami League had won the election on the basis of this existing constitution and any fundamental change of this document should not be effected without people's approval; he also alleged that the intentions behind the introduction of the provisions were in fact highly political and as such those would primarily be used for repression of political Opposition.<sup>30</sup>



Through various amendments and laws excessive powers were concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib and it led to a peculiar arrangement under the banner of parliamentary system where the difference between party and government was increasingly blurred. Lawrence Ziring commented that 'the Awami League dominated National Assembly was compelled to pass a series of amendments to the Constitution which reduced that body to a rubber stamp of the chief executive. This was Mujib's method of reaching for total power but it made a shambles of constitutional performance.'<sup>31</sup> The decline of the First Jatiya Sangsad was complete when the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution was brought before the House in the form of Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Bill, 1975 with the following characteristics: switch over to presidential form from parliamentary system; introduction of single party rule; an all powerful president; absence of independence of judiciary and suspending the fundamental rights of the citizens. Through this amendment the democratic principles which were incorporated in the 1972 Constitution were thoroughly revised and replaced by an autocratic appearance with an objective of eliminating political Opposition and disregarding the spirit of constitutionalism.<sup>32</sup> The way this amendment was passed within 30 minutes and without proper debate or discussion was objected by the Opposition members and in protest they walked out of the House.

In the First Parliament the existence of any constitutional Opposition was not recognised or tolerated by the ruling party and as such the views expressed by a few Opposition and independent MPs

were never taken seriously. The domination of parliament by a single party due to brute majority and absence of an effective Opposition in the House made it easier for the regime to follow arbitrary practices opposed to the norms and conventions of the parliamentary form of government.

Opposition outside the Parliament:

Role of Radical Opposition and Regime Response  
-----

Since the independence of Bangladesh, the ruling Awami League government faced serious opposition from alienated groups, and political opponents. Although the Opposition suffered badly in the general election, within less than a year the Opposition against the regime became more voluble. During this time intensification of activities by NAP(B) and JSD were continuously visible. Bhashani tried to exploit the public sentiment on the issues of Indo-Bangladesh relations along with signing of the controversial Friendship Treaty between the two countries; massive smuggling in the borders; deteriorating law and order and famine situation prevailing in the country. Bhashani alleged in a public meeting at Rajshahi in November 1973 that the possibility of constitutional politics was fast disappearing in the country owing to the indiscriminate killing of Opposition workers by the government.<sup>33</sup> Of all the Opposition parties, JSD was gaining its strength gradually as manifested by its large following among the younger radical sections. The student front of this organisation became victorious in a number of union elections of various colleges



in the country. With large gathering in its political meetings JSD appeared as a potential Opposition against the regime. One forceful and drastic political action of JSD in March 1974 was its launching of gherao (meaning confinement) of the offices and residences of ministers and important government organisations like Planning Commission, Secretariat, Relief Committees, Red Cross Office, T.V. and Radio Centres, Rakkhi Bahini Offices, Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust, Central Jail, government controlled newspaper offices and the illegal occupants. All these were regarded by JSD as the instruments of repression, mismanagement and corruption.<sup>34</sup> The gherao programme started with confinement of Home Minister's residence including a plan of handing over to the minister a memorandum of Redemption. But the JSD processionists encountered police firing in which some of the JSD workers were killed and several were injured and arrested. The regime in its counter move branded JSD as anti-state element; in another coercive move the central office of JSD was damaged, its newspaper office was seized and closed. Such actions of the regime did not however stop the organisation to continue its anti-government mobilisation and movement for establishing socialist system of the working class.

In early 1974 as a result of fruitful negotiation six political parties namely NAP(B), BJL, Jatiya Gonomukti Union, Bangladesh Jatiyo League of Oli Ahad, Bangladesh Communist Party (Leninbadi) and Bangladesh Sramik Krishak Sammobadi Dal formed an All Party United Front under the leadership of Maolana Bhashani. In its move against the government this Front announced a Four-Point demand including release

of all political prisoners and detenues, establishing security of life and restoration of peace; curbing of price hike and introducing rural rationing system, and scrapping of all unequal treaties or pacts with foreign countries. The attempts of this Front to launch an anti-government movement could not be successful due to a lack of broad based public sympathy for its demands. Since the component political parties were disorganised and faction ridden they failed to provide effective political programme in front of the masses and could not generate support in the countryside.<sup>35</sup>

Because of lack of necessary strength and unity the Opposition political parties failed to consolidate their position and offer themselves as counter force against the organisationally strong Awami League. The young and inexperienced leadership of JSD was yet to gain foothold among the people and the leadership capability of NAP leader Bhashani was never used to capture state power. At one stage Bhashani's attempt to continue fast unto-death to eliminate corruption from the society and meet the Opposition demands was not successful. His another warning against the government either to fulfil the Four-Point demand of the All Party Action Committee by 30th June 1974 or to face mass movement could not be materialised as he and his associates were arrested and imprisoned by the ruling regime.

The actual threat however came from the left radical Opposition parties for which the AI government was especially concerned and was greatly disturbed. These underground revolutionary parties



posed a real challenge to the country's social and political order. Among such parties the more active were the Purbo Bangla Sarbohara Party led by Siraj Sikder, the Purbo Banglar Sammobadi Dal (Marxist-Leninist) led by Mohammad Toaha, Purbo Bangla Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) led by Abul Bashar and Deben Sikder, and East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) led by Shukhendu Dastidar. Having tactical and ideological differences, these parties had a common opinion that the revolution of Bangladesh organised in 1971 was unfinished and incomplete. These radical parties were of the view that when the liberation movement of Bangladesh was going to be transformed into a real people's war of liberation led by their radical leaders the landed bourgeois Indian government in collaboration with social imperialist Soviet government made a direct intervention in the people's war and changed its course and as such the Awami League government, representative of the exploiting class and agent of imperial powers, came to state power. Above revolutionary parties opined that Bangladesh's independence on 16th December 1971 did not bring about emancipation of the working class who were being exploited by the puppet Awami League government; these parties agreed on their common objective of uprooting the government through armed struggle and establishing a people's government under the command of a communist party which alone could finish the unfinished revolution started in March 1971 and transform this country into a real socialist state.<sup>36</sup>

Above underground parties developed their own political armed cadres through training and started violent actions at various places by adopting guerrilla tactics. In the spirit of a second revolution they launched their struggle to unseat the government and crush the exploiters. In their violent activities the armed cadres of the underground parties adopted three strategies: they started secret killing of the leaders belonged to the Awami League; they attacked the houses of the big farmers and looted their food-grains in order to help the rural poor; they targeted the machineries engaged in maintaining law and order in the countryside.<sup>37</sup> As such local police stations and Rakkhi Bahini camps came under attack by the armed revolutionaries. There were regular reports in the newspapers regarding their operation at various police outposts, rural markets, and communication system. According to one report during the second half of 1973 fifty two police stations came under armed attack by the radical miscreants.<sup>38</sup> It was known from another report that by the end of 1974 four thousand Awami Leaguers were murdered including five members of parliament.<sup>39</sup> Because of the above violent activities, local law and order system became paralysed and the authority of the regime was greatly threatened.

Talukder Maniruzzaman noted that of the radical Opposition parties Bangladesher Communist Party (Leninist) originated with four pro-Chinese groups and worked both as open and secret organisation forming its own revolutionary student front called the Bangladesh Biplobi Chatra Union and a labour front called the Bangla Sramik Federation. Although this



party had established its operation cells in a number of districts yet it was opposed to extreme violence as employed by the Indian Naxalites. The goal of this party to unify the left was difficult to achieve because of conflicts within its own ranks. The more active radical Opposition was the Sarbohara Party led by an engineer-cum-revolutionary Siraj Sikder who attracted university-educated sections in his organisation and propagated his ideas through his party literatures called the Sangbad Bulletin and Lal Jhanda. With a good communication network Sarbohara Party formed a National Liberation Front comprising workers, peasants, and oppressed minorities. With the revolutionary cadre this party made attacks on the government troops and claimed the responsibility of most of the lootings, dacoities and bank robberies. Another underground party was Mohammad Toaha's Sammobadi Dal which regarded the Rakkhi Bahini as essentially an Indian army in this country. This party had also a national liberation front and attracted the frustrated freedom fighters in its guerrilla force to intensify activities in different districts in Bangladesh. Abdul Haq's East Pakistan Communist Party (ML) was against the creation of Bangladesh with Indian help and organised its own people's war against the counter forces. Purba Bangla Communist Party (ML) was another underground revolutionary party comprising three groups and organised terrorist activities mostly in the districts of northern region of Bangladesh. Although most of the above radical parties had factional feuds and ideological or tactical differences yet they all agreed to complete the unfinished revolution of Bangladesh through their revolutionary and violent activities.

After independence Awami League's strategy was to root out by force the Opposition forces both from extreme left and far rightist elements. After liberation, however, there was hardly any opposition from the rightist political groups like Jamat-i-Islam, Muslim League, Pakistan Democratic Party, Nizam-i-Islam and the like. This is because the right wing parties which were the associates of the occupation forces were declared banned and their leaders were imprisoned by the regime under the Collaborator's Act. In order to contain the radical Opposition one of the strategies of the AL government was to release the rightist politicians from jail in Dec. 1973 although the ban on the political activities of the rightist fundamentalists was not lifted.<sup>41</sup> In another move to respond to the challenges of the revolutionary parties the AL regime adopted a policy of getting closer with the two pro-Moscow left parties namely Mujaffar's National Awami Party NAP(M) and Moni Sing's Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB). Awami League obtained necessary support from these two political organisations both in pre and post independence Bangladesh.

In the initial years after liberation, NAP(M) was following, as was observed, a policy of being a responsible opposition and it was also hoped that it would inherit state power should the ruling Awami League lose in popularity.<sup>42</sup> But NAP(M) could not continue this kind of role because of its utter failure to exploit the anti-government sentiment of the people and also due to its policy of extending its support towards the policies and programmes of the Awami League government. Both NAP(M) and CPB came closer with the government party in spite of



their earlier criticisms on corruption and government atrocities killing two processionists while protesting U.S. bomb attack on North Vietnam. These parties welcomed the constitution drafted by Awami League and gave AL their all out support in the general election of 1973. Such cooperative and in a sense subservient attitude of these parties towards the government made them 'B' team of the ruling regime. In their efforts to establish socialism in Bangladesh both NAP(M) and CPB were active in forming a united front with ruling Awami League. In this attempt they obtained necessary support from the Soviet Union. The student fronts of CPB and Awami League worked hand in hand in forming such an alliance. To this end three-party unity committees were established at the local levels. With this background, in October 1973 Awami League in alliance with NAP(M) and CPB formed the popular United Front called the 'Gono Oikka Jote' with a nineteen member central executive committee in which three members were taken from CPB, five from NAP(M) and the rest eleven members from the ruling Awami League.<sup>43</sup> In its declaration the Jote maintained that its unity was based on the four state principles; nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism, and its prime objective was to crush the enemies of socialism and Bangladesh. It was also expressed that the Jote would realise the political ideology of Sheikh Mujib and destroy the conspiracy of the foreign agents including anti-social and anti-state elements. Thus the strength gained through the Jote was channelled by the government to deal with the threats posed by the underground radical Opposition parties.

But the above mentioned three-party alliance was weak in nature and hardly anything was done by it to improve the ailing economic sector. Moreover, as mentioned by one scholar, the formation of the Jote was disliked by a powerful section of the ruling Awami League who had U.S. connection.<sup>44</sup>

Facing the revolutionary activities of the radical Opposition, the government decided to follow hard line and adopted various measures to strengthen its hands, including/declaring emergency in the country. Other legal steps of the regime were: establishing of special tribunals to try armed miscreants; arranging firing squads for execution of guilty persons; arresting without warrant of suspected individuals who committed crime; suspending the activities of any party or group working against the state; declaring the provision of the newsprint control order; and voiding any challenge in a court of law to actions taken under the Special powers Act by the government.<sup>45</sup> In order to stop the opposing view points the regime controlled the press and closed down the publications like Wave, Desh Bangla, Ganakantha and Holiday which belonged to the opposition political groups.<sup>46</sup> The harrassment of the journalists also continued since the press was playing a significant role in criticising the ruling regime and propagating the stand of the Opposition.

In order to control the Opposition the Awami League government developed from the start its own apparatus and paramilitary forces. Lal Bahini was created as a private force to act as the enforcer for the Awami League in some of the more vital areas of Bangladesh.<sup>47</sup> The radical Opposition was severely dealt with through the regime's own internal security force called the Rakkhi Bahini formed in March 1972.



The officers of the Rakkhi Bahini were empowered to arrest or search any suspected person without giving any reason. The importance and benefits given to the Rakkhi Bahini created a feeling of discontent and alienated the members of the armed forces. In the attempt of the government to single out the radical elements, thousands of revolutionary party workers were arrested and many were killed. In its operation the Rakkhi Bahini was able to recover significant number of arms and ammunitions which were in turn freely used to eliminate those political oppositions. In the dailies torture and killing of political opponents were frequently published. It was reported that the leader of the Sarbohara Party, Siraj Sikder (a potential threat to the regime) was killed after his arrest when he tried to escape from the police custody.<sup>48</sup> But inspite of the above legal steps including the Special Powers Act and the violent operation of the Rakkhi Bahini the regime was continuously threatened by the underground activities of the radical Opposition parties.

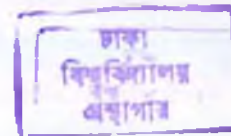
also

The regime had/problems within its own political organisation. Opposing views developed within the higher echelons of the Awami league led by the then Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed who openly criticised that the economic policies of the government were responsible for the miseries of the people and advocated for introducing pure socialism in Bangladesh. Facing such criticism Sheikh Mujib balanced in favour of the Industries Minister Syed Nazrul Islam who and his group supported mixed economy and thus Mujib dismissed from his cabinet

Tajuddin Ahmed and six other hardliner ministers.<sup>49</sup>

In order to cope with the grave situation in the country resulting from the armed threat from the radical Opposition; deteriorating law and order and economic situation; pervasive factionalism in politics and administration and crisis in the ruling party, the regime declared <sup>on Dec 28, 1974</sup> a state of emergency in the country suspending the fundamental rights of the citizens. At the same time the leader of the youth front of the Awami League, Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni and the loyal opposition parties, NAP(M) and CPB were espousing that the system of parliamentary government had failed in Bangladesh and they urged Sheikh Mujib to establish a new one-party government comprising the leaders of the patriotic parties and begin his 'Second Revolution' in the country.<sup>50</sup> After few weeks the Constitution was amended to replace parliamentary system with a one-party presidential rule. With the formation of the single legitimate national party called the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) by Sheikh Mujib all the parties in the Opposition were declared banned.

382518



As mentioned earlier after the formation of Awami League government in the post liberation period, there was a speedy growth of opposition and opponents in the politics of Bangladesh, But due to the general acceptancy of the AI and the popularity of its charismatic leader, Sheikh Mujib, the Opposition with their weak organization suffered very badly in the election of 1973 . With a very insignificant



representation in the Jatiya Sangsad the Opposition had a little scope to play any constructive legislative role to make the government behave or to act as alternative to the party in power. From the beginning the ruling regime was intolerant of Opposition both inside and outside the parliament and failed to recognise the free play of opposition activities or accept their criticism. Emajuddin Ahamed noted that 'when the opposition mounted, the party in power became more intolerant and the party leaders began spending most of their creative energy and valuable time in handing their opponents... The leaders in opposition, deprived of the opportunities for ventilating their grievances and points of view on national issues, especially the alternative programmes and policies, through legally approved means, became desperate and took to violent means. That in turn hardened the attitude of the power wielders all the more. The leaders in opposition then adopted more violent methods, some of which were incontrovertibly undemocratic. Thus ultimately the political issues were brought down to the streets for solutions through demonstrations, mob violence, gheraos and so on.'<sup>51</sup> The regime followed a tougher stand and adopted various legal and coercive measures against the radical Opposition parties. The radical Opposition although posed a severe challenge to the authority of the ruling AI through violent underground activities yet due to internal conflict, ideological differences and factional feuds these parties could not come up with a broad national programme or offer the nation any alternative leadership. It has been commented that 'if Mujib were to

be critically viewed for persisting with personality cult and assorted ideology, the opposition seemed to be little concerned about evolving a viable ideology and programme for national development and social change in Bangladesh.<sup>52</sup> Because of the reasons due to mentioned earlier and/the inherent weakness, the ruling party could not emerge as a viable political organisation to keep its hold over the major social groups in the country and a ground was gradually prepared for the eventual down fall of the regime. With the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib through a violent bloody coup by the alienated junior officers of the Bangladesh Army on 15th August 1975, the political order created by Mujib came to an end. After a ban on political activities and parties for more than one year the army regime first permitted parlour politics and later allowed activities of political parties within the framework of multi-party system.



Notes:

- 
1. Emajuddin Ahamed ed. Bangladeshe Shangshadiya Gonotantra Prasangik Bhabna, (Dhaka: Karim Book Corporation, May 1989) p.1
  2. Moudud Ahmed, Bangladesh Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1983) p.7
  3. Ibid, p.104
  4. Ibid, p.90
  5. Ibid. p.91
  6. Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics Problems and Issues (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1980) pp. 73 and 79
  7. Ranga Lal Sen, Political Elites in Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1986) p.291
  8. Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and It Aftermath (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1988)
  9. Ibid
  10. Badruddin Umar, Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh (Dacca: Mowla Brothers, 1974) p.225
  11. See Abul Fazl Huq, 'Constitution-Making in Bangladesh' in Emajuddin Ahamed ed. Bangladesh Politics (Dacca: CSS, 1980) pp.6-10
  12. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op cit, 1988, p.156
  13. Ekota 9th February 1973 see Ranga Lal Sen op cit, p.294
  14. Ranga Lal Sen, opcit, p.295
  15. Ibid and Moudud Ahmed, op cit, p.139
  16. Moudud Ahmed, op cit, p.140
  17. Rounaq Jahan, op cit, p.83

18. Moudud Ahmed, op cit, p.145
19. Badruddin Umar, op cit,
20. Lawrence Ziring, Bangladesh From Mujib to Ershad An Interpretive Study (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1992) p.96
21. see Sundar Ram, Role of Opposition Parties in Indian Politics (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992) pp.4-5
22. Badruddin Umar, op cit, pp.274-275
23. Badruddin Umar, Towards Emergency (Dacca: Muktaadhara 1980) p.18
24. Abul Fazl Huq in Emajuddin Ahamed, op cit , p.29
25. Jatiya Sangsad Debates June 1974
26. Jatiya Sangsad Debates, 1974
27. Dilara Choudhury, Constitutional Developments in Bangladesh Ph.D. Thesis University of Dhaka, 1992
28. Hakim and Huque, 'Constitutional Amendments in Bangladesh' in Regional Studies Vol.XII, No.2. Spring 1994, p.77
29. Moudud Ahmed, op cit, p.149
30. Ibid, pp.149-150
31. Lawrence Ziring, op cit. p.101
32. Hakim and Huque, op cit, p.79
33. Badruddin Umar, 1980, op cit, pp.16-18
34. Moudud Ahmed, op cit, p.219 and Daily Ittefaq 18.3.1974
35. Syed Serajul Islam, 'Polity and Politics During Mujib Era' in Emajuddin Ahamed ed. Society and Politics in Bangladesh (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1989) p.54



36. Talukder Maniruzzaman, Group Interests and Political Changes Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982) p.131
37. Syed Serajul Islam, Bangladesh State and Economic Strategy ( Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1988 ) p.72
38. Ibid
39. A. Mascarenhas, Bangladesh: A Legacy of Blood (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986) p.44
40. Talukder Maniruzzaman, 1982 op cit pp.151-156
41. Zillur Rahman Khan, Martial Law to Martial Law Leadership Crisis in Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1984) p.95
42. Rounaq Jahan, op cit, p.74
43. Sangbad August 6 and 27 in T.S. Rahman 'One-Party BKSAL: An Analysis' Asian Studies No.12, 1993
44. Ranga Lal Sen, op cit, pp.297-298
45. Syed Serajul Islam, 1988, op cit, p.73
46. Rounaq Jahan, op cit, p.89
47. Lawrence Ziring, op cit, p.90
48. The Bangladesh Observer 3.1.1975
49. The Bangladesh Observer, 18.7.1974
50. see T.S.Rahman, op cit, p.46
51. Emajuddin Ahamed, 'Crisis of Democracy in Bangladesh' in S.Khan ed. Politics and Stability in Bangladesh Problems and Prospects (Department of Govt & Politics, J.U. 1985) p.6
52. M.Solaiman, 'Opposition Politics and Mujib's Quest for Power (1972-75)' The Journal of Political Science Association, Dhaka, 1988  
p.169

Chapter-III

Opposition and Its Role During Zia Regime:  
-----

After the overthrow and assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975, the coup leaders declared martial law and installed Mushtaque Ahmed as the President of Bangladesh and retained major portion of the ministers and state ministers belonging to the erstwhile Mujib cabinet. The newly established government dissolved the single party BAKSAL rule and disbanded political parties by promulgating ordinances. An announcement was made by the new president for the revival of political activities after a period of one year and holding of general elections in February 1977 in order to restore parliamentary system of government in the country. The bloody coup and the new regime created mixed reaction in the political sections. The opponents of Sheikh Mujib were in favour of such political change and thus NAP (B), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), and the underground radical parties extended their readiness to accept the army regime. Opposition to the regime came from the ardent supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Pro-Moscow political parties and the group of well known freedom fighter Qader Siddiqui.<sup>1</sup> They also supported labour unrest at the Adamjee Jute Mills initiated by the pro-Mujib labour leaders. The rightest elements were happy with the regime because of its pro-Islamic and pro-Western sympathies. Contradictions were there in the new system because of the simultaneous existence of parliament and major portion of the cabinet of the erstwhile government. Schisms also developed between the senior officers of the army followed by reshuffling in its ranks. This situation brought



General Ziaur Rahman to the position of the Chief of Staff of the army. As a move against the junior officers and coup leaders, a counter-coup took place on November 3, 1975 led by Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf who replaced Zia as army chief and put him under house arrest. This counter-coup ousted Mushtaque Ahmed from his office and installed Chief Justice A.S.M. Sayem as the new President. The <sup>coup</sup> was proved abortive as the soldiers inspired by the military front (Biplobi Gono Bahini) of the Jatiya Samaj-tantrik Dal (JSD) revolted against the counter-coup leadership and staged on November 7, 1975 Sepoy Revolution. Killing of Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf and the defeat of his associates paved the way for reinstalling General Zia as army chief who thus consolidated his position and became the Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator and emerged as the de facto leader of the new regime.

Zia regime and JSD : It appeared that the JSD played a very instrumental role in the soldier's uprising of November 7, 1975. The JSD was active in establishing People's Liberation Army modelled after Chinese pattern in the Bangladesh Armed Forces and had maintained linkages through its cells at various ranks of the army. JSD's military front was supposedly headed by Lieutenant Colonel Abu Taher. Both the JSD party workers and its military front successfully circulated leaflets among the soldiers calling for a sepoy revolution. The soldiers belonging to the JSD's military front played a crucial part in organising soldier's uprising<sup>2</sup> and freeing General Zia from custody to make him the leader of the new regime. The second stage of the soldier's revolt was planned by the Gono Bahini as a social revolution.<sup>3</sup> In response to JSD's demand, its

top leadership including President M.A.Jalil and General Secretary A.Rob was released from prison. But Zia's relations with the organisation was short lived and soon got soured as Zia's initiatives or moves were not in line with the JSD's plan of organising a true revolution led by the People's Army. Moreover its role in the soldier's uprising was not acknowledged by the regime. In retaliation JSD through its leaflets branded General Zia as anti-revolutionary and was critical about Zia's balance in favour of the sympathizers of the West and leaning towards the rightist elements. It reminded the regime about an earlier agreement between General Zia and Colonel Taher to realise the Twelve-Point demand of the sepoy and gono Bahini for democratising the armed forces.<sup>4</sup> Zia regime thus faced a fresh move by the JSD to organise a class war between the soldiers and officers. It was noted that JSD's new 4-Point programme incorporated demand for removal of differences between soldiers and their superior officers; discontinuation of the use of soldiers as batmen for officers and their household activities; branding of junior officers who were cooperating with the officers as anti-revolutionary forces; and retention of arms and ammunition by soldiers until the above demands were realised.<sup>5</sup> With such JSD activities the/<sup>regime</sup> apprehended a general breakdown of discipline within the armed force and thus adopted a tough stand against the JSD. By late November 1975, the regime could restore discipline in the army ranks. Government actions against the JSD resulted in arrest and imprisonment of JSD leadership alongwith bulk of its workers and ultimately trial and execution of Colonel Taher and his associates in July 1976. As a protest, JSD called for a general hartal on 31 July, 1976 but could not attract much support from the public.



Revival of Political Parties and Division in Opposition:  
-----

Initially General Ziaur Rahman declared his regime as non-political and interim in nature with its prime objective to return political power to the elected representatives of the people and restore a real democratic order. To this end the target of holding general elections was February 1977. In the mean time parliament was dissolved through the presidential proclamation on Nov.8, 1975. Side by side restrictions on free politics and martial law continued in order to establish desired peace and order. As part of preparing the ground for free political activities and holding elections the regime adopted a measure of allowing limited party activity from July 1976. The government thus passed the Political Parties Regulation or PPR to permit parlour politics from 30 July, 1976. Under the PPR political parties had to submit their constitutions, political programmes and manifestoes for scrutiny in order to obtain necessary government permission to do indoor politics.

There was a trend of massive proliferation of political parties with the passing of PPR. Because of ban on open political activity for one year under martial law there was a sort of competition among the political groups to get state approval and recognition of their organisations. It has been noted that about sixty political groups applied for permission and duly submitted their constitutions and twenty one of them including the Awami League were given government approval to operate as political parties under PPR by the end of 1976.<sup>6</sup> Rounaq Jahan mentioned that through the mechanism of PPR and parlour politics Zia regime was successful in fragmenting the faction prone political parties further

and the initial strategy of the regime was to pick up the support of most of the existing political organisations and factions.<sup>7</sup> With regard to the political programmes of the parties placed before the regime hardly any major difference among them was noticed because like the regime itself they also advocated for moderate economic policies.<sup>8</sup> Later in 1978 under continuous pressure from the political parties the Zia regime withdrew the PPR in November 1978 resulting into free paly of party building and massive increase in the number of political parties in the country. It was known that more than hundred political parties were operating at that time. Earlier in May 1976 as per an official order restrictions on communal and religion-based parties were withdrawn and as such fundamentalist parties like Muslim League, Council Muslim League, Islamic Democratic League, Jamat-i-Islami, Nizam-i-Islam were revived with old and new names under PPR.

In the process of revival of parties within the framework of multi-party system factional trends were clearly visible among the major political parties. In the attempt to revive itself Awami League was getting reconstituted under the leadership of the widow of late Tajuddin Ahmed Mrs Johra Tajuddin. As such its council meeting in July 1977 formed an organising committee of 44 members with Mrs. Tajuddin as the convenor. Following the earlier BAKSAL line it prepared a political programme of establishing exploitation free society in the country. Other Awami League leaders like Mizunur Rahman Chowdhury who were anti-BAKSAL and had differing ideas abstained from attending the above council meeting. Later on in 1978 Abdul Malek Ukil and Abdur Razzaque were elected as the President and General Secretary respectively of the main Awami



League while in August of the same year the break away section led by Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury formed separate Awami League. The rightist and liberal Awami Leaguers also separated themselves and established their own parties. Thus Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkbagish formed Gona Azadi League, General (Retd) M.A.G.Osmani formed Jatiya Janata Party and Khandker Mushtaque Ahmed, ex-President and an associate of 15th August coup, formed Democratic League.

After the formation of single party BAKSAL in Feb.1975, National Awami Party (Muzaffar) and Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) merged with the same. In 1976, NAP(M) and CPB revived themselves as separate political parties under PPR. On the questions of supporting the regime and religion issue differing opinions developed within NAP(M). As a result a small section of NAP(M) led by Suranjit Sengupta and Syed Altaf Hossain organised a separate political party called Jatiya Ekata Party (JEP) in December 1978. Debates on the above issue continued within the NAP(M) resulting into the formation of a different National Awami Party by the break away leaders Pankaj Bhattachariya and Chowdhury Harun-ur-Rashid in July 1979.

Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani as president of NAP(B) revived his political organisation in 1976 under PPR and appointed Mashiur Rahman Jadu Miah as the General Secretary of the party. Splits also occurred within NAP(B) as its senior Vice-President Dr. Alim Al-Razee formed a separate political party called the Bangladesh People's League. After the demise of Maulana Bhashani NAP(B) leadership was captured by Mashiur Rahman who became the President and S.A.Bari A.T. was given the post of General Secretary of the organisation. NAP(B) leaders received patronage

from the Zia regime and extended its support to General Zia in the presidential election of 1978. Later they joined his Bangladesh Nationalist Party(BNP). Efforts, however, were made by NAP(B) leaders like Anwar Zahid, Abu Naser Khan Bhashani, Ghazi Shahidullah, Nurur Rahman to maintain the separate existence of the organisation.<sup>9</sup>

After the soldier's uprising of 7 Nov.1975 due to the above mentioned role of JSD its leadership and rank and file were severely dealt with by the Zia regime. Later under PPR a moderate section of JSD led by Abdul Awal was given permission to operate but was again banned in Oct.1977. In April 1978 the original JSD was able to get approval from the government to work as a full fledged political party. JSD, however, abandoned its past violent revolutionary role and adopted a programme of mass movement through constitutional and peaceful means to establish democratic order.<sup>10</sup>

Smaller political parties which started their operation under PPR included among others Jatiya League and United People's Party(UPP). On the question of supporting the regime UPP faced formal split in the party; one section led by Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Captain Abdul Halim Chowdhury sided with General Zia while the other section comprising Rashed Khan Menon, Haider Akbar Khan Rono and Nazrul Islam formed a separate Political organisation called the Bangladesh Gonotantrik Andolon and became active in politics.

Mohammad Toaha's Sammobadi Dal splintered in 1978 when Toaha and Nagen Sarkar of the same party expelled each other for anti-party activity. Later three left wing parties namely Jatiya Gonomukti Union, Bhashani faction of NAP and Sammobadi Dal formed an alliance with an eye to probable legislative elections.<sup>11</sup>



Zia's Power Consolidation and Opposition:  
-----

In order to consolidate power and to prepare grounds for political objectives Zia's crucial strategy had been to gain support from political groups and civilianise his military regime. As such three different streams of political forces were included in his regime namely a) Zia's own functional supporters within the Bangladesh army and bureaucracy, b) the right wing Muslim League and other Islamic fundamentalists who were either eliminated or suppressed by Mujib government, and c) a major portion of radical elements who were opposed to Mujib rule most notably the leadership of NAP(B) led by Mashiur Rahman.<sup>12</sup> In the above process as chalked out by Zia, all the major political parties of the country got influenced resulting into increased tension and factionalism within the political organisations. They became divided houses on the question of supporting the military leader with some of their party members getting associated with the Zia regime.<sup>13</sup>

For achieving political legitimacy the regime was considering to hold general election as promised earlier. But before holding such an election General Zia wanted to be sure of winning it and expected that a sufficient support was recruited from most of the existing political groups or factions to counter the Opposition mostly represented by the Awami League with its organisational strength. Building a national front consisting of groups or factions by the regime was not very satisfactory to sweep the polls. Rashiduzzaman remarked that political organisation building was difficult since each typically

centred around one personality and political coalitions were subject to intense factionalism and were marked by personal jealousies.<sup>14</sup>

Controversy arose among the politicians over the holding of proposed elections. Pro-regime political groups and politicians like Moulana Bhashani, Khandker Mushtaque Ahmed and the pro-Chinese left parties led by Sammobadi Dal, Bangladesh Communist Party (ML), and United People's Party were in favour of postponement of the proposed elections in February 1977 and advocated for strengthening the hands of Zia regime against the Indo-Soviet imperial forces. Such views of the political supporters of the regime indeed went against the feelings of the pro-Moscow leftists and the Awami League party. Unwillingness of the regime to hand over power to the faction ridden parties was evidenced by the postponement of the parliamentary elections by President Sayem on 21st November 1976. The postponement of election was opposed by politicians like General(Retd) M.A.G.Osmani and parties like Democratic League, Islamic Democratic League and Muslim League. Silence of Awami League and the pro-Moscow parties on the election controversy indicated their opposition stand on the issue.

The regime favoured its own design of restoring democracy in phases from local level to the national level. As such its plan was to first hold union parishad elections in January 1977 to be followed by presidential and parliamentary elections. In order to materialise his political objectives Zia's decision was to further concentrate state power and consolidate his position. He therefore took the charge of Chief Martial Law Administrator in November 1976 and assumed the



presidency on 20 April, 1977 replacing Justice Sayem on health grounds. His assumption of the presidency was seen by the political observers as 'the result of a carefully reasoned conclusion that a strong presidential system was the most appropriate vehicle for his own transition to civilian political leadership.'<sup>15</sup> With the consolidation of power of Gen. Zia, a new state developed in Bangladesh and subsequently took the concrete shape of an 'administrative state'<sup>16</sup> characterised by marriage of convenience between military and civil bureaucracy and their dominance in the decision-making process. One scholar noted that Ziaur Rahman aimed at a new authoritarianism through a pseudo-democratic process with a grass root party network for recruitment of support groups at the local levels.<sup>17</sup> It was commented that during Zia regime a coercive army willing and capable of eliminating all opposition to the military bureaucratic alliance was the critical element in the scenerio. But authoritarianism within the framework of a military-bureaucratic system produced many more claimants to power than a civilian political framework. Under such circumstances it had been difficult to command the alligiance of the people with an attempt to establish authoritarian rule through a political process.<sup>18</sup>

As a part of recruiting support from the right, liberal, and centrist forces, General Zia moved to amend the Constitution and incorporated Islamic principle in place of secularism, socio-economic justice in place of socialism, and in place of Bengali nationalism he articulated Bangladeshi nationalism. Zia's commitment to country's overall social and economic development was expressed through his

Nineteen-Point Programme highlighting self-sufficiency of the nation in all respects; popular participation in development administration; population control; development of the condition of workers, youth, and women folk and the like. In order to test public confidence about Zia's above moves a national referendum was held on 30 May, 1977 in which he obtained 98.99 per cent support from the electorate. Pragmatic Nineteen-Point Programme was used by Zia as his election manifesto in the referendum as well as in subsequent elections. Although among the opposition forces pro-Moscow NAP and CP were not against the referendum, the main opposition party Awami League remained silent on the issue. The JSD stood up as the only opposition party to oppose the referendum of General Zia; in the absence of the imprisoned leadership, JSD's young cadres in their political posters criticised the referendum as nothing but a political bluff of the regime.<sup>19</sup>

In order to get things done as per Zia's design the next move of the regime was to hold presidential election about one year after the referendum. This was done to further consolidate the position of Zia and his strength vis-a-vis the Opposition in the forthcoming parliamentary election. While analysing Zia's option for first holding presidential election Rounaq Jahan noted that 'Zia was apprehending that his plan of phase wise process of civilianization and democratization could have been jeopardized following the victory of opposition in the legislative election. As such if however, Zia won the presidential election earlier, he was in a relatively strong position and could use the powers



and privileges of his office to mobilize votes for his supporters in the parliamentary election. Additionally, Zia wanted a victory in presidential election participated by opposition political parties to silence the critics of the referendum.<sup>20</sup>

Presidential Election and Opposition:  
-----

With the approaching of the presidential election on 3 June, 1978, the Opposition parties got the first real opportunity for political activity since the first military coup on 15 Aug. 1975. The Opposition parties and groups aligned themselves to nominate their common candidate for the presidency against General Zia who became the candidate of an electoral alliance called the Jatiyatabadi (Nationalist) Front consisting of JAGODAL, NAP(B), Muslim League, United People's Party, Bangladesh Labour Party, and Bangladesh Schedule Caste Federation. The Opposition forces representing diverse groupings formed Gonotantrik Oikko Jote or Democratic United Front consisting of Awami League, NAP(M), Janata Party, Bangladesh People's League and Gono Azadi League. Opposition alliance nominated Janata Party chief General (Retd) Osmani as their candidate to give a fight against Zia. Although there were ten presidential candidates the real contestants were Zia and Osmani: Zia using electoral symbol of 'sheaf of paddy' and Osmani using Awami League's previously used 'boat'. There were several political parties in both the above electoral alliances but the battle was seen by the observers as a fight between the ruling regime and the Awami League. Vis-a-vis Zia the election manifesto of Gono Oikko Jote included: return to parliamentary democracy, the restoration of 4 State Principles embodied in the 1972 constitution, preservation of independence and values of the Liberation War, bring rule of law in the country,

removal of bureaucratic corruption, adoption of necessary measures in economic, agriculture, education, industry and health sectors in order to serve the greater interests of the common masses, and an active and non-aligned foreign relations.<sup>21</sup> While assessing the effects of presidential electoral politics of 1978 on the country's configuration of political forces Rashiduzzaman noted the following: 'First, the Awami League was slowly reemerging on the political scene although it was still confronted by opposition from the government and its own political factions. Second, the right wing forces were also out in the open and had established their credentials. Third, the radical forces were not yet strong enough to stand on their own. Fourth, JAGODAL, although it began with strong official support, hardly got off the ground. Finally, the political forces, while trying to reactivate their organizations, remained generally weak.'<sup>22</sup>

On the eve of presidential election and during the election campaign the Opposition faced severe restrictions from the regime. Opposition, crippled through PPR, was given only forty day's notice of the election and twenty three days in which to campaign. They had to contest the election in the midst of ban on processions, night curfew in Dhaka city, government manipulation and use of administrative machineries and media in Zia's favour, and imprisonment of great many numbers of Opposition workers. Franda noted that as per estimates of the principal Opposition, Awami League, at the time of presidential election there were as many as five thousand Awami workers and members of the party were in prison without trial.<sup>23</sup> Because of the persistence of martial law regulations and above restrictions, Opposition was in a really



difficult situation either to arrange sufficient money for the election, or to do mass contact throughout the country, or to have access to effective means to reply the regime's anti-opposition propaganda. In order to get prepared for the election Opposition's appeal to defer the said election for a few months did not receive any favourable government consideration. As was expected the election results saw General Zia victorious while the Opposition candidate Osmani received about 22 per cent of the total votes cast.<sup>24</sup>

In the post-presidential election period preparation was going for the holding of promised parliamentary election. But the Opposition was increasingly getting impatient with the persistence of martial law and the regime's drag on policy of lifting restrictions on free politics. Demands were thus made by Opposition political parties for quick restoration of democracy in the country. As such leading Opposition forces like the Awami League Malek and Mizan, NAP(M), JSD, and Gonotantrik Andolon organised meetings to articulate the following demands: withdrawal of martial law; repeal of PPR; release of political prisoners; reinstatement of democratic rights; repeal of other black laws; announcement of parliamentary election date; reatoration of sovereign parliament; and annulment of the 4th Amendment. To achieve these demands the major Opposition tried to forge greater unity of the pro-liberation forces.

In the subsequent government actions PPR was repealed in Nov. 1978 and the date of Jatiya Sangsad election was fixed on Jan 27, 1979. While announcing the date of parliamentary election General Zia indicated about establishing a sovereign parliament and withdrawing of martial law in the first session of the newly elected Jatiya Sangsad. He, however,

remained silent about the issues of moving over to parliamentary system, repealing black laws or emergency powers, releasing political detainees or meeting the on going demands of the Opposition. Sharp reaction was expressed by the opponents soon after Zia's election announcement. Their immediate reaction was that an unbiased or fair election was impossible under martial law where the regime was a party to the said election. After reviewing Zia's speech 13 Opposition parties led by Awami League, JSD, United People's Party, Jatiya Janata Party, Gonotantrik Dal and five party front of Aatur Rahman Khan jointly decided to launch an anti-election movement and boycott the election unless their demands including withdrawal of martial law and emergency powers of the government, introduction of parliamentary democracy by repealing 4th Amendment, Zia's retirement before continuing politics, release of all political prisoners and restoration of freedom of press were met by the regime. Other parties which also decided not to take part in the election set preconditions and called for movement against the government included Gono Front, Muslim League, CPB, and Jatiya Gonomukti Union. Although the Opposition parties agreed on their major demands against the regime yet a single platform could not be established by them due to their ideological and mutual differences over the political change through the 15th August Coup of 1975. With the support of some of the rightist and left political groups, the regime was trying to establish that martial law would not hamper in any way to hold a fair and free parliamentary election.

Being unable to <sup>obtain</sup> confidence of the Opposition, the regime decided to modify its stand. As such It amended some provisions of the



4th Amendment through a proclamation including 'the appointment of a prime minister who must be a member of the parliament and should enjoy the confidence of the majority members of the House; provision for the inclusion of non-members of parliament in the cabinet, their number not exceeding one-fifth of the total strength of the body; the president having no power to veto any bill passed by the parliament; and the holding of a referendum for making changes in the Constitution and the method of election of the president.'<sup>25</sup>

The above proclamation of General Zia proved unsuccessful to soften the attitude of the boycotting Opposition parties which came up with their bitter criticisms regarding the above amendment to the Constitution. The leaders of AI, JJP, Labour Party, Jatiya League, and Gono Azadi League criticised that the amendment was a fraud attempt which made the parliament entirely an ineffective body, brought the cabinet virtually under the control of all powerful president, and created enough confusion since it reflected the autocratic BAKSAL system.<sup>26</sup> Facing the Opposition's tough stand further concessions were announced by the regime in December 1978 including suspension of the provisions of martial law regarding political activities; soft policy on the release of political prisoners; retention of fundamental rights; withdrawal of restrictive provisions of the press and publication ordinance; <sup>and</sup> extension of dates for the submission of nomination papers. Side by side government attempts for negotiation continued and the Opposition leaders were invited to have discussion with General Zia. Several rounds of talks with the Opposition led the regime to shift

the date of parliamentary election and accept the following Opposition demands: Prime minister would be the leader of the majority party in the parliament; Jatiya Sangsad would make the council of ministers answerable to it; and phase wise release of political prisoners. After discussion among themselves five Opposition parties namely BJJ, UPP, JSD, SKSD and BCA decided in favour of participating in the elections.<sup>27</sup> The Awami League (MU) at first remained adamant to its earlier rigid stand. But being unable to extract further concessions from the regime the working committee of the party after having meetings in the first week of January, 1979 decided to withdraw the boycott and participate in the election.<sup>28</sup> With this decision of the Awami League uncertainty of holding the parliamentary elections was gone.

#### Parliamentary Elections of 1979 and Opposition:

-----

After the declaration of the election schedule by the Election Commission more than 50 political parties applied for election symbols but the same was allotted to 30 political parties. Of the 2125 contesting candidates for 300 general seats in the parliament 1079 belonged to above 30 parties with Zia's BNP putting forward the largest number of candidates. Among the Opposition political parties, four, namely Awami League (MU), Awami League (M), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), and the Muslim League-Islamic Democratic League (ML-IDL) Alliance emerged as the major contestants with their 953 candidates. The following table shows the party wise break up of the candidates in the 1979 parliamentary elections:



Table-I  
Party Nominations of Candidates

Political Party	Number of Candidates
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	298
Awami League-Melek Ukil (AL-MU)	295
ML-IDL Alliance	265
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	210
Awami League-Mizan (AL-M)	183
NAP(M)	89
United People's Party (UPP)	70
Gono Front (GF)	46
NAP-Nurur Zahid	37
Jatiyatabadi Gonotantrik Dal (JAGODAL)	30
NAP-Naser	28
Bangladesh Sammobadi Dal (BSD-Toaha)	19
Bangladesh Jatiya League (BJL)	14
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)	14
Other parties	81
Total	1709

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission in Khan and Zafarullah in Emajuddin Ahamed ed. Bangladesh Politics, Dacca: CSS, 1980, p.124.

On the eve of the parliamentary elections, efforts were being made especially by the smaller organisations to form electoral alliances of ideologically like-minded parties. The leaders of JSD called for opposition unity in order to establish democratic political environment. Formation of alliance and united front of the progressive forces vis-a-vis the reactionary elements was the sentiment of CPB, Bangladesh Democratic Movement, and Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal (SKSD). Rightist electoral alliance was formed by the Muslim League (representing modernist view) and Islamic Democratic League (representing fundamentalist view) under a joint symbol but with different election manifestoes.

Another alliance under the banner of Gono Front was formed by Krishak Sramik Party, Bangladesh Jatiya Dal-Amena, NAP-Sattar, People's Democratic Party and break away Siddique faction of IDL. Efforts were also made to make an electoral front consisting of JSD, UPP, BJL, SKSD, NAP-NZ, and GA. Above first two alliances were able to contest the elections under a common banner. But the third alliance was loosely organised along with differences with JSD. With the leaving of JSD from the alliance other component parties opted to remain united but fight the election with their different manifestoes and symbols.<sup>29</sup>

The principal Opposition party, Awami League did not join the polarisation of political forces and decided to contest the election alone for organising movement for democracy both inside and outside the parliament. The Opposition had to fight against Zia's BNP (formed in Sept. 1978) which <sup>was</sup> a conglomeration of <sup>various</sup> political forces namely JAGODAL, NAP(B), UPP, and <sup>a</sup> faction of ML. While nominating, the major Opposition party, Awami League followed its earlier practice of putting up individuals from teachers, businessmen and professionals. Unlike the government sponsored party, the Opposition including Awami League, NAP(M), and few smaller left parties nominated non-Muslim candidates even in places where the number of non-Muslim population was negligible.

Because of the restrictions under martial law regulations and election boycott movement, it was difficult for the Opposition to get necessary preparation for the election within a short period of time. Complaints were thus made by the Opposition that they were not given enough time and freedom for doing effective campaigning. The election



campaigning ,however, gave the contesting Opposition parties an opportunity to maintain contact with the electorate and place before the public their political programmes after their revival in a new political environment. One of the major campaign issues put forward by the Opposition was to restore a true democratic order under parliamentary framework and get rid of the martial law and dictatorial regime led by General Ziaur Rahman.

Awami League (MU) in its election manifesto pledged to reinstall multi-party parliamentary form of government as envisaged under the original 1972 Constitution and implement socio-economic and administrative programmes contained in the 'Second Revolution'. Awami League maintained that it was against the policy of dis-investment of nationalised industries, banks, insurance companies and factories. It used the image of Sheikh Mujib and pledged to repeal black laws and work its best to establish exploitation free society, economic emancipation of the toiling masses, freedom of press and media, free play of politics and conditions for rural development.

Islamic Democratic League made its commitment to establish Islamic welfare state and to this end it would enact laws following the Holy Quran and Sunnah. It emphasised to unite the people to uphold the country's sovereignty and solidarity of the Islamic forces. The Muslim League without putting emphasis on Islamic tenets favoured the principles of liberal democratic order. It pledged to develop the country through increasing production, employment creation, and small

scale industrialisation. Awami League (Mizan) denounced the single party system and reiterated its commitment to multi-party democracy based on parliamentary system of government. Favouring neutral foreign policy it promised to develop sound political leadership, economy without full scale nationalisation and effective military and administrative system in the country. JSD in its manifesto opted for democratic national government, parliamentary sovereignty, democratic rights, effective unbiased administration, judicial freedom, mass oriented land reform and education system and an economy free from exploitation. JSD maintained its anti-India and anti-US stand and was against unequal treaties and hegemonism and favoured non-aligned independent external policy. The Gonoatantrik Andolon pledged to establish independent parliament with active opposition within the legislature and opted for fundamental rights of the citizens, economic freedom and free trade unionism. Five Party alliance Gono Front favoured parliamentary democracy and was opposed to BAKSAL groups and undemocratic moves of the regime terming it as neo-Baksalite. It campaigned for mixed economy based on competition and self-sufficient economy with sound cooperative system and agriculture. UPP opposed both the government party and BAKSAL forces and opted for sovereign parliament, people's democracy, economic freedom alongwith existence of both private and public sectors in the economy. NAP(M) in its well prepared election manifesto explained its option for sovereignty of the people, secularism, mass education, people oriented economic policy, better opportunity for the workers and the peasants, and a foreign policy based on non-alignment and anti-imperialism. The splinter groups of original NAP(B), NAP(N), NAP(Z) maintained their anti-Awami-Baksalite stand and campaigned for establishing



democratic government, multi-party system, and economic emancipation of the masses. Other smaller left parties like Jatiya Ekota Party (JEP), and CPB pledged for establishing socialism in the country and working against the imperial forces.<sup>30</sup>

In their election campaigning the Opposition developed a sharp criticism of the rule and policies of General Zia. They opposed the military autocratic system and brought specific charges against the regime for imprisonment of great many number of opposition political workers; limitations imposed on fundamental political and legal rights, and press censorship. Opposition attacks were also made on Zia's economic policies resulting into excessive dependence on foreign aid, inflationary situation, economic disparity leading to rich-poor gap and price hike of the essentials. Zia 's policy of rehabilitating and patronising the anti-liberation forces and collaborators was vehemently criticised by the Opposition. They also denounced the regime's pro-U.S. attitude and became very critical about the signing of the Peace Corps Agreement. Awami League was specially critical about Zia's changing of the fundamental state principles of the constitution and attempts of the regime to explain Bangladesh's history and national liberation movement in a distorted manner. Although the above criticisms were levelled by the Opposition against the Zia regime yet a united opposition platform could not be established alongwith a common major campaign issue that could generate enough interest among the electorate.

Out of the 39 million registered voters only about fifty per cent of them exercised their voting rights to elect the Second

-121-

Parliament of the country. The government sponsored Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won greatly in the elections with 207 seats out of 300 general seats in the House. Although the party of General Zia obtained massive victory, the parliamentary election of Feb.1979 witnessed the representation of a considerable number of Opposition candidates in the legislature. Performance profile and strength of the parties in the elections can be seen from the following table:

Table-II

Parliamentary Election Results of 1979 and Performance Profile of the Represented Political Parties:

Party	No.of seats contested	No.of seats won	% of seats won	% of votes polled	No.of lost	Deposit forfeited
BNP	298	207	69.00	39.75	91	4
AL(MU)	295	39	13.00	23.70	256	39
ML/IDL	265	20	6.66	10.00	245	172
JSD	240	8	2.66	7.10	232	212
AL(M)	183	2	0.66	2.65	181	152
BGF	46	2	0.66	2.68	44	44
BJL	14	2	0.66	0.50	11	11
BGA	18	1	0.34	0.20	17	17
SD	19	1	0.34	N.A.	18	18
JEP	5	1	0.34	0.20	4	3
MAP(M)	89	1	0.34	2.20	88	67

Source: S.R.Chakravarty Bangladesh: The Nineteen Seventy Nine Elections, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1988) p.74



The parliamentary elections returned Awami League as the second biggest political party and largest opposition in the country while the ML-IDL alliance emerged as the third biggest force followed by JSD which was able to improve its position in the parliament compared to the elections of 1973. One of the features of the 1979 elections was the defeat of some top leaders of the major Opposition parties. Leaders like Abdul Malek Ukil, Tofael Ahmed, Korban Ali of Awami League, Abdus Sobhan, Abbas Ali Khan, Fakhruddin Ahmed of ML-IDL, Yusuf Ali Chowdhury, Shamsul Huq of AL(M), UPP chairman Kazi Jafar Ahmed, and Md. Farhad of CPB failed to win. Prominent Opposition Leaders who were elected included Asaduzzaman of AL(MU), Shahjahan Siraj of JSD, Minanur Rahman Chowdhury of AL(M), Rashed Khan Menon of BGA, Ataur Rahman Khan of BJJ, Khan A. Sabur of ML, Suranjit Sengupta of JEP, Muzaffar Ahmed of NAP(M), ASM Solaiman of GF, and Mohammad Toaha of Bangladesh Sammabadi Dal (BSD). While reviewing the causes of the failure of the Opposition parties Khan and Zafarullah<sup>31</sup> noted that they failed to form any viable and strong alliance and work out effective strategies to counter the ruling party; in a number of constituencies the votes obtained by the opposition parties taken together were greater than the government nominees, yet due to lack of consensus and mutual confrontation the opposition parties were unable to win.

One scholar mentioned that class character of the Opposition parties was much the same as that of the ruling regime; as such the candidates of both the BNP and the AL, JSD and other Opposition parties belonged to the upper middle class whose social roots were traced in the landownership and powerful kin groups.<sup>32</sup>

After the declaration of the election results Opposition parties came up with the charges of irregular practices, election manipulation and rigging by the ruling regime. As an example of vote rigging it was noted that 'one of the candidates of an opposition party, Major General Khalilur Rahman, was initially declared a winner from his constituency, only to be made a loser after a questionable recount votes.'<sup>33</sup>

The return of more than seventy Opposition candidates and 16 independent members to the parliament and the presence of some experienced capable Opposition M.Ps within the House led the political observers to expect that the Second Jatiya Sangsad would not be turned into a one-party affair. Side by side frustrations were also there because of the diminishing of the status of the legislature under Zia's new political order. Zia's typical presidential system which neither followed full fledged American <sup>type</sup> nor French pattern established a typical parliament with its very existence depending on the pleasure of the president. Under this system the appointment and dismissal of the prime minister and the cabinet depended on president's wish without making any provision of their responsibility to the elected Jatiya Sangsad. Under a new article 92 A , provisions were made to curtail the powers of the legislature in matters of finance. Moreover, control of the parliament was assured by three clauses of 'second proclamation' which provided: 1) that the President could appoint upto one-fifth of his cabinet from among the people who were not MPs; 2) that the President might enter into treaties with foreign governments without informing Parliament if he considered such action in the national interest; and 3) that the President might withhold his assent from any



any bill passed by the parliament in which case he could be made to assent only if a national referendum on the issue was organised and passed.<sup>34</sup> It was therefore a matter of speculation to what extent the Opposition members of Parliament ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> able to exploit limited scope in front of them to perform an effective role to contribute their might under the above diminishing status of the Parliament and lop sided executive-legislature relations.

Opposition's Role Inside the Legislature:  
-----

Unlike the First Parliament the Second Jatiya Sangsad officially recognised the existence of constitutional Opposition and as such Asaduzzaman and Mohiuddin Ahmed of the Awami League elected from Jessore and Bakerganj constituencies respectively became the Leader and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the House. Following the practice of traditional parliamentary system as represented by U.K. the Opposition Leader in the Second Jatiya Sangsad was accorded by the government a special status alongwith the privileges and rank of a cabinet minister.

The tenure of the Second Parliament was 206 days and it held a total of eight sessions where considerable parliamentary activities were transacted alongwith participation of Opposition members of Parliament. In the very first session of April, 1979 the Opposition raised its protest against the passing of the controversial Fifth Amendment to the Constitution which validated all the martial law regulations, orders and proclamations made since the 15th August coup of 1975. The amendment was adopted by 241 votes to nil amidst walkout by the Opposition members belonging to Awami League (MU and MC), JSD, NAP(M),

Gonotantrik Andolon and Jatiya Ekota Party. Twenty other Opposition MPs from ML-IDL, JL, Sammobadi Dal, and Gono Front however, abstained from voting on the issue. The Opposition members maintained their presence in the House by expressing political demands although along party lines: Khan A.Sabur of ML calling for Bangladesh's becoming an Islamic state; Mohammad Toaha of SD trying to realise his party's role in the Liberation War; and Shahjahan Siraj of JSD demanding the release of political prisoners belonging to his party. In the following second session better cooperation of the Opposition members was noticed in the House when on 31 May, 1979, all the Opposition MPs staged first combined walkout as a mark of their protest against the remarks of the Deputy Speaker regarding Opposition MPs' privileges.<sup>35</sup> Opposition also remained vocal on Bangladesh's dispute with India over Farakka issue and India's proposal for a canal with a connection between the Brahmaputra and the Ganges rivers. During the Budget session Opposition led by the Awami League opposed the budget for 1979-80 as anti-people and criticised the same was formulated with a view to flourishing capitalist development in the country in collaboration with the multi-national companies. To counter the claim of the Treasury Bench about better economic life of the people under Zia regime, Suranjit Sengupta of JEP in his critical speech in the House referred to the American National Policy Report where it was maintained that Bangladesh's development and existing social order only benefitted a small elite at the expense of majority poor.<sup>36</sup> In December 1980 the entire Opposition staged a united walkout to protest the passing of Disturbed Areas Bill enabling the regime to exercise extensive powers in areas



with deteriorating law and order situation. The Opposition thus expressed its apprehension that the bill would be subject to misuse throughout the country.<sup>37</sup>

In the legislative business question hour remains very significant as it is used by the Opposition to scrutinise government actions and to elicit information and ministerial reply on a matter of public concern. In the Second Jatiya Sangsad question hour was not there in the first and final sessions. In all other sessions of the Second Parliament the total number of accepted starred questions was 7294, total number of accepted unstarred questions was 856, and total number of accepted short notice questions was 35. In order to find out the nature of the parliamentary questions raised by the Opposition MPs in the Second Jatiya Sangsad, its second session was randomly selected. During the second session out of the 471 starred and unstarred questions in the House 300 were from the Opposition MPs. During the month of May of the said session 15 MPs from six Opposition political parties raised 95 questions. Of these 59 were raised by 7 MPs from Awami League focussing on issues like primary education, self-reliant pilot scheme, unemployment, distribution of khas polt in Monpura Thana, Construction of Thana Health Centres at Jamalpur and Rajshahi, and facilities for the labourers in the nationalised industries. In their 12 questions, three JSD MPs raised the issues like devaluation of currency in the country, land cultivation under Ganges-Kobadek project, abandoned property of Petro Bangla, amount of natural resource at Mymensingh, fish supply in the country etc. 5 Opposition MPs from BJJ, ML-IDL, GA, and GF put up the rest 24 questions raising issues like distribution of agricultural

loans, oil exploration in Bangladesh by foreign companies, 1974 famine, construction of bridge in various places, river erosion in Dacca and Comilla, government/<sup>loss</sup>for fire, road construction at different areas etc. While reviewing the above 95 questions it was noticed that they covered mostly the constituency related issues or problems of the concerned Opposition members of parliament. The rest of the questions were exploratory and functional in nature.

Another very drastic and powerful parliamentary weapon in the hands of Opposition is Adjournment Motion. A motion for adjournment of the business of the House is moved for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance. In the Second Parliament a total of 52 adjournment motions were moved by the Opposition out of which 31 were discussed. On 13 motions concerned ministers gave their official statements in the House. The following Tables III and IV show the number of session wise adjournment motions tabled by the Opposition and their party wise distribution:



-128-

Table-III

List of adjournment motions tabled by the Opposition in all the eight sessions of the Second Jatiya Sangsad (1979-82)

Sessions of the Second Jatiya Sangsad	No. of motions received	No. of motions dismissed	No. of motions accepted from Opposition		Total no. of motions tabled by Opposition
			discussed/ given statement	not discussed	
1st (April 1979)	48	44	0	3	3
2nd (21.5.79- 30.6.79)	88	79	4	2	6
3rd (9.2.80- 4.4.80)	63	42	11	0	11
4th (22.5.80- 26.7.80)	163	150	7	4	11
5th (28.11.80- 31.12.80)	96	77	2	6	8
6th (10.4.81- 2.5.81)	71	66	0	2	2
7th (21.5.81- 10.7.81)	109	89	3	1	4
8th (15.2.82- 2.3.82)	79	59	4	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>52(46.84%)</b>

-129-

Table-IV

List of adjournment motions of the Opposition MPs accepted for discussion in the Second Jatiya Sangsad (1979-82)

Sl no.	Name of Opposition MP	Name of constituency	Party	No.of motion
1.	A.S.M.Solaiman	Dacca	GF	13
2.	Suranjit Sengupta	Sylhet	JEP	1
3.	Asaduzzaman Khan	Mymensingh	AL	1
4.	Asaduzzaman	Jessore	AL	6
5.	Rashed Khan Menon	Bakerganj	GA	6
6.	Shahjahan Siraj	Tangail	JSD	6
7.	Khan A. Sabur	Khulna	ML-IDL	2
8.	Ibrahim Khalil	Faridpur	ML-IDL	2
9.	M.A.Matin	Pabna	ML-IDL	1
10.	Almas Hossain	Jamalpur	ML-IDL	5
11.	Shukhendu Shekhar Halder	Bakerganj	AL	1
12.	Habibur Rahman Miah	Patuakhali	AL	1
13.	Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury	Chittagong	ML-IDL	2
14.	Imajuddin Pramanik	Rajshahi	AL	1
15.	Taleb Ali	Noakhali	AL	1
16.	Mohammad Toaha	Noakhali	SD	1
17.	Salahuddin Yusuf	Khulna	AL	1
18.	Md. Mohsin	Rajshahi	AL	1
			Total	52

Table IV shows that 8 MPs from AL, 5 MPs from ML-IDL, and one each from JSD, SD, JEP, GF, and GA took part in moving adjournment in the House. Of the motions which were discussed included issues like rise of the price of newsprint, increase of bus fare, impact of Farakka Pact, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, publication of anti-state article



in Shahin School Magazine, leakout of the questions of S.S.C.exam, increase of the price of of rice and wheat in ration, natural gas export to India, increase of fertiliser price, Issue of Talpatti Island, crisis of food in the country etc.

Opposition members of the 2nd Parliament were also seen active in using the parliamentary device of calling attention to matters of urgent public importance as per Rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament as can be noticed from the following table:

Table-V

List of Calling Attention to matters of urgent public importance and Opposition participation in the Second Jatiya Sangsad(1979-82)

Sessions	Notices received	Notices accepted by the House	Opposition notices discussed
First	12	7	5
Second	261	58	34
Third	403	129	53
Fourth	419	25	10
Fifth	187	21	12
Sixth	121	18	9
Seventh	156	13	3
Eighth	66	8	7
Total	1652	279 (100%)	133 (46.67%)

Table-V shows that out of the 279 calling attention notices which were accepted by the House 133 were from the Opposition. The Opposition MPs also exploited the opportunity to raise issues to discuss on matters of urgent public importance for short duration as per Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament as can be seen from the statement of the following table-VI.

Table-VI

Participation of Opposition in discussion on matters of urgent public importance for short duration in the Second Parliament(79-82)

Sessions	Notices received	Accepted Notices in the House	No. of Opposition Notices discussed
First	---	---	---
Second	33	1	1
Third	27	5	4
Fourth	42	3	2
Fifth	42	14	3
Sixth	19	3	2
Seventh	27	1	1
Eighth	9	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>28 (100%)</b>	<b>13 (46.42%)</b>

Of the above 13 Opposition Notices, 4 were moved by Opposition Leader Asaduzzaman, 2 by GA MP Rashed Khan Menon, and one each by Suranjit Sengupta of JEP, Ibrahim Khalil of ML-IDL, Shawkat Ali of AL, Shahjahan Siraj of JSD Almas Hossain of ML-IDL, ASM.Solaiman of GF and Mohammad Toaha of SD. Above Notices were raised to discuss issues like complains of releasing ship, situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts, attack of miscreants in Red Cross camp, attack on ex-Freedom Fighters, and Indian firing in Sylhet borders.

Rule 60 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament provides for Half-an-Hour discussion initiated by the Speaker on two sittings only in a week for discussion on a matter of public importance subject of a recent question starred or unstarred and the answer to which needs elucidation on a fact or matter. Participation of Opposition in the Half-an-Hour discussion in the



Second Parliament can be seen from table-VII as follows:

Table-VII

Half-an-Hour discussion on matters of public importance in the  
Second Jatiya Sangsad (1979-82) and Opposition participation.

Sessions	Notices received	Accepted Notices in the House	Opposition Notices discussed
First	--	--	--
Second	16	2	2 (time barred)
Third	12	6	2 (time barred)
Fourth	12	1	1
Fifth	8	3	1
Sixth	5	--	--
Seventh	--	--	--
Eighth	3	--	--
Total	56	12 (100%)	6 (50%)

Out of the above six Notices 3 were raised <sup>by</sup> ASM. Solaiman of GF, one each by Imajuddin PramaniK of AL, Prof. Mofizul Islam of BJI and Abdul Matin Miah of JSD to discuss issues like salary of Bangladeshi diplomats, allocation of government accommodation on the basis of seniority, rehabilitation of beggars and massive theft in the nationalised industries.

In the Second Jatiya Sangsad a good number of legislative committees including more than 30 departmental committees were formed to develop the committee system. Financial committees like Public Accounts Committee and Estimate Committee were seen active with Public Accounts committee and Public Undertaking Committee duly submitted their reports. But as the committees

were chaired by the ministers and were greatly dominated by the Treasury Bench and also due to unwillingness of the ministers to accept specific charges on concerned departments, the Opposition members of parliament in the above legislative committees had only a limited scope to play an effective role in the whole committee system.

As a part of their activities inside the legislature, Opposition members also participated in the discussion on the presidential speech in the House and made critical comments. As an example it can be mentioned that on 28.4.81 JSD MP Shahjahan Siraj complained that the remarks made by the Opposition members on the speech of the president did not receive any coverage either in Television or Radio because of the total government control over these media.

Above activities or participation of Opposition in the legislative transactions of the Second Parliament using the above legislative mechanisms indicate that the Opposition remained alert to perform their duties as parliamentarians and representatives of their constituencies. If such role of the Opposition inside the legislature is taken into consideration then it can be said that the/affairs of the Second Jatiya Sangsad were not totally a one-party show. But at the same time it can be commented that lack of sovereignty of the parliament, absence of responsibility of the cabinet to the House, enough control of the chief executive, and curtailment of the authority of the Jatiya Sangsad under the political order of General Ziaur Rahman put significant constraints upon the Opposition activities to effectively scrutinise the executive actions or to stop the attempts of the regime to legitimise its undemocratic doings through an elected parliament.



Opposition Outside the Parliament:  
-----

The Second Parliament did not turn into a national platform to discuss or settle the questions of major national issues or to resolve the mutual differences between the Treasury Bench and the Opposition. Opposition's earlier intention to continue their movement within the parliament therefore did not produce desired results and this led the Opposition political parties to take their actions outside the legislature to the streets and strengthen their anti-government movement. In order to get rid of the controlled democracy imposed by Zia their target was to dislodge the regime from power. In order to become forceful against the government new political alliances were formed alongwith violent political programmes including hartals, street agitations and the like. For establishing Opposition unity a ten-party alliance was formed in 1980 comprising AL(MU), JSD, AL(M), NAP(M), JEP, NAP(Harun), CPB, Workers Party, Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal (SKSD), and Gono Azadi League. This alliance held public meetings and in its joint statement issued on 12 April, 1980 reiterated to continue united movement against the government.<sup>38</sup> There were also 5-Party and 9-Party alliances came up in the political scene. But the alliances suffered from serious problem of organisational leadership. Z.R.Khan noted that 'each alliance leader attempted to utilise an uncertain political situation to his advantage. Unity for the alliance leaders was more of a short-term tactical move than a political action born out of conviction or a concern for critical societal change.'<sup>39</sup> For forging greater unity attempts were also seen by some left parties

led by NAP(B), JAGMUI, UPP, and Gono Front to work together within the framework of a single political party. The Opposition parties got encouraged with the formation of the National Movement and World People's Solidarity Council in December, 1980. But the programmes of this body lost momentum after a few months of its inception because of the lack of integration of the leadership.<sup>40</sup>

There were inherent weaknesses within the alliances mainly because of the differences of opinion among the component political parties. As such the leaders of the ten-party alliance although agreeing on other issues could not come to a consensus in upholding the image of Sheikh Mujib or demanding trial of his murderers owing to the differing attitudes of the Awami League and the JSD. As part of their anti-government movement the Opposition vehemently criticised the regime's changing of nationality, its backed away from secular position and its moves to appeasing the anti-liberation forces and giving those elements enough patronage. The Opposition contended that 'Zia's system was neither parliamentary nor presidential nor an amalgam of both, but rather an authoritarian one, in the Ayub style, under the garb of presidential democracy.'<sup>41</sup>

Opposition movement against the Zia regime suffered a set back as bitter schism developed within the ranks of major opposition parties due to the differences on ideology, leadership, national and international alignments etc. Splits occurred within the largest Opposition party, Awami League (MU) between its two factions, one led by anti-BAKSAL Tofael group and the other led by pro-Moscow Razzaque group resulting into postponement of the Awami League's council session.



Intense factionalism in the second biggest party JSD led to its formal break up and the formation of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal(BSD) in April, 1981 by the break away group. Splits also occurred in the Muslim League over controlling party posts leading to the emergence of Muslim League Siddiqui group.

General Zia's attempts to recruit more support for his BNP through a policy of divide and rule and distribution of patronages and benefits greatly encouraged factionalism and intra-party feuds in the Opposition camp. A sort of competition was observed among the opposition politicians to obtain goodies offered by the Zia regime. As such politicians like Harun-or-Rashid of JSD, Ferdous Ahmed Quraishi of Jatiya Janata Party (JJP), Mohammadullah of Democratic League, and Mannan Bhuiya faction of UPP left their organisations to join the ruling party.

Because of the mutual differences Opposition's collective or independent call for hartals, demonstrations or street agitations could not become effective either to challenge the Zia regime of generate greater public support in its favour. Haque noted that 'deeply mistrustful of each other and sharply divided over policies the opposition groups failed to present a 'cohesive' economic policy. Although at times the groups entered alliances on specific issues, real unity on a well-conceived program could not be achieved owing to ideological disputes, conflicts, crisis of leadership, clash of personality, and a spirit of accommodation to the party-in-power for selfish ends. As a result the political movements reached no goal. Hence the opposition groups were reduced to harping on certain historical aspects of the country's liberation struggle.'<sup>42</sup>

Opposition after the demise of Zia: Although General Zia was  
-----  
successfully trying to keep the country's politics as per his political  
design yet he could not escape repeated abortive coups and rebellion  
within the army leading to his violent killing on May 30, 1981.  
After his death, Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar assumed the  
presidency temporarily. During this time Opposition forces raised  
their demands for constitutional politics and got involved into the  
process of electing Zia's successor. Opposition raised their protest  
against the passing of the Sixth Amendment in July 1981 enabling the  
incumbent president, vice-president, or acting president to contest  
election without leaving office. The Opposition while boycotting the  
parliamentary session complained that the amendment was made to serve  
the narrow purposes of the party in power.<sup>43</sup> Opposition parties  
led by Awami League, JSD, NAP(M) and DL expressed their apprehensions  
about the fairness of the election under government manipulation  
following  
and came out with the /demands as a pre-condition to participate in  
the same: withdrawal of emergency imposed after Zia's assassination;  
release of political prisoners; shifting of the election date; press  
freedom; and equal electoral opportunity for the contesting candi-  
dated. The date for electing the president was/refixed by the government  
in Nov. 1981 meeting most of the above Opposition demands.<sup>44</sup> This situa-  
tion paved the way for Opposition's participation in the said election.  
But because of hopeless division among the most formidable opponents,  
major Opposition parties and alliances failed to put up a single  
candidate against the government nominee Justice Sattar. Four major



candidates from the Opposition side contested the election namely Dr. Kamal Hossain of Awami League, Major (Retd) Abdul Jalil of JSD, Professor Muzaffor Ahmed of NAP(M), and General (Retd) MAG. Osmani of the Nagarik Committee (Committee of citizens). Of more than three dozen presidential candidates, AL nominee Dr. Kamal Hossain appeared as the main contestant and real challenger to BNP's Justice Sattar, but he faced defeat by obtaining only 26.3% of the votes in that election held on 15 Nov.1981. In spite of the Awami League's rejection of the election results, observers believed that the election reflected the sentiment of the electorate. It was noted that 'the unstinted support of the Bangladesh military, the tarnished image of the single most organized political party--the Awami League--and the inability of the opposition parties either to form an alliance or to present a valid alternative to the BNP's policies and programmes, insured Sattar's landslide victory <sup>45</sup> obtaining 66 per cent of the votes.

In the post election period President Sattar, however, faced a severe crisis leading to the development of conflicting relationship between his civilian government and the military aspiring for political power and demanding participation in the system. President Sattar also admitted the presence of corruption and grave crisis in the system and his sentiment was reflected in his presidential address on 15.2.82 in the final and eighth session of the Second Parliament. While commenting on the speech of the President on 25.2.1982, opposition parliamentarian Rashed Khan Menon became critical of the regime's

overall policies and called for an evaluation of the question on the intervention and role of the army in nation's politics. After reshuffling of his cabinet, it was indeed difficult for President Sattar to steer the wheel of the state facing increased pressure from the impatient army led by Lt. General H.M.Ershad for their 'constitutional role'. He was thus forced to hand over power to Lt. General Ershad who on 24 March, 1982 declared Martial Law all over the country, suspended the Constitution, and dissolved the Jatiya Sangsad through a proclamation.

Notes:

1. Z.R.Khan, Martial Law to Martial Law Leadership Crisis in Bangladesh (Dhaka: UPL, 1984) p.144
2. Ibid, p.144, and Talukder Maniruzzaman, Group Interests and Political Changes Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh(New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982) p.177
3. Kirsten Westergaard, State and Rural Society in Bangladesh,(New Delhi: Select Book Service Ltd. 1986) p.84
4. Emajuddin Ahamed, Military Rule and the Myth of Democracy,(Dhaka: UPL, 1988) pp.144-45
5. Z.R.Khan, op cit, p.161
6. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op cit, p.191
7. Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics Problems and Issues,(Dhaka: UPL 1987) p.208



8. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op cit p.191
9. Abul Fazl Haq, Bangladesher Shashan Babastha O Rajniti, (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988) pp. 252-53
10. Ibid. p.246
11. M.Rashiduzzaman, 'Bangladesh: 1978: Search for a Political Party' Asian Survey Vol.XIX, No.2, Feb.1979. p.193
12. Marcus Franda, Bangladesh The First Decade New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt Ltd. 1982, p.223
13. M.Q.Zaman, 'Ziaur Rahman: Leadership Styles and Mobilization Process' Khan and Thorp eds. Bangladesh: Society, Politics and Bureaucracy (Dacca: CENTAS, 1984) p.108
14. M.Rashiduzzaman, 'Changing Political Patterns in Bangladesh: Internal Constraints and External Fears' Asian Survey, Vol-17, No.9, Sept.1977, pp. 793-808
15. Marcus Franda, op cit p.222
16. Syed Serajul Islam, Bangladesh State and Economic Strategy (Dhaka: UPL, 1988) p.119
17. M.Q.Zaman in Khan and Thorp, eds. op cit, p.107
18. Mosharraf Hossain, 'Nature of State Power in Bangladesh' Journal of Social Studies No.5, Oct.1979 p.36
19. Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath (Dhaka: UPL, 1988) p.216
20. Rounaq Jahan, op cit p.212
21. The Election Manifesto of GOJ in R.Sen Political Elites in Bangladesh (Dhaka: UPL, 1986) p.311
22. M.Rashiduzzaman, op cit, 1979, p.192
23. Marcus Franda, op cit. p.225
24. It was reported that in the birth place of Sheikh Mujib that is in Gopalganj of Faridpur district, Opposition candidate obtained more than eighty per cent votes. Bangladesh Observer, 5.6.1978 in R.Sen op cit

25. M.Khan and Zafarullah, 'The 1979 Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh' eds. Politics and Bureaucracy in a New Nation Bangladesh, (Dhaka: CENTAS, 1980) p.223
26. Bangladesh Observer, 18.12.1978
27. Khan and Zafarullah, op cit p.123
28. S.R.Chakravarty, Bangladesh The Nineteen Seventy Nine Elections (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1988) p.15
29. Ibid, pp.42-43, and Khan and Zafarullah op cit p.226
30. Information regarding the election manifestoes of the contesting political parties was gathered from the English and Bengali newspapers published during January and February 1979
31. Khan and Zafarullah, op cit, p.234
32. Rangalal Sen, op cit p. 317
33. Z.R.Khan, op cit p.193
34. M. Franda, op cit p. 228
35. A. Haque, 'Bangladesh 1979: Cry for a Sovereign Parliament' Asian Survey Vol.XX No.2, Feb.1980
36. R. Sen, op cit, p.319
37. Franda, op cit, p.301
38. Ekota, 18.4.1980
39. Z.R.Khan, op cit, p.205
40. Ibid
41. Kirsten Westergaard, op cit, p.98
42. A.Haque, 'Bangladesh in 1980: Strains and Stresses--Opposition in the Doldrums' Asian Survey, Vol.XXI No.2, Feb. 1981, p.194
43. Franda, op cit, p323
44. Ibid
45. Z.R.Khan, op cit, p.220



## Chapter-IV

### Ershad Regime and Opposition: -----

In order to prepare grounds for formally taking over power from the civilian president Justice Abdus Sattar, Lt. General H.M. Ershad came up with his demands for army's role in the decision-making process and system of governance of the country. As such in his statement he asserted that potentials of army's discipline and efficiency in a poor country like Bangladesh could be effectively used for productive and nation building purposes in addition to its role of national defence<sup>1</sup>; the concept of military needed a departure from the conventional western notion of the role of the armed forces and called for combining the role of nation-building and national defence into one concept of total national defence.<sup>2</sup> Naturally there were sharp criticisms made from the political front against such views and demands of General Ershad. Hakim noted that almost all political parties were extremely critical of Ershad's proposal, but they could not build a united and strong resistance to it.<sup>3</sup>

As apprehended army intervention in Bangladesh politics once again took place on 24 March, 1982 under the leadership of General Ershad who formally captured state power. The inevitability of his action was justified on the grounds that 'national security, independence and sovereignty were threatened by social and political indiscipline, unprecedented corruption, a devastated economy, administrative stalemate, extreme deterioration of law and order, and frightening economic and food crisis.'<sup>4</sup> Like his fellow coup leaders in other Third World countries, General Ershad promised that the army would eventually return state power to

civilian authority after implementing a host of socio-economic reforms in the country including 'elimination of corruption, decentralisation of administration, disinvestment of industries and educational changes.'<sup>5</sup> To this end Ershad regime started with crucial moves and it thus banned free politics and political activities in the country; arranged trials of ex-members of the council of ministers and bureaucracy to eliminate corruption; and abolished institutions like Gram Sarkers and Jubo Complex created during General Zia's rule. Rahman noted that 'although it was difficult to assess whether people agreed with the stated reasons for the military, there was no demonstrable opposition whatsoever because of the widespread feelings of resignation after an experience of a civilian political process filled with tensions and frustrations.'<sup>6</sup> Thus the bloodless coup staged by Ershad was accomplished with little public controversy. It seemed that the people were ready to accept the new order established by him. Ziring mentioned that 'popular support was negligible but the opposition was also constrained.'<sup>7</sup>

In the newly created order the regime's primary constituency and the only support base was the armed force and as such General Ershad's plan was to consolidate his position within this coercive force. It was noted that factionalism within the army was greatly reduced to make it more integrated for upholding its institutional interests and playing an active role in governing the nation. This powerful institution was thus strengthened in two major ways: first, there was gradual phasing out of certain radical elements in the armed forces, and second, congenial condition was created through greater communication and



mutual sharing of views among its different hierarchies.<sup>8</sup> As part of Ershad's strategy to nurse and satisfy his constituency, the strength of the army was increased from 60,000 in 1975 to 101,500 in 1988-89 and its defence budget was increased on average by 18% over the period while total yearly budget increased by 14%; the real wages of the officers were nearly double compared to the real income of corresponding civilian officers; of 22 large corporations 14 were headed by the retired or serving army personnel and of 48 missions abroad, one-third were headed by the military members.<sup>9</sup> All these measures helped Ershad secure necessary support from the armed forces. General Ershad's call for the institutionalisation of the role of the army in Bangladesh, on the lines of Indonesia, Nigeria or Thai experience, draws close parallel with that of the Pakistani military dictator General Zia-ul-Huq's efforts of assigning a pivotal position to the army in the constitution as the final custodian of the country's integrity.<sup>10</sup> Thus under Ershad regime his army had a significant status in the power structure enjoying tremendous influence and power over the civil society. By establishing his grip over the entire state apparatus Ershad greatly succeeded in safeguarding the corporate interests of the armed forces.<sup>11</sup> All his above initiatives came under vehement criticism in the political front. Opposition political parties termed his steps as a process of 'militarisation of politics and administration' and expressed their discontent.

As the political activities were banned in the country since martial law was declared by Ershad, the first political opposition

against the regime came from the student community in February, 1983. The students of Dhaka University in their agitation greatly protested the regime's proposed education policy which recommended the introduction of English and Arabic as compulsory subjects at the secondary and primary levels. The anti-regime movement of the students gained momentum with the total support extended by the major political parties. The movement reached its climax when the students and security forces confronted each other resulting into violent clash and killing of some persons and injuring great many students. Rahman mentioned that the traumatic events of mid-February led to some visible changes in the policy decisions of the regime which thus allowed from April 1, 1983 indoor politics of the political parties and General Ershad invited the opposition party leaders to have a dialogue on socio-politico and constitutional issues.<sup>12</sup> Ahmad noted that much publicised dialogue of the General with the political parties proved a non-starter; his first political dialogue was held with smaller party leaders like Aatur Rahman Khan of Jatiyo League, faction leaders of the Muslim League and NAP(Niru), Dr. Razee of the People's League, Shah Moazzem Hossain of Democratic League, Nanna Mia of Krishak Sramik Party, and Abu Naser Khan Bhashani of NAP(B).<sup>13</sup>

With the granting of parlour politics demands were increasingly raised by the major opposition parties to restore democratic politics in the country. But one significant weakness of these parties was the existence of factional feuds within their organisations. Major opposition party, Awami League's division into two factions was quite visible; Sheikh Hasina led one section favouring parliamentary democracy



while the other faction was headed by pro-BAKSAL leader Abdur Razzaq. The BNP had also factional groupings comprising leaders like Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and M.A.Matin. Leadership crisis and factional conflicts also affected the smaller parties belonging to both the left and the rightist political organisations including JSD, Muslim League and Jamat-i-Islami.<sup>14</sup> Factionalism and the regime's 'carrot and stick' policy led to mushrooming of political parties in the country.

In order to organise anti-government movement forming of alliances by the opposition political parties was called for. Thus two major political alliances emerged in the political scene of the country playing a crucial role and giving leadership to the anti-Ershad movement. Of the two, one was centrist-leftist 15-Party alliance led by the Awami League; other components of this alliance were Awami League (Siddique), BAKSAL, JSD, Gano Azadi League, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Workers Party, NAP(Harun), NAP(Muzaffor), CPB, Sammobadi Dal, Jatiyo Ekota Party, Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, BSD(Mahbubul Haq), and Mazdur Party.

The other important force was the 7-Party alliance led by the BNP; it was a combination of both rightist and left political parties including United People's Party, Bangladesh Jatiyo League, Gonotantrik Party, NAP(Nurur Rahman), Krishak Sramik Party, and Bangladesh Biplobi Communist League.<sup>15</sup> Although both the above alliances took an anti-regime stand and were struggling for restoring democracy in the country yet mutual differences between the two prevented them from building a common political platform. With regard to the fundamental constitutional question of governmental system, the 15-Party alliance demanded

parliamentary democracy as introduced by the original 1972 Constitution while the 7-Party alliance favoured presidential multi-party democracy. Keeping their mutual opposing stand the two political alliances came to an understanding by August 1983 to work together to project a semblance of unity. As such they decided to launch anti-Ershad movement and formulated a common Five-Point demand which included a) immediate withdrawal of martial law and lifting ban on political activities, b) restoration of fundamental rights, c) release of political prisoners, d) holding of parliamentary election before any other election, and e) trial of the individuals responsible for killing students in Dhaka in mid-February, 1983.

The two alliances became active and started their anti-Ershad agitation to realise the above mentioned Five-Point demand. Thus on 30th September, 1983 'demand day' was observed by the major opposition parties. Without conceding to Opposition demands General Ershad announced a 15-month schedule for holding elections in a sequence, first, local bodies and then presidential and parliamentary which he declared, would usher in people's democracy. Doubts were expressed by Lt. General Ershad regarding the applicability of western concepts and institutions of parliamentary type to this country in terms similar to Ayub's in united Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> The Opposition political parties continued their agitation and protest against the regime and a general strike on November 1, 1983 called by them was totally observed. This led General Ershad to realise the need for political participation and in mid-November of the same year he withdrew the ban on free political activities and also announced the dates for presidential and parliamentary polls. He, however, failed



to satisfy the mainstream Opposition which demanded withdrawal of martial law and a parliamentary election before holding presidential election.<sup>17</sup>

In order to realise their demands the opposition alliances organised a sit-in-strike on November 28, 1983 in front of the Secretariat, the seat of the government. This action of the Opposition was met with violent confrontation between the political workers and the police resulting into injury and killing of a number of striking people. Facing such situation the regime declared its willingness to hold both the parliamentary and presidential elections simultaneously on 27 May, 1984, but as before this decision could not convince the opposition political alliances.

Ershad's power consolidation, quest for legitimacy and Opposition:

Although General Ershad had been quite able to consolidate his position within the armed forces yet he faced his unacceptability in the political front. Hakim noted that 'an acute legitimacy crisis that stemmed from Ershad's usurption of state power through unconstitutional means threw the nation into a situation of protracted confrontation between the ruling group and its political opponents.'<sup>18</sup> Since his taking over power Ershad constantly made his endless search for legitimising his regime. In this effort he followed the footsteps of his predecessor late president Ziaur Rahman. As part of Ershad's civilianisation process, a new dimension was added in politics by forming a government sponsored political party in late November, 1983. Thus the president of Ershad government, Justice A.F.M. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury

along with the cabinet members floated the new party called the 'Janadal'. By distributing official position, patronage, and goodies, Ershad was able to attract some fortune seeking, dissident leaders and workers belonging to opposition political parties to join the Janadal. Ershad was thus successful to pick up leaders like Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and M.A. Matin from the BNP and appointed them as his cabinet members. In the same manner former senior vice-president of the Awami League, Korban Ali joined the Ershad camp as minister in 1984. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury of Awami League and Shah Moazzem Hossain of Democratic League also became the activists of the Ershad's political group.

The search for more political supporters continued and persons like General Secretary of the Dhaka University Students Union (DUCSU) and other riffraffs from the break away sections of the Opposition were recruited by the regime. But in the face of Opposition movement against the government, Ershad's call to strengthen the government backed political platform did not receive enough response to provide the Janadal on a solid foundation. While launching Janadal Ershad floated his 18-Point programme highlighting socio-economic development of the country in order to popularise his courses of political action. At the university level pro-Ershad student front was created and organised under 'New Bengal' for extending support to Ershad's 18-Point programme and his moves. In order to streamline his actions General Ershad made himself the president of the country on December 11, 1983 replacing Justice A.F.M. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury without showing any reason. He also retained at the same time the position of Chief Martial Law Administrator



and this was done through an amendment to the martial law proclamation of March 24, 1982.

Finding the Opposition in the streets with violent agitations and a general strike in January, 1984, General Ershad seemed to toy with the Opposition by offering to dialogue with their leadership. But failed to convince the mainstream Opposition the regime made some conciliatory moves in early 1984 in the form of releasing a number of political prisoners. The opposition alliances were in favour continuing the dialogue with the regime only on the basis of their 5-Point demand mentioned earlier. But by May 1984 the said effort of the regime proved to be futile to remove the differences between Ershad and the major Opposition on the fundamental constitutional and political issues of the country.

General Ershad's attempts to obtain legitimacy led him like his predecessors, Ayub and Zia, to fall back on local government for recruiting necessary support from the grass roots. His newly created upazila scheme was greatly used for the purpose and thus the upazila scene was monopolised by the candidates who declared themselves as members of the government sponsored Janadal. Regarding the upazila chairmen elections the major Opposition argued that the changes in local government and administration that the Ershad regime had wrought by fiat were ipso facto illegitimate; they asserted that any alteration in the system of local level decision-making must emerge from debate, free discussion, and vote of the national parliament.<sup>19</sup> The Opposition movement for foiling the upazila elections led to a confrontational situation

and turned into a severe opposition agitation against the Ershad rule. In the event of adamant move of the opposition alliances upazila election was postponed by the regime on 18 March, 1984.

In late April, as a conciliatory move towards the Opposition General Ershad announced his acceptance of holding parliamentary elections before the presidential one and proposed a formula under which parliament, once elected, would be given a specific time frame in which to determine a structure of government consistent with the suspended constitution. In order to avoid power vacuum during the said interim period Ershad would continue as the CMLA but MLA at the zonal and district levels including tribunals and military courts would be abolished.<sup>20</sup> This proposal, however, was rejected by the Opposition on the ground that any sort of neutrality was impossible as long as General Ershad and his cabinet members occupy their official positions. The major opposition alliances were thus strict to their earlier 5-Point demand and the regime had to re-fix the date of parliamentary polls on December 8. But such decision of the regime did not ease the stalemate and the political impasse continued unabated. At the huge rallies organised by the 15 and 7-Party alliances and Jamat-i-Islami on October 14, 1984 the above proposal of the parliamentary elections was rejected by the major Opposition.<sup>21</sup> Terming the rally as the 'People's Parliament' the Opposition leaders announced their non-cooperation movement in order to paralyse the working of the army regime led by General Ershad. The important features of this movement included: call for secession of payment of land taxes and shop taxes, toll on



hats and bazars and municipal taxes; call to stop possible cooperation to the government; and call to form action committees against the illegal and treacherous regime all over the country.<sup>22</sup> This time right wing fundamentalist party Jamat-i-Islami, so long rejected for its anti-liberation activities in the independence movement of 1971, was accepted by the two major political alliances to become their partner in the anti-Ershad movement.

In a move the 15-Party alliance made a resolution where it was spelled out that the phased withdrawal of martial law retaining the zonal martial law administrators until the day of actual elections under the guise of relief and rehabilitation as proposed by the regime was actually to retain its grip on the administration with a view to packing the parliament with puppets so as to perpetuate the army rule under a parliamentary facade.<sup>23</sup> On the occasion of solidarity day of 7th November, 1984, General Ershad made an announcement regarding handing over power to the people's representatives after the proposed election. This announcement was criticised by the 7-Party alliance leader Begum Khaleda Zia who opined that such transfer would only be possible through an impartial election which, however, was not possible keeping General Ershad in power.

Both the two major opposition alliances were not agreeable to participate in election offered by the regime unless their conditions were duly met. As such they observed a general strike on December, 1984. Further 48-hour strike on 22-24 December took a violent turn and led the regime to reschedule the parliamentary polls on

on April 6, 1985. With this declaration the date of the parliamentary elections was changed by the regime for the fourth time since 1983. In order to convince the major Opposition the regime offered some more concessions including dismantling of MLA posts, martial law tribunals and courts before the end of January; complete reinstatement of the constitution and withdrawal of martial law once the new assembly met: no political appointee in the cabinet and prohibition of standing cabinet members to run for election; and holding of presidential polls after the parliamentary elections had been completed.<sup>24</sup> In reply to the proposed modus vivendi by the regime the major Opposition alliances came up with the following preconditions before taking part in the Jatiya Sangsad election on 6th April, 1995: lifting of martial law; holding the polls under a neutral care taker government; holding of parliamentary election by a free election commission; postponement of the upazila elections upto the end of the parliamentary election; withdrawal of warrants against the political party workers; and implementation of the demands of the workers and employees.<sup>25</sup> Although initially the regime's above offer created skeptic feelings and vacillation within the major groupings of the political alliances yet before the arriving of final date of filling electoral nominations, the Opposition declared their decision to boycott the parliamentary polls scheduled for April. The regime retaliated by reinstating the provisions of martial law withdrawn eralier with greater vigour; Opposition leaders including Sheikh Hasina and Begum Zia were put to house arrest and all political activities excepting that of ruling party were declared



banned. Universities were also closed down along with the imposition of press censorship. The election schedule for the parliamentary polls was again cancelled by the regime on March 1, 1985.

After taking the above severe measures, General Ershad moved to hold a country wide referendum on March 21, 1985 in favour of his continuation in the presidency till the arranging of presidential poll. The referendum sought the answer of the electorate on the question 'Do you support the policies of President , and do you want him to continue to run this administration until a civilian government is formed through elections ?' On the day of the referendum the Opposition <sup>statistics</sup> called a general strike to make it unsuccessful. The government/, however, showed that General Ershad obtained 94.14% of the affirmative votes from the 72% of the voters who cast their votes. The Opposition while vehemently criticising the whole referendum show, termed the same as a futile exercise and hopeless effort. They questioned the fairness of the referendum which to them failed to attract less than 20 per cent of the genuine voters.

With the obtaining of much expected popular mandate Ershad moved to arrange upazila elections on 16 and 20 May, 1985 in the hope that support from the grass roots would further strengthen and consolidate his position. Although the opposition political forces were unfavourable to such elections yet some major opposition parties including the Awami League , BNP and CPB showed their reluctance to make any meaningful anti-election moves . As such paradoxically quite a good number of candidates belonging to the two major Opposition political

alliances participated in the upazila elections based on non-partisan basis.<sup>26</sup> Peter Bertocci noted that 2,300 candidates contested for the chairmanship in all but two of the country's 460 upazilas (sub-districts); some 500 of those running were believed to represent either the Awami League or the BNP, despite denials of both parties and official disallowal of candidates' running on party slates, and 25% to 30% of the winners were said to represent the<sup>above</sup> two opposition political parties.<sup>27</sup>

The holding of the upazila elections as per schedule alongwith undeclared participation from the major Opposition gave the ruling regime some needed political gains. In late May, 1985 the regime relaxed its rigid stand and released from house arrest the top two Opposition leaders, Hasina and Khaleda, although the earlier ban on political activities of the Opposition continued. Looking an eye on the future national elections, the regime as part of its main political institution-building floated in mid-August, 1985 a political alliance known as the Jatiyo (National) Front. The Front was a conglomeration of politicians coming from different political parties and factions including the Janadal, Muslim League(Siddique group), Shah Azizur Rahman faction of BNP, Kazi Jafor's United People's Party and Ganatantrik Party. The Front's founding manifesto included restoration of the suspended constitution's provisions relating to fundamental rights, withdrawal of martial law administration in phases and the revival of the political process.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently from October 1, 1985 only indoor politics was permitted to the political parties. In spite of their losses due to defections to the government sponsored coalition Front, the major



Opposition stood up against the regime, demanded free political process and an early election of the people's representatives. General Ershad was not so sure about the success of his National Front and such feeling led him to form on the very first day of 1986 a new political party called the Jatiya Party. Simultaneously outdoor politics was also permitted. Hakim mentioned that the Jatiya Party was an umbrella party of turncoat politicians and became a platform for civilian defence of military rule.<sup>29</sup> In the event of fresh Opposition movement, General Ershad announced on March 2, 1986 his decision to hold parliamentary elections in late April of the same year and offered some concessions in exchange of cooperation from the mainstream Opposition. His offerings included: resignation of ministers who might contest the proposed election; the abolition of offices of regional martial law administrators and army courts; and prohibition of the use of state facilities for campaigning.<sup>30</sup> Immediately after Ershad's above announcement the new date for the parliamentary polls was fixed on April 26, 1986 by the Election Commission.

Election of Third Jatiya Sangsad and Opposition:  
-----

The above mentioned concessions and announcement of the parliamentary elections were rejected by the major opposition alliances which found great difference between their demands and the stand of the ruling regime. In order to organise greater united movement against the regime the two alliances came closer and iterated their resistance

against those who would participate in the election. On March 22, 1986 the final day of filling nominations for the elections, the two alliances called a nation-wide general strike. The unity between the two however, proved fragile as the major opposition party, Awami League, after the speech of ultimatum by Ershad suddenly/<sup>surprisingly</sup> made its crucial decision on 21 March, 1986 to participate in the polls. Following this decision of the Awami League the regime rescheduled the polling date and fixed it on 7 May, 1986 to enable that party to make some preparations for the electoral fight.

In its explanation the Awami League stated that the boycotting of election could cause disastrous consequences leading to massive violence and bloodshed and could defeat the process of transition to democracy.<sup>31</sup> The pro-Awami components of the 15-Party alliance like CPB and pro-Moscow parties argued that the concessions pledged by the regime amounted to a victory of the movement and hence the Opposition had every reason to participate in the polls in order to consolidate this victory.<sup>32</sup> But those other parties of the 15-Party alliance which had opposing views and differed with the pro-election decision of the Awami League formally broke their relationship with the alliance and formed their own alliance comprising five pro-Chinese left parties and became known as the 5-Party alliance.

The 7-party alliance led by the BNP remained adamant to its earlier decision of boycotting the said polls. The BNP from its side laid down its demands of restoring fundamental rights, releasing all political prisoners, and cancelling the judgement made against



the politicians convicted under martial law. In her allegation BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia pointed out that the parliamentary election would be nothing but an 'arranged game' between the ruling regime and the Awami League.<sup>33</sup> She also made an extensive tour all over Bangladesh calling the people to boycott the polls while the contesting Awami League and Jamat-i-Islami were busy with their election campaignings. Islam mentioned that Awami League's pro-election decision and departure from the anti-regime movement caused much more damage to the Opposition camp than the regime had accomplished in the preceding 4-year period.<sup>34</sup> To the political observers it was clear that the Awami League's decision came mostly because of its apprehensions and distrust towards the BNP. In order to have an upper hand in the game of politics vis-a-vis the rival BNP, Awami League after analysing the situation decided to exploit the election fight. On the eve of parliamentary elections accusations and counter-accusations and mudslinging between the two major opposition political parties, Awami League and BNP, gave General Ershad a good chance to get a remarkable strategic advantage in his favour.

The election of Third Jatiya Sangsad did not arouse enough interest among the public although a total of 1,527 candidates; 1,074 from 28 different political parties and 453 independents contested the polls for 300 general seats in the parliament. Because of the absence of one major Opposition party, BNP, the election was a peacemeal show. In its election campaign the major opposition contestant Awami League branded the regime of General Ershad as an autocratic system of the army;

using the image of its charismatic leader, Sheikh Mujib, it pledged the restoration of democratic order based on parliamentary system; repealing of all black laws; establishing freedom of media and independence of judiciary. Through its election campaigning the Awami League got an opportunity to maintain contacts with the electorate and propagate its views vis-a-vis Ershad regime and its rival, BNP.

It was observed that during the election day, democratic and congenial environment was lacking because of the prevalence of violence, involvement of hoodlums, ballot box hijacking and the like. As such allegations were raised by the Awami League against the regime for committing vote robbery, rigging, and doing media coup.<sup>35</sup> It also demanded recounting of votes and reelection in those constituencies where unfair means had been adopted by the ruling regime.<sup>36</sup> The above accusations of the Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina were also endorsed by a observer team which came from Britain.

As was expected the election results saw the ruling Jatiya Party victorious with 153 seats. The Awami League came up as the major parliamentary Opposition with 76 seats followed by Jamat-i-Islami with 10 seats. Because of indirect election all the 30 reserved women seats were captured by the Jatiya Party of Ershad. The following table gives the detail of the parliamentary election results.



Table-I

## Results of Parliamentary Elections of May 7, 1986

Party	No. of seats won	% of seats won	% of votes received of the total votes cast
Jatiya Party	153	51.00	42.34
Awami League	76	25.33	26.16
Jamat-i-Islami	10	3.33	4.61
NAP(U)	5	1.66	1.29
CPB	5	1.66	0.91
JSD (Rob)	4	1.33	2.54
Muslim League	4	1.33	1.45
JSD(Siraj)	3	1.00	0.87
BAKSAL	3	1.00	0.67
Workers Party	3	1.00	0.53
NAP (M)	2	0.66	0.71
Other parties	0	--	1.73
Independents	32	10.66	16.19

Source : Election Commission, Dhaka, Government of Bangladesh

Opposition inside the Legislature:  
-----

The inaugural session of the Third Jatiya Sangsad was convened on 10 July, 1986, but the major parliamentary Opposition led by the Awami League boycotted the very first session protesting the sitting of the parliament amidst martial law in the country. The Opposition parliamentarians arranged a 'mock parliament' on the Jatiya Sangsad premises and stayed there for two hours as a mark of their protest. As such General Ershad had to deliver his inaugural address to an assembly unattended by the parliamentary Opposition. The first session of the Third Parliament continued for 12 days and during this time Awami League proposed the following compromise formula of 'give and take' to ease the existing situation: 1) formation of two separate enquiry committees on the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as four leaders in jail; 2) declaring Mujib as the father of the nation; 3) including the name of Mujib in all school text books; 4) allowances for the Mujib family; 5) placement of photographs of Mujib inside the parliament; 6) enforcement of the 1972 constitution; 7) erection of a mausoleum on the grave of Mujib; 8) ensuring two seats in the by-election; and 9) partial ratification of four years' acts and deeds of the martial law regime.<sup>37</sup> This formula, however, was not acceptable to the regime which proposed some modifications but failed to satisfy the Awami League. Nevertheless, the Awami League reconsidered its position and later took its seats in the Parliament.<sup>38</sup>

The Third Jatiya Sangsad continued upto July 13, 1987; it held



only four sessions and enacted 38 laws during its tenure of 75 days. With the absence of the major parliamentary Opposition the first session was indeed a dull session. During this session there was no question hour which is one of the very important parliamentary activities. In the second session 158 notices of questions were received but all were time barred. In the third session 1441 starred, 325 unstarred, and 7 short notice questions were discussed in the House. In the fourth and final session the number of accepted questions included 1355 starred questions, 250 unstarred questions and 1 short notice question.<sup>39</sup> There was significant participation from the parliamentary Opposition in the discussion on parliamentary questions. In order to find out the patterns of questions during the question and answer session of the Third Parliament 500 questions taken randomly were analysed by a study; it was noticed in that study that of these questions 301 (60.20%) were informative in nature, 153 questions (34.60%) were functional cum operational, and the rest 26 questions (5.20%) were policy oriented demanding explanatory answer from the party in power.<sup>40</sup>

The second session of the Third Jatiya Sangsad was very significant for General Ershad's regime since it was summoned to pass the Seventh Amendment to the constitution for validating the proclamation of martial law and all other actions taken since March 24, 1982. This session continued only for five hours and again without the presence of the main Opposition parliamentary party, the Awami League. The ruling Jatiya Party needed the support of 2/3rds of the MPs to pass the Seventh Amendment Bill and managed to get the backing of the smaller opposition

parties in the Parliament namely JSD(Rob), JSD(Sirsj), BAKSAL, Muslim League and 2 independent MPs. After the passing of the Seventh Amendment Bill General Ershad withdrew martial law and revived the Constitution. The parliamentary Opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina condemned the amendment as a 'Black Chapter' in the history of the nation.

During the remaining third and final sessions of the Third Jatiya Sangsad the parliamentary opposition parties remained active in using the legislative devices to participate in the parliamentary business and transactions. In the process they tried to criticise the party in power and raised important issues and problems faced by the nation. Moving an adjournment motion is a powerful weapon in the hands of the Opposition to draw attention of the House to a matter of urgent public importance and seek discussion by adjourning the Business before the House. In the following two tables the adjournment motions and issues raised by the Opposition in the Third Parliament are mentioned:

Table-II

## List of adjournment motions of the Opposition in the Third Parliament

Sessions	Notices received	Notices accepted	Notices dismissed	Opposition Notices		Total motions of Opposition
				discussed	not discussed	
1st Session 10.7.86-22.7.86	3	0	3	0	0	0
2nd Session 10.11.86	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rd Session 24.1.87-25.3.87	158	4	154	3	1	4
4th Session 11.6.87-13.7.87	48	1	47	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5(100%)</b>



Table-III

List of adjournment motions tabled by the Opposition MPs  
in the Third Jatiya Sangsad

Sl no.	Name	Constituency	Party	No. of motions
1.	Suranjit Sengupta	Sunamganj-2	NAP	1
2.	Md. Ayenuddin	Rajshahi-4	BML	3
3.	Mosharrof Hossain	Chittagong-1	AL	1
			Total	5

Of the above adjournment motions one was raised by Suranjit Sengupta to discuss the critical conditions of transportation prevailing in the country; Ayenuddin of Muslim League tabled three motions to discuss a) bomb blast and clash at Dhaka university and Dhaka Medical college premises and subsequent deteriorating situation; b) police raid on the peaceful procession demanding introducing Islamic rule in the country, and c) the killing of 11 people inside Bangladesh territory at Pura Ramgarh of Chittagong on 1.6.87 by the miscreants. Mosharrof Hossain of Awami League tabled one issue to discuss the price hike of rice and essential commodities and impact on citizens' lives. Of these Opposition notices four were discussed in the House while the issue on Islamic rule raised by Ayenuddin was not allowed to move.

The Opposition in the Third Parliament also used another important parliamentary device of calling attention to matters of urgent public importance as per Rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad which can be seen from the following table.

Table-IV

List of calling attention to matters of urgent public importance and Opposition participation in the Third Jatiya Sangsad

Sessions	Notices received	Notices dismissed	Notices accepted	Opposition Notices
First	19	15	4	1
Second	2	2	0	0
Third	494	383	111	63
Fourth	165	156	9	7
Total	680	556	124(100%)	71(57.25%)

Out of the above 71 Opposition notices 43 were raised by the Awami League, 10 by Jamat-i-Islami, 5 by JSD(Rob), 3 by JSD(Siraj), 5 by Muslim League, 3 by NAP, and 2 by CPB. The major issues raised by these opposition parties included: adoption of proper measure to solve the crisis of Chittagong Hill Tracts; Deteriorating law and order situation in the country; anti-social activities; widening of the highway connecting Nawabganj and Rajshahi; mosquito problem in Dhaka city; Indian withdrawal of waters from the Gombi river; irregularities in the promotion of the BCS officers; speeding up of the activities of Bogra rural electric society(PBS); river erosion of the Jamuna etc.

In order to keep the government in its toes another opportunity of the Opposition is to participate in the discussion on matters of urgent public importance for short duration which has been provided by the Rule-68 under the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Bangladesh.

In the Third Jatiya Sangsad there were no such discussion in its first, second and fourth sessions. Only the third session offered



such opportunity to the parliamentarians. This session received 89 notices and accepted only 7 notices (100%) for discussion in the House. Of these notices 6 (85.71%) were raised by the Opposition Awami League members. Thus 1) Mobarak Hossain (Nawabganj-3) came up with the complain of selling adulterated oil in the markets; 2) Jalaluddin Talukder (Netrokona-2) proposed to withdraw the interests of agricultural loan upto 10,000 Taka; 3) Shah Hadiuzzaman (Jessore-4) pointed to the situation occurred as a result of terminating more than 100 workers by the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust; 4) Md. Nasim (Sirajganj-1) referred to the loss of Sirajganj WAPDA dam and adjacent land to the Brahmaputra river; 5) Mahmudur Rahman Belayet (Noakhali-3) raised the issue of implementing the irrigation project comprising the parts of greater Noakhali, Comilla and Chittagong; and 6) Azizur Rahman (Maulvibazar-3) called attention to the deteriorating situation occurring from the mismanagement in the tea gardens of the Maulvibazar district.

The legislative device of half-an-hour discussion on matters of public importance arising out of an answer to a question as provided by Rule-60 of the Rules of Procedures of the Parliament could not be utilized by the Opposition in the Third Jatiya Sangsad as there was no such discussion in its first, second and fourth sessions. Only during the third session 16 notices were received of which only one was accepted by the House. The lone notice which was accepted was raised by the Awami League's Hadiuzzaman (Jessore-4) and the subject of his discussion was the returning of abandoned house to a person who was not a citizen of this country. This notice was however was time barred,

Another parliamentary mechanism of the MPs is the question of privilege. Subject to the provisions of Rule 165 of the Rules of Procedures of the Jatiya Sangsad, a member may raise a question involving a breach of privilege either of a member, or of the Parliament or of a committee thereof. In the Third Jatiya Sangsad 85 such notices were received and 20 (100%) were accepted by the House. Of these 20 notices 14 (70%) were raised by the Opposition; of the Opposition notices 6 were raised by the Awami League, 3 by JSD(Rob), 2 by JSD(S), 2 by Jamat-i-Islami, and 1 by CPB. Most of these were referred to the appropriate committees for consideration.

One most crucial device as employed by the Opposition in legislature has been the parliamentary committee system to act as a watch dog of administration and functioning of the party-in-power. Article 76 of the Bangladesh Constitution has made elaborate provisions for appointing standing committees including financial committees like public accounts committee to examine and scrutinise government actions. The Third Jatiya Sangsad had a number of standing and financial committees but all these were characterised by their inactivity. Zaman noted that the Third Parliament which had a life span of 1.5 years did not at all constitute any of the vital committees like public accounts, estimates, public undertakings and government assurances that ensure public accountability.<sup>41</sup> As such the Opposition in the Third Jatiya Sangsad had a very limited role to play in the committee system.

Although the Third Parliament had considerable number of Opposition MPs yet they had scanty scope to fight against the ruling



regime to legalise its autocratic moves and extra-constitutional activities. The status and power of the Parliament curtailed during Zia's rule was further damaged at the hands of General Ershad because the Thrid Jatiya Sangsad emerged out of a allegedly rigged election. As such the critics regarded this Parliament as nothing but a rubber stamp of the praetorian regime of General Ershad. It was therefore not possible for the parliamentary Opposition to use this impotent body against the wishes of the government. Its participation in the parliamentary activities using the above mentioned legislative devices hardly proved to be effective to pressurize the regime to behave democratically. Thus most of the crucial bills were passed according to the wishes of the chief executive and the Opposition had nothing to do but walking out. Only the combined Opposition movement outside the legislature could able to force the regime to consider their demands. As such on one occassion Lt. General Ershad abstained from giving his assent to the Zila Parishad Bill passed by the Parliament allowing representation of the armed forces in the civilian administration. The objective of the major Opposition party, Awami League, of entering the Parliament to fight against the regime could not be achieved. As such taking its movement to the streets became the only option.

#### ----- Presidential Election and Opposition: -----

After the passing of the Seventh Amendment and formal withdrawal of martial law and revival of the Constitution, General Ershad in his

quest for legitimacy arranged a presidential election on 15 October, 1986. In order to place his candidature for the presidency Ershad joined the government's Jatiya Party in August 1986 and gave up his position as the army chief. Taking lesson from the parliamentary elections, the Awami League and other opposition parties including the BNP decided to boycott the presidential election. In order to resist the attempt the Opposition called for a hartal all over the country on the day of presidential election. The 15-Party alliance led by the Awami League demanded rejection of Faruk Rahman's candidacy for the presidency because of his involvement in the killing of Sheikh Mujib. BNP regarded the election as another attempt to legitimise Ershad's illegal regime and demanded his resignation, dissolution of the Parliament, release of all political prisoners, and free fair election under a neutral caretaker government.<sup>42</sup> As anticipated General Ershad obtained landslide victory in the election with about 84% of the votes cast. Such victory was greatly criticised by the Opposition on the ground that less than 4% of the voters cast their votes to make this election nothing but a 'farce'. Thus sworn in ceremony of Ershad as the elected president was observed as a 'black day' by the major Opposition on October 23, 1986.

Being unable to effectively force the Ershad regime to establish democratic politics and credible electoral process the mainstream Opposition launched a fresh movement in late 1987 with a call to oust the General from power and restore democracy. The movement of the Opposition creating mass sentiment continued with greater



vigour and nearly paralysed the administration through the programmes like protests, demonstrations, hartals and rallies. The regime retaliated by taking the Opposition leaders under house arrest. Opposition's Dhaka Seige Programme greatly concerned the regime and later it found no other option but to declare a state of emergency on 27 October, 1987. It dissolved the Third Parliament on 6 December, 1987 and fixed the date for the Fourth Parliamentary election on March 3, 1988. While analysing the failure of the 1987 movement of the Opposition Hakim mentioned that 'the movement was not well concerted as the two major alliances could not lead it from a common platform with a coordinated programme..Khaleda and Hasina, the two major leaders of the movement looked upon each other with suspicion and as political rivals. Mutual distrust between these two leading political personalities reduced, to some extent, the vitality of the movement they led.'<sup>43</sup>

#### Election of the Fourth Jatiya Sangsad and Opposition:

Elections for the Fourth Parliament were held on March 3, 1988 as scheduled without the participation of the mainstream Opposition. As such the people were not at all enthusiastic about the polls which involved insignificant parties to contest vis-a-vis the ruling Jatiya Party. The Combined Opposition Party or COP consisting of 76 unknown and inconsequential parties led by JSD leader A.S.M. Abdur Rob was brought forward to take part in the said polls. JSD(Siraj), Freedom Party and other smaller parties also put up their own candidates. In spite of the mainstream Opposition's attempts to foil the national and local council elections, 4400 union parishad elections duly held

on February 10, 1988. While the major Opposition parties led by the Awami League and the BNP remained reluctant to participate in the parliamentary elections, they took part in the above local council elections.<sup>44</sup>

In the Fourth Jatiya Sangsad elections a semblance of contest was put up by the insignificant parties led by the COP which was regarded by the critics as 'Loyal Opposition' of the Ershad government. Although it was officially announced that over 50% of the voters cast their votes yet the mainstream Opposition claimed that the figure was not even one per cent. As was guessed the ruling party won an overwhelming victory with 251 seats out of 300 general seats. They remained satisfied with 19 seats followed by JSD(s) and Freedom Party obtaining 3 and 2 seats respectively. In the election independent candidates got 25 seats. Because of the expiry of the stipulated time period, the Fourth Parliament of 1988 had no reserved seats for women. The major Opposition as a part of their movement observed 5th March, 1988 as a protest day. The leader of 8-Party alliance, Sheikh Hasina criticised that with Ershad no election can become free and fair and reiterated a united movement against the autocratic regime. Seven-Party leader, Begum Zia also made similar remarks terming the election as farce and fraud.

Fourth Jatiya Sangsad and 'Loyal' Opposition:

The life span of the Fourth Parliament was 168 days and during its tenure it held seven sessions and enacted 142 laws. Although the Fourth Jatiya Sangsad lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the



mainstream Opposition and could not obtain popular image yet in its parliamentary sessions quite a good number of legislative activities were transacted. Mention may be made regarding the parliamentary questions. In this Parliament 5,812 starred questions, 931 unstarred questions and 9 short notice questions were discussed in the House. While analysing 500 parliamentary questions taken randomly from the seven sessions of the Fourth Parliament, one study found that 274 questions were informative in nature; 133 questions were operational cum functional and the rest 93 questions were accountability cum policy oriented. It was mentioned in that study that although suffering from illegitimacy and low profile, the MPs of the Fourth Parliament showed their active concern in the legislative business. About 60% of the members of Parliament were fresh with no previous experience, but being the first timer they seriously took part in the deliberations of the legislature to legitimise their role by being active and participative.<sup>45</sup>

The Fourth Jatiya Sangsad received 337 notices of adjournment motions of which only 5 were accepted for discussion. The 'loyal' Opposition members tabled three motions; two by Nur Alam Ziku of COP and one by Shahjahan Siraj of JSD(S). These notices were raised to discuss a) deteriorating law and order situation prevailing in the country and the terrible consequences; b) the situation arising out of the demand for establishing permanent bench of the High Court in various places of Bangladesh; and c) the issue of conspiracy regarding 'independent Bangabhumi' across the borders.

With regard to calling attention to matters of urgent public importance the House received a total of 1,459 notices but accepted 151 . Of the accepted 151 notices (100%), 67 (44.37%) were raised by the so called Opposition . Their major issues included Chatak cement mill and its problems; demand for reforms in the Election Commission; system loss of the PDB; tubewell disorder in North Bengal; Ganges-Kobadek Project; deforestation; problems of cancer treatment; Farakka barrage and flood in Bangladesh etc.

Eagerness was noticed among the Opposition members to participate in the discussion on matters of urgent public importance for short duration. Of the 238 such notices 51 (100%) were accepted by the House for discussion and 26 (50.98) were raised by the 'loyal' Opposition members. Of these notices 19 were tabled by the COP and the rest by the JSD (Siraj). The issues which were raised by them included among others erosion of the Surma and the Jamuna rivers; loss of foodgrain due to electricity disconnection to deep tubewells; Satanic Verses book of Salman Rushdi; drug issue; problem of the Chittagong university graduates belonging to Forestry Department; collection of outstanding loans and the problem of the poor peasants.

For half-an-hour discussion, the House received 56 questions and of those accepted 9 (100%). Of the accepted notices 4 (44.44%) were raised by the Opposition members belonging to COP. Thus Mustafizur Rahman (Noakhali-2) discussed unit wise loan and supply of import licenses to the owners; Sirajuddin Ahmed (Dhaka-5) raised the issue to discuss possession of land at Badda and Khilkhet areas; and



the eyes of the public led them to depend totally on the pleasure of the President for their very existence. Remaining within a Parliament which was characterised by its subservient nature, the 'loyal' Opposition had hardly any scope to discuss vital issues of national interests but to approve executive orders and controversial bills like Zila Parishad bill and the Eighth Amendment bill to the constitution declaring Islam the state religion of Bangladesh.

Major Opposition in the streets:  
-----

The passing of the Constitution (Eighth Amendment) Bill caused great dissatisfaction in the major Opposition circle. Dennis Wright argued that the regime's Islamisation process was triggered by two major factors; 1) through this attempt the regime tried to identify secularism of the Awami League with the Indian system and dominance over Bangladesh and their misrule till mid-1970s; and 2) the measure reflected the regime's great dependence on Islamic foreign aid.<sup>47</sup> Alam mentioned that the Islamisation of the Bangladesh society had to be explained in terms of the regime's eternal quest for appropriate hegemonic projects.<sup>48</sup> The mainstream Opposition opposed such move and questioned the legitimacy of an illegal legislature to pass such a vital bill which created suspicion among the minority communities in Bangladesh leading to divide the nation. The bill, passed in June 1988 also factionalised the Opposition groups; Rahman noted that for the first time, the Jamat-i-Islami did not join with the leading Opposition parties to work against such government initiative involving religion.<sup>49</sup>

Kalimuddin Ahmed (Sunamganj-5) brought the issue of construction of road connecting Sunamganj and Chatak Doara.

The Opposition members also used the question of privilege in the House which received 66 notices but accepted 10 (100%). Of these 3 (30%) were raised by the opposition members from the COP and JSD(Siraj). Shahjahan Siraj of JSD pointed out that there was breach of privilege <sup>of</sup> one MP who was <sup>not</sup> allotted a room in the MP Hostel; COP's Abdul Mosabbir (Habiganj-1) put forwarded another case of breach of the privilege of MPs whose list containing the names of the rural ration dealers was not entertained by the concerned authority; Khandker Mafizur Rahman (Kishoreganj-6) of COP mentioned that one MP's privilege was breached as he was assaulted by an assistant police super while travelling in a train.

The Fourth Jatiya Sangsad tried to activate its committee system. One study mentioned that although the standing committees of the Third Parliament suffered from inabilities to work independently due to lack of information, appropriate logistic and administrative support from the ministries yet interestingly the so called Parliament produced as many as five committee reports; two on public accounts and one each on estimates, public undertakings and governmental assurances.<sup>46</sup> This was a better performance compared to the committees of the previous Parliaments.

Although the Treasury Bench and the 'loyal' Opposition of the Fourth Jatiya Sangsad tried to become active in performing their designated legislative job yet their lack of legitimacy in



The major political concern of the mainstream Opposition parties was to strengthen their anti-government movement and forge more unity among them. But such intention was hampered due to surfacing of factionalism in the major Opposition forces. The Awami League was prone to splits with lack of trust among the top party leaders more particularly between Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Kamal Hossain. Major split also occurred in the BNP in July 1988 over the question of decision-making within the party and on the decision on participation in national elections leading to the expulsion of six influential partymen by Begum Khaleda Zia.<sup>50</sup> Lawrence Ziring commented that the rivalry between Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia continued to play into the hands of General Ershad; Hasina, instead of emphasising Ershad's removal from office, centered her demand on the restoration of parliamentary democracy as<sup>per</sup> country's original Mujib constitution, while Begum Zia's efforts were directed to unseat Ershad, her personal nemesis, and to introduce a presidential system as initiated by Ziaur Rahman.<sup>51</sup>

General Ershad's efforts to remain in power continued unabated. As such on July 6, 1989, Prime Minister Moudad Ahmed introduced the Constitution Nineth Amendment Bill providing for two terms of five years each for the president and elected vice-president. The real significance of this bill was that it gave notice to the nation that General Ershad was a candidate for the second term for which he was taking necessary preparations. As usual the mainstream Opposition

became highly critical of the bill. BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia alleged in a public meeting that the Nineth Amendment had been passed so that power could be transferred cleverly to another hand.<sup>52</sup>

#### Ershad regime and opposition from the Civil Society:

The praetorian regime of Lt. General Ershad encountered severe opposition not only from the mainstream Opposition political parties but also came into sharp conflict with the major professional groups of the country. As mentioned earlier in this chapter that the first opposition against the regime came from the student community protesting the government's proposed education policy. Another politically relevant section was the lawyers group. When in June 1982 the regime established permanent benches for the High Court and Supreme Court Division at various divisional and district head quarters, the lawyers particularly of Dhaka's Supreme Court opposed and protested the move as an attempt to disperse the lawyers all over the country so as to reduce their political influence. Their protest was manifested by their boycotting the sessions of the Supreme Court and demanding the resignation of Ershad through their meetings and conferences.<sup>53</sup>

Other professionals also came up as significant force against the Ershad regime. A number of professional groups like Lawyers Coordination Committee, Coordination Committee of the teachers, doctors, engineers, agriculturists and others began to draw attention of the people when they challenged various authorities of the regime by framing their own professional demands.<sup>54</sup>



The most formidable of the above professionals was the central association of the workers and employees as represented by the Sramik Karmachari Oikka Parishad or SKOP which was formed in 1984. 15 national trade union federations which were the components of SKOP came from socialist, nationalist, and independent groups and at the same time they also represented themselves as the labour fronts of the mainstream opposition political forces and parties.<sup>55</sup>

SKOP through its demands and movements forced the government to sign an agreement on 21 May, 1984 favouring labour demands. SKOP continued its movement to realise the agreement signed by the government and played a crucial part in the anti-Ershad movement of 1987 organised by the mainstream Opposition. It also gave its total support to Opposition's later political movements.

#### Mass Upsurge of 1990 and fall of General Ershad:

Since its assumption of state power on 24 March, 1982, the regime of General Ershad faced continuous and sometimes severe movements organised by the mainstream Opposition parties and alliances. But because of lack of unity and trust in the Opposition camp helped him to stay in power and he made his efforts, although unsuccessfully, to legitimise his regime. After the passing of the Nineth Amendment to the constitution Ershad expressed his willingness to go for second term for the presidency alongwith his running mate Moudud Ahmed and started taking preparations for the probable presidential election in 1991. The major Opposition again took a negative stand against

this effort. In their anti-government agitation the Opposition observed nation wide hartals and blockade for more than 60 days in the year 1989. The upazila elections were held in March, 1990 on non-partisan basis. The results from 393 contests showed that the ruling Jatiya Party secured 197 followed by Awami League with 121, the Jamat-i-Islami with 27 and BNP with 24 and the rest were captured by other smaller parties and independents.<sup>56</sup> Obtaining less than half of the contested seats by the Jatiya Party candidates threw apprehensions regarding Ershad's success in a fair presidential election. Such trend also concerned the donor countries which put pressures upon Ershad for arranging free fair democratic elections contested by the major Opposition. The Opposition remained adamant to thwart the moves for the presidential election by Ershad.

In their anti-Ershad movement the Opposition chalked out various programmes and arranged a sit-in-strike in front of the Secretariat on October 10, 1990. This was, however, followed by an unexpected clash leading to division between the Awami League and the BNP raising different slogans. In order to forge unity 22 rival students organisations on their own came forward and formed the All Parties Students' Unity or APSU and also promised to employ their all out efforts to oust General Ershad and free the nation from autocracy. The coalescence of the major students groups proved catalyst for the expansion of the unity movement and Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina and BNP leader, Begum Zia, agreed to settle their personal enmity, at least for the time being.<sup>57</sup> As such all the



major Opposition alliances, yielding to the pressure of APSU signed on November 19, 1990 a joint declaration highlighting the formula of transition from autocracy to democracy. The main features of the joint declaration included the following: i) opposition parties and alliances would not only boycott but also resist all elections under Ershad; ii) Ershad must resign and handover power to a caretaker government; iii) the caretaker government would restore the credibility of the election system and ensure franchise right to all citizens; iv) the interim government would handover power to a "sovereign parliament" elected through free and fair elections.<sup>58</sup>

This joint declaration added an unprecedented strength to Opposition's anti-autocracy movement. Following 1987-style the regime retaliated by oppressive measures and declared a state of emergency on 27 November, 1990. All such coercive measures including curfews were violated by the oppositionists and alongwith the common masses they were determined to put ultimate assault on the autocratic Ershad government. As a final attempt Ershad proposed to resign 15 days ahead of filling nomination for the presidential election but nothing from Ershad could be acceptable to the mainstream Opposition. Such a situation thus forced General Ershad to resign and on 6 December, 1990 Jatiya Sangsad was dissolved and Ershad handed over power to a nominee of the combined opposition alliances, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. The anti-autocracy movement of the Opposition and consequent mass upsurge thus finally succeeded in removing the praetorian autocratic regime from power and it paved the way for restoring democratic polity in Bangladesh.

Notes :

1. Emajuddin Ahamed, Military Rule and the Myth of Democracy (Dhaka: UPL, 1988) p.134
2. Kirsten Westergaard, State and Rural Society in Bangladesh, (New Delhi: Select Book Services Ltd. 1986) p.100
3. Abdul Hakim, Bangladesh Politics: The Shahabuddin Interregnum, (Dhaka: UPL, 1993) p.11
4. Kirsten Westergaard, op cit, p.100
5. Md. Aatur Rahman, 'Bangladesh in 1982: Beginnings of the Second Decade' Asian Survey Vol. XXIII, No.2, February, 1983. p.152
6. Ibid
7. Lawrence Ziring, Bangladesh From Mujib to Ershad An Interpretive Study, (Dhaka: UPL, 1992) p.155
8. Md. Aatur Rahman, op cit, p.151
9. Talukder Maniruzzaman, Politics and Security of Bangladesh (Dhaka: UPL 1994) p.139
10. Veena Kukreja, Civil-Military Relations in South Asia, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991) p.170
11. Ahmed Shafiqul Huque and Yahia Akhter, 'Militarization and Opposition in Bangladesh: Parliamentary Approval and Public Reaction' Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 27:2, July, 1989
12. Md. Aatur Rahman, 'Bangladesh in 1983 A Turning Point for the Military' Asian Survey, Vol. XXIV No.2, February, 1984, p.241
13. Borhanuddin Ahmad, The Generals of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1993) p.125
14. Aatur Rahman, 1984 op cit, p.242
15. Weekly Bichitra, November 28, 1983
16. Veena Kukreja, 1991, op cit, p. 170



17. Ataur Rahman, 1984, op cit, p.242
18. Md. Abdul Hakim, 1993 op cit, p. 18
19. Peter Bertocci, 'Bangladesh in 1984 Year of Protracted Turmoil' Asian Survey, Vol.XXV, No.2, February, 1995, p.159
20. Ibid.
21. Borhanuddin Ahmad,1993, op cit, p.138
22. M.Zaglul Haider, 'The Bloodless Military Coup in Bangladesh: An Analysis' The Journal of Political Science, Dhaka University, Vol.II, Issue.I, 1985, p.98
23. Borhanuddin Ahmad, op cit, pp.138-139
24. Peter Bertocci, 'Bangladesh in 1985 Resolute Against the Storms' Asian Survey Vol.XXVI No.2, 1986, p.227
25. The Bangladesh Times, 4.2.1985 in Haider op cit, p.99
26. B.M.Monoar Kabir, 'Movement and Elections: Legitimation of the Military Rule in Bangladesh' The Journal of Political Science Association Dhaka, 1988. p.177
27. Peter Bertocci, 1986, op cit, p.230
28. Ibid, p.1231
29. Md. Abdul Hakim, op cit, pp. 20-21
30. Syed Serajul Islam, 'Bangladesh in 1986 Entering a New Phase' Asian Survey, Vol.XXVI No.2, February, 1987, p.164
31. The Sangbad, 24.3.1986 in Hakim op cit p.23
32. B.M.Monoar Kabir, 1988, op cit p.179
33. Syed Serajul Islam, 1987, op cit, p.165
34. Ibid.
35. Weekly Bichitra, 2.1.1987
36. Weekly Bichitra, 16.5.1986
37. Syed Serajul Islam, Bangladesh State and Economic Strategy, (Dhaka: UPL, 1988) p.189

38. Lawrence Ziring, 1992, op cit, p.198
39. All information regarding the role of parliamentary Opposition in the legislature were gathered from the various volumes of the Jatiya Sangsad Debates and Proceedings (1986 -1990)
40. Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, 'Institutional Process and Practices of Administrative Accountability: Role of Jatiyo Sangshad (Parliament) in Bangladesh' South Asian Studies, Vol.10, No.2, July,1993,p.54
41. Ibid
42. Syed Serajul Islam, 1987, op cit p.168
43. Md Abdul Hakim, op cit p.29
44. Syedur Rahman, 'Bangladesh in 1988 Precarious Institution: Building Amid Crisis Management' Asian Survey, Vol.XXIX, No.2, Feb.1989
45. S. Aminuzzaman, 1993, op cit, pp.52-56
46. Ibid.p.58
47. Dennis Wright, 'Islam and Bangladesh Polity' South Asia (10) 2,1987.
48. S.M.Shamsul Alam, 'Islam, Ideology and the State in Bangladesh' The Journal of Asian and African Studies, XXVIII, 1-2, 1993,p.101
49. Syedur Rahman,1989,p.218 op cit
50. Ibid
51. Lawrence Ziring, 1992, op cit, p.210
52. Borhanuddin Ahmad, 1993, op cit.p.147
53. Talukder Maniruzzaman, 1994, opcit, p.140
54. B.M.Monoar Kabir, op cit, p.175
55. Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, 'Interest Group Politics in Bangladesh: The Case of SKOP' BISS Journal Vol. 12, 1991.
56. Craig Baxter, 'Bangladesh in 1990 Another New Beginning' Asian Survey, Vol.XXXI, No.2, Feb.1991. pp.148-149
57. Lawrence Ziring, op cit, p.214
58. Abdul Hakim, 1993, op cit, pp.32-33.



Chapter-V

Parliamentary Democracy and the Role of Opposition under the Present BNP Rule:

-----

After the assumption of state power by the caretaker government led by a consensus-candidate of the mainstream Opposition, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed all necessary preparations were taken by the interim administration to move towards democracy. The caretaker government's first charge was to keep the functioning of the country by non-controversial means.<sup>1</sup> Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who was acting both as the head of the state and head of government was given a mandate by the mainstream Opposition to hold free and fair election of parliament within three months of forming of his interim government. In order to organise credible elections Justice Ahmed's initial move was to permit the political parties to operate freely in a congenial environment. For establishing mass confidence in the electoral process the caretaker government adopted a number of important measures: responding to the demands of the political parties the Election Commission was reconstituted with three sitting judges alongwith powers to suspend returning and presiding officers for election offences; all public personnel deployed for election duties were put under the Election Commission's jurisdiction; the Election Commission after consultation with the contending parties formulated a 16-Point code of conduct which laid down among others that the contesting parties must show their respect to mutual fundamental rights, nothing should be done to disrupt the holding of elections or each other's campaign activities.<sup>2</sup> With the arranging of Jatiya Sangsad election under a neutral

caretaker government the citizens of the country in general expected to cast their votes themselves without hindrances on their own free choice and judgement. It was thus hoped that election as an institution would achieve its credibility alongwith confidence of the masses in this institution. The date of parliamentary elections was fixed on February 27, 1991 by the caretaker government of Justice Ahmed. The election was greatly significant as it would lead to restore democracy and decide on the nature of the country's system of government.

With the declaration of the date of parliamentary elections great enthusiasm was noticed among all section of the population and the political parties. During this time a proposal was mooted by the 5-Party Front and the CPB that a national government should be formed by the major political parties which led the anti-autocracy movement. The 5-Party Front which played an important role on a number of occasions as a mediator between the Awami League led 8-Party and BNP led 7-Party alliances during the anti-Ershad movement, made the above proposal to forge greater unity of the major parties in the post election period to consolidate the gains of democracy. But such a proposal/<sup>was</sup>not acceptable to both the two leading parties, the Awami League and the BNP, as they had divergent opinions on important national issues alongwith their different manifestoes.

Parliamentary Election of 1991 and the major political parties:  
-----

In the Fifth Parliamentary Elections 75 political parties and a total of 2787 candidates contested the polls for 300 seats in



in the Jatiya Sangsad. Of the contesting political parties four, namely the Awami League, BNP, Jamat-i-Islami and Jatiya Party were significant. Awami League nominated 264 candidates and as part of electoral alliance filed 36 candidates in favour of the Awami League backed 8-Party Alliance. BNP came up as the only political party with its 300 candidates for all the electoral districts. Jatiya Party put up 272 candidates followed by Jamat-i-Islami's 222 candidates. Other smaller parties which put up more than 50 candidates included JSD(Rob), BAKSAL, JSD(Inu), Freedom Party, Muslim League (Q), Islamic Oikka Jote, and Janata Dal. The Bangladesh Zaker Party of the Pir of Atroschi which had blessing of the ousted president Ershad and other political leaders nominated 251 candidates.

The major contesting political parties in their electoral meetings, rallies and processions were able to attract huge gatherings and through their campaignings they established contacts with the electorate. In its election manifesto Awami League pledged to reintroduce parliamentary democracy in the country. While emphasising her father's role as Bangabandhu and architect of the constitution, the AL leader, Sheikh Hasina pointed to her father's murder for political reasons and demanded punishment for the killers.<sup>3</sup> She reiterated Awami League's commitment to four components to Mujibism including nationalism, democracy, socialism, and secularism and emphasised 'Bengali' nationalism. Awami League also inter alia propagated to repeal all black and repressive laws, install independence of the judiciary, pursue non-aligned foreign policy, build up capable

armed force for defensive purposes. Awami League's socialism placed it in opposition to Ershad's denationalisation policy and privatisation programme and advocated movement towards market economy.<sup>4</sup>

While preferring secular democracy Sheikh Hasina criticised the army rule of both Ziaur Rahman and Ershad and their using Islam for political purposes. She termed the election of 27 February as a referendum on the future form of government and urged the voters to give her two thirds majority in the parliament so that the existing constitution could be amended to introduce parliamentary system of government replacing quasi democratic presidential system.<sup>5</sup>

In its election manifesto BNP pledged to implement the 19-Point Programme as introduced by General Zia. Using the image of Ziaur Rahman, BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia upheld Zia's policy of politics of development highlighting multi-party democracy, rule of law, agricultural development, self reliant economy, honest administration, gram sarkar, canal digging programme and independence of the judiciary. The BNP promised to implement the principles as incorporated in the Constitution by Zia including 'absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah' and economic and social justice. It also advocated non-aligned foreign policy with an emphasis on cordial relation with the muslim and SAARC countries, and building of a well disciplined army. Begum Zia in her speeches pinpointed the negative aspects of the Awami League's rule in the early seventies and Ershad's autocratic rule for about nine years. Talukder Maniruzzaman mentioned that in 67% of her speeches Mrs Zia criticised the Awami League rule as



the 'years of darkness' leading to famine, one-party rule and repressive measures; she attacked General Ershad for destroying all democratic institutions and judiciary and took pride for her steadfast uncompromising opposition against Ershad's autocratic rule.<sup>6</sup> BNP remained silent about the form of government although its preference was to continue with the presidential system as introduced by Zia and subsequently followed by Ershad.

In order to gain support of rural voters both the leaders of Awami League and BNP promised that if voted to power agricultural loans upto Taka 5000 would be waived and land revenue upto 8.5 acres would be exempted by them. Maniruzzaman noted that both the leaders proved to be indefatigable campaigners and covered the whole of Bangladesh; they addressed several meetings almost every day between mid December 1990 to 25 February, 1991.<sup>7</sup>

Another major contestant in 1991 election was the Islamic fundamentalist party, Jamat-i-Islami, which pledged to make Bangladesh an Islamic state based on Quran and Sunnah and promised to establish welfare state and meet the fundamental needs of the citizens. Such promises of the Jamat-i-Islami were spelled out in its 16-page election manifesto.

Jatiya Party of ousted President Ershad also came up as a contestant in the election although many oppositionists after the mass upsurge were in favour of banning the party. This party, however, was allowed by the care taker government to participate in the polls.

Although its major leaders and candidates were either taken into custody or out of the scene yet the workers of the party came up with political programmes highlighting Bangladeshi nationalism, balance between the legislature and the chief executive; and Islam as a state religion.

The elections of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad duly held on 27 February, 1991 with spontaneous participation of the genuine voters. In the elections more than 55% of the voters cast their votes and the polling was regarded as free and fair by the foreign observation teams coming from Britain, Japan and SAARC countries. The results of the elections did not, however, meet the predictions of the political observers who speculated that Awami League would obtain majority seats in the Jatiya Sangsad to form the government. The results thus came as a great surprise to the Awami Leaguers who were expecting a victory based on their organisational superiority over others. By obtaining 140 seats out of 300 BNP emerged as the single largest party followed by Awami League with 88 seats. Jatiya Party and Jamat-i-Islami became the third and fourth largest parties by obtaining 35 and 18 seats respectively. The results of the Fifth Parliamentary elections can be seen from Table-I.

It was psychologically difficult for Awami League to accept defeat; not only it failed to achieve majority seats but some well known AL leaders were also defeated like Dr. Kamal Hussain, Amir Hussain Amu, Abdul Mannan, and Zillur Rahman. AL leader, Sheikh Hasina could not win in two constituencies in Dhaka. While commen-



Table-I

Results of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad Elections held on 27 Feb.1991

Party	No.of candidates elected	% of votes received	% of seats won
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	140	30.81	46.66
Awami League	88	30.08	29.33
Jatiya Party	35	11.92	11.66
Jamat-i-Islami	18	12.13	6.00
CPB	5	1.19	1.66
BAKSAL	5	1.81	1.66
NAP(M)	1	0.76	0.33
Ganatantri Party	1	0.45	0.33
Workers Party	1	0.19	0.33
JSD(Siraj)	1	0.25	0.33
Islami Oikka Jote	1	0.79	0.33
National Democratic Party (NDP)	1	0.36	0.33
Independents	3	4.39	1.00
Total	300		

Source: Election Commission

ting on the election results Sheikh Hasina maintained that 'it is inconceivable that the people have not voted for Awami League, and the results surprised and stunned the people.' She further added that 'the voters have voted in her party's favour but some identified undemocratic force conspired with an invisible force to deny the people

the benefit of the verdict', she alleged that some secret hand had manipulated the election results.<sup>8</sup> Although AL Leader Sheikh Hasina failed to accept the results yet senior Awami League leader Dr. Kamal Hussain accepted his party's defeat.

While analysing the debacle of the Awami League Hakim identified the following factors: the party was over confident without considering objective situation; the internal feuds inside the AL contributed substantially to the defeat of the party; Sheikh Hasina's campaign strategy was defective as her criticism of Zia was looked upon as arrogant and aggressive by the general electorate; moreover, Awami League's participation in the parliamentary elections held during Ershad rule in 1986 was disliked by many voters and had damaged the image of the party.<sup>9</sup>

In his research Talukder Maniruzzaman finds that of the 300 candidates who became the MPs of the Fifth Parliament 53% belong to dominant business and industrial classes. Thus both the winning party and other major parliamentary parties have significant number of MPs who belong to this social class. The business and industrialists (including former army officers now in business and industry) comprise 66%, 51% and 63% of the legislators respectively in the BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party. This social class also comprise the second largest group among the MPs of the Jamat-i-Islami. The nouveau riche class, well understanding how they had been created by political power, now wanted to have political power for themselves. This explains why the businessmen and industrialists form the



majority in the Fifth Parliament.<sup>10</sup> Many would thus argue that the class interests of the parliamentary parties including the government and the Opposition are the same. Another writer notes that there has been a qualitative change in political recruitment; earlier there was a political career starting from student politics, in its place established businessmen, industrialists and retired professionals are entering politics.<sup>11</sup>

Although BNP emerged as the single largest party by bagging 140 seats yet it was still not in a position to form the cabinet requiring 151 seats out of 300. Since the BNP could not enlist support from Awami League, Jatiya Party and minor left parties, a partnership was formed with the Jamat-i-Islami. As the coalition of the BNP and Jamat-i-Islami commanded a clear majority it induced the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to summon the Chief of the BNP parliamentary party, Begum Zia to form the cabinet. With the dissolving of the Council of Advisers of the caretaker government, Begum Khaleda Zia became the Prime Minister on 20 March, 1991 and appointed her eleven-member cabinet alongwith a number of state ministers. In exchange of Jamat-i-Islami's support in forming the government, BNP kept two reserve seats for Jamat's women candidates. Thus with the bagging of 28 unopposed reserved women's seats BNP's total strength in the Parliament went upto 168. On April 5, 1991 the Awami League was declared as the largest Opposition party in the Jatiya Sangsad and its Chief Sheikh Hasina was officially announced as the Opposition leader in the House.

### Opposition in the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad:

---

One distinguishing characteristic of the Fifth Parliament is that unlike previous parliaments it has a strong organised Opposition. In earlier Four Parliaments the Treasury Bench had a upper hand alongwith their sheer majority. But in the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad out of 330 MPs Opposition claims 157 seats.<sup>12</sup> Till date the Fifth Parliament held a total of 18 sessions. Since the 13th session the Opposition has been boycotting the parliament on the demands of holding free fair elections under a neutral caretaker government and recently submitted their en masse resignation. As such this study concentrates on the role of Opposition in the Parliament till the 13th session.

On April 5, 1991 the first session of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad began alongwith the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the House. Though the main Opposition was committed to parliamentary system yet the tradition of uncontested election of the Speaker was not maintained. Awami League though aware of its minority insisted on putting forward its own candidates; they naturally lost and in the mean time the parliamentary tradition was marred. Since the Awami League did not receive any vote from outside the party the unity in the Opposition was also broken.<sup>13</sup>

### Opposition demand for Parliamentary System

---

Opposition pressure on the Treasury for introducing parliamentary democracy mounted in the very first session of the Fifth Parliament. On April 8, 1991 Awami League came up with the demand



for establishing parliamentary form of government. Inspired by the speech of the Acting President in the Parliament to translate the agreement of the joint declaration of the Three Alliances, the Opposition parties led by the Awami League strongly advocated to switch over to parliamentary system and establish sovereign Jatiya Sangsad.

This demand was also put forwarded simultaneously outside the legislature by the Awami League coupled with various student organisations, fronts, and professional bodies.

While demanding parliamentary system the Opposition argued that under the existing constitution all powerful president had no accountability to the people and the council of ministers was nothing but an advisory body and such a system led the elected president to degenerate into an autocrat.<sup>14</sup> As such in order to prevent future autocratic rule in the country the parliamentary Opposition parties including the Awami League, Jamat-i-Islami, and the parties belonging to 5-Party Alliance began to press to achieve their vital demand. During the working of the first session the Deputy Leader of Opposition in the House served a notice of constitution amendment bill for the purpose. Awami League also moved another constitution amendment bill providing validation of the tenure of the Acting President and finding ways to his return to the Bench. The ruling party was not only under pressure from the major Opposition to go back to parliamentary system but also faced similar demands from its rank and file and BNP supporters. Yielding to demands from the Opposition and government back benchers Begum Zia ultimately decided for a parliamentary form of government.

She also meticulously considered other factors including bleak chances of winning the presidential election because of strong Opposition and the sentiment of the ulema group; and the realisation that Ershad will still be a force to be reckoned with.<sup>15</sup>

During the second session of the Fifth Parliament, Constitution (Eleventh Amendment) Bill, 1991 and Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Bill, 1991 were moved on 2 July, 1991 by the ruling party in the House. While the former removed the constitutional problems of returning of the Acting President to his earlier post in the Supreme Court, the latter advocated parliamentary system of government replacing presidential type. From the Opposition Awami League moved the Constitution amendment bill two days later in the House. Earlier in April 1991 a bill containing reversion to parliamentary system was already introduced by the Awami League. The Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Bill proposed by the ruling BNP was criticised for a number of its provisions. The Opposition raised objections to the provisions relating to the inclusion of non-MPs in the cabinet, the powers of the president to dissolve the House, the authority for conducting presidential election, and restrictions on floor crossing. There were detail discussion and criticisms in the House on both the bills proposed by the Treasury Bench and the Opposition. For detail examination of the bills they were referred to a Select Committee comprising 15 members from government and Opposition parties. After initial complications the Committee prepared a report which was adopted by all the parties.



In August 1991 the Constitution (Eleventh Amendment) Bill, 1991 and Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Bill, 1991 were placed before the House for formal adoption. After brief deliberation on 7 August the former was passed by 278 votes to none. On the latter votes were taken twice; in the first voting there were 306 votes in favour and none against and in the second voting there were 307 votes in favour and none against. Before the passing of the above constitution amendment bills the main Opposition, Awami League attempted to raise the repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance of 1975 as a precondition to the passage of the above bills. It had, however, little option but to vote for the bills when the Acting President threatened to leave his office in case of a failure of the concerned parties to pass the bills within the specified time limit. In order to have public endorsement for the change of the governmental system through the Twelfth Amendment a nation wide referendum was held in September 1991. The electorate voted favourably although voter turn out was little over 35 per cent. With this public approval Bangladesh returned to the parliamentary democracy anew. 'The spirit of unity generated in the movement against autocracy was crucial in initiating the process, and the ruling party was compelled to take into consideration the sentiment of the public and the Opposition.'<sup>16</sup>

Although an unanimous decision was taken by all concerned to introduce parliamentary system of government yet the Opposition felt uneasy as the system in the name of parliamentary democracy in fact established 'prime ministerial government'. The Opposition

was resentful because of the punitive clauses against the MPs of the Fifth Parliament. They apprehended that the constitutional provisions as introduced in Bangladesh for ensuring the greater dominance of the prime minister would not lead to establish accountable government in the country. The provisions which restricted the independence of the members of parliament either to vote against the prime minister or to make grouping within a party were unacceptable to the Opposition. They opined that the existence of a neutral titular head which is an important feature of parliamentary system was not possible in Bangladesh as the mode of election of the president was made in such a manner that unless a candidate is nominated and supported by the prime minister that person's chance of becoming the president is nil. Choudhury<sup>17</sup> noted that the relationship between the prime minister and the president in Bangladesh is not that of equals, here the president's position is somewhat subordinate; under the existing constitutional provisions the power of dissolution of legislature by the president becomes meaningless, similarly the power to declare an emergency depends entirely on the prime minister's initiatives and the president would have no role in it but to accept the prime minister's written wishes.

#### Presidential Election and Opposition:

On October 4, 1991 the presidential election was held. Earlier in August the Opposition vehemently opposed and criticised the government attempt to hold election of the president by an open ballot.



Despite Opposition demand for holding presidential election through secret ballot the Treasury Bench went ahead with its own bill and passed the same on 14 August, 1991 in the midst of walkout by the parliamentary Opposition parties. Knowing its minority position in the House Awami League decided to put up a candidate from the Opposition side as a mark of its protest against the nomination of controversial person Abdur Rahman Biswas by the ruling party for the presidency. The candidature of Biswas also aroused contention within the government party and this led the party in power to promulgate an ordinance providing restrictions on floor crossing even in electing the head of the state. The Opposition moved their united resistance against this ordinance which to them encroached the fundamental rights of the members of parliament and hence it was undemocratic and autocratic in nature. It was also criticised by the Opposition that by giving his signature the Acting President made himself a party to this controversial ordinance. The Opposition went to the extent of legally challenging the validity of the Presidential Election Act and Presidential Election Amendment Ordinance. Thus writ petitions were moved in the High Court by some leading MPs belonging to Opposition parties. Reference may be made of Barrister Moudud Ahmed of Jatiya Party and Sheikh Ansar Ali of Jamat-i-Islami. Facing such Opposition moves the party in power repealed the ordinance one day before the presidential election and this was seen as a significant political gain of the combined opposition forces.

Initially Awami League supported the nomination

of Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury and Makbul Hossain as presidential candidates. However, with the withdrawal of nomination of Makbul Hossain, Justice Chowdhury became the Awami League-backed presidential candidate whom the Awami League tried to project as the common candidate of the combined Opposition. But Awami League's attempts to make Justice Chowdhury as consensus-candidate of Opposition could not be successful because of lack of support from the Jatiya Party and Jamat-i-Islami. The ruling party mobilised its own MPs for their necessary support for Abdur Rahman Biswas who visited Jamat leader Golam Azam and sought the support of his party. It came as great surprise to political observers when Awami League-supported candidate Justice Chowdhury met controversial leader Golam Azam and requested the backing of Jamat-i-Islami in the election. This damaging move of the AL-backed candidate prevented the NAP, CPB, and the allies of the Awami League from supporting Justice Chowdhury. The only support for the AL-backed candidate came from the Ganatantri Party. In the presidential election BNP's Abdur Rahman Biswas came out successful with 172 votes while 92 votes went in favour of Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury.<sup>18</sup> Other Opposition parties in the House namely Jatiya Party, Jamat-i-Islami, NAP, CPB, JSD(Siraj), NDP, Workers Party and Islami Oikka Jote did not participate in voting. With the assuming of office by the elected president on October 9, 1991, the Acting President went back to his original place in the Supreme Court. All the parliamentary Opposition parties, however, boycotted the oath taking ceremony of newly elected President Abdur Rahman Biswas. The passage of the Eleventh and Twelfth



Amendments to the Constitution brought the Opposition and the party in power in a single platform but that compromise and cooperation soon marred by their mutual disagreements on other important national issues.

Golam Azam Issue and Opposition:  
-----

During the fourth session of the Fifth Parliament Golam Azam issue seemed to have occupied the stage of Opposition politics. Heated debate over the Jamat's controversial leader Golam Azam took place in the fourth and fifth sessions. Later in the fifth session the main Opposition, Awami League staged walkout in protest of the government's stand concerning the Jamat leader. On the same issue Awami League, Jatiya Party, and other opposition parties continued their boycott till the sixth session. In late June an agreement was signed between the government and Opposition and the boycotting parties rejoined the House. The accord stipulated among others the trial of Golam Azam under the laws of the land and the Constitution.<sup>19</sup> The restoration of citizenship of Golam Azam by the High Court was vehemently criticised by the major Opposition which demanded the implementation of the verdict of the People's Court (Gono Adalat) giving Golam Azam a death sentence. In order to pressurise the government to implement the above verdict, the Awami League-backed Opposition staged a sit-in demonstration on 9th May and called for half-day hartal on 13 May, 1992. The AL led Opposition continued their agitations for implementation of the 4-Point accord signed by the leaders of BNP and Awami League. The Opposition extended its total support to the anti-government

agitations and programmes organised by the Committee for the elimination of killers and collaborators of 1971 known as the Nirmul Committee.<sup>20</sup>

No Confidence Motion:  
-----

The highlight of the sixth session of the Fifth Parliament was the no-confidence motion brought by the major parliamentary Opposition parties against the party in power.<sup>21</sup> Such a parliamentary move from the Opposition against the government was unprecedented in country's political history. On August 5, 1992 seven notices of no-confidence were submitted against the party in power by the Awami League, Jatiya Party, Workers Party, JSD, NAP, CPB, and Ganatantri Party. Of the seven notices the Speaker of the House allowed one notice moved by the Deputy Opposition Leader Abdus Samad Azad for debate in the House. Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina put up various evidences of the failure of the party in power and demanded resignation of the government. During the debate she charged that the government had totally failed to ensure law and order, protect property and lives, curb terrorism on the campuses, protect foreign mission and solve the problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Rohingya refugees. The Opposition members in the House also condemned the ruling party for politicisation of administration. While participating in the debate on no-confidence motion against the government Sheikh Hasina iterated that such a motion reflected the wishes of the masses and the fall of the government did not mean it would foil democracy. In her 58-minute speech



Opposition leader launched a blistering attack on the government and gave an account of the failure of the Treasury Bench in various sectors of the country. Sheikh Hasina pointed out that the whole nation was worried due to sharp deterioration in the law and order situation; she quoted press reports on terrorism throughout Bangladesh besides other anti-social activities. The mover of the no-confidence motion, Deputy Leader of Opposition brought in the House nine specific charges against the ruling party and said that people had lost confidence in the government of Begum Khaleda Zia and as such being responsible to the masses the Opposition had no alternative but to move the above motion against the government. The statement given by the Deputy Opposition Leader was echoed by other Opposition MPs including Abdur Razzaque, Motia Chowdhury, Rahmat Ali, Azizur Rahman, and Mirza Azam of the Awami League; Shamsuddoha of CPB; Sheikh Anwar Ali of Jamat-i-Islami; Shahjahan Siraj of JSD(S); and Barrister Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party. After heated and marathon debate on the no-confidence motion between the Treasury Bench and the Opposition MPs, the Speaker of the House gave it for voting. The no-confidence motion against the 17-month old government of Begum Khaleda Zia was lost in the Jatiya Sangsad by 186 to 122 votes. The MPs of the Jamat-i-Islami abstained from voting on this crucial motion in the House while the MPs of NDP and Islami Oikka Jote and two independent members of parliament were not present in the Parliament.<sup>22</sup> Though the Opposition lost in the voting on this motion yet it can not be denied that such Opposition move had an educative

value for the members of parliament in general since it brought an opportunity for the MPs to learn the art of an important parliamentary practice.

Parliamentary Devices and Opposition:  
-----

The reintroduction of parliamentary system of government and the returning of a considerable number of opposition MPs alongwith the recognition of constitutional Opposition in the House ushered in a new hope of democratic development in the country. Political observers expected that under the parliamentary set up the constitutional Opposition while discharging legislative duties would do its prime job of examining and scrutinising government activities properly to make the party in power behave. The major Opposition during their presence in the House from the first till thirteenth session of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad tried to use important parliamentary mechanisms to demand accountability from the government and put forward Opposition points and issues. The parliamentary devices which were used by the Opposition in the Fifth Parliament for the above purposes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter-I, among the parliamentary activities, the Question Hour is greatly used by the Opposition MPs because it is an important means through which individual rights are protected and public grievances are ventilated. In case of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad, from the first till the thirteenth session, there were as many as 7701 starred questions, 2631 unstarred questions and



5 short notice questions discussed and answered in the House along with considerable participation from the parliamentary Opposition parties. Major portion of the questions posed by the Opposition MPs dealt with constituency related interests or problems while other questions were informative, functional, and policy oriented in nature.

Opposition in the Fifth Parliament remained active in moving Adjournment Motion which is regarded as an important legislative weapon in the hands of the Opposition to keep the party in power in its toes. Rule 61 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament provides that a motion for an adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of recent and urgent public importance may be made with the consent of the Speaker.<sup>23</sup> In Table-II and Table-III the list of adjournment motions and issues tabled by the Opposition in thirteen sessions of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad are mentioned. It can be seen from these tables that with regard to adjournment motion a total of 1790 notices were received till the thirteenth session, of which 64 were accepted by the House. Out of these accepted notices 38 (59.37%) were tabled by 28 Opposition members. Thus 19 Opposition MPs from Awami League tabled 25 motions; 5 Jamat-i-Islami MPs raised 7 motions; 1 NDP member raised 3 motions; one MP each from Workers Party, JSD, and Jatiya Party raised the rest 3 motions.

The 25 adjournment motions raised by the Awami League MPs included the following issues: Golam Azam's selection as the formal head of Jamat-i-Islami; maintenance of the Haji Camp; police raid

Table-II

List of Adjournment Motions tabled by the Opposition till the thirteenth session of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad

Sessions	Notices received	Notices accepted	Notices dismissed	Opposition Notices
First 5.4.91-15.5.91	180	2	178	2
Second 11.6.91-14.8.91	61	0	61	0
Third 12.10.91-5.11.91	149	1	148	1
Fourth 4.1.92-18.2.92	249	1	248	1
Fifth 12.4.92-19.4.92	88	14	74	-
Sixth 18.6.92-13.8.92	17	0	17	0
Seventh 11.10.92-6.11.92	129	0	129	0
Eighth 3.1.93-11.3.93	295	4	291	-
Nineth 9.5.93-13.5.93	77	22	55	15
Tenth 6.6.93-15.7.93	96	1	95	1
Eleventh 12.9.93-27.9.93	158	1	157	1
Twelfth 21.11.93-8.12.93	116	7	109	6
Thirteenth 5.2.94-7.3.94	175	11	164	11
Total	1790	64(100%)	1726	38(59.37%)

- a) In the fifth session 14 accepted notices were on Rohingya Muslim refugees and all were discussed in the House; majority of the dismissed notices centred on Golam Azam & Gono Adalat. Detailed statements on notices are not available.
- b) Detailed statement on the notices accepted in the eighth session is not available in the Jatiya Sangsad Proceedings.



Table-III

List of Adjournment Notions tabled by the Opposition MPs in the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad till the Thirteenth session

<u>Sl. no.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Notices</u>
1.	Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury	National Democratic Party	3
2.	A.M.Riasat Ali	Jamat-i-Islami	1
3.	Rashed Khan Menon	Workers Party	1
4.	M.Shamsul Haque	Awami League	2
5.	Syed Nazibul Bashar	Awami League	1
6.	Latifur Rahman	Jamat-i-Islami	1
7.	Ruhul Quddus	Jamat-i-Islami	3
8.	Aminul Islam	Awami League	2
9.	Md. Abdus Shahid	Awami League	2
10.	Abul Kalam Azad	Awami League	2
11.	Abdur Razzaque	Awami League	1
12.	Shahjahan Siraj	Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal	1
13.	Abdus Samad Azad	Awami League	1
14.	Rahmat Ali	Awami League	2
15.	Motia Chowdhury	Awami League	1
16.	Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury	Awami League	1
17.	Rafiqul Islam	Awami League	2
18.	Mizanur Rahman Manu	Awami League	1
19.	Tofael Ahmed	Awami League	1
20.	Tabibur Rahaman Sarder	Awami League	1
21.	Shahjahan Khan	Awami League	1
22.	Joynal Abedin Hazari	Awami League	1
23.	Shahjahan Chowdhury	Jamat-i-Islami	1
24.	Hafeza Asma Khatun	Jamat-i-Islami	1
25.	Kazi Abdur Rashid	Awami League	1
26.	Khan Tipu Sultan	Awami League	1
27.	Manirul Huq Chowdhury	Jatiya Party	1
28.	Mosharrof Hossain	Awami League	1
Total			38

on the people while observing independence day on March 26 and the first day of the Bengali new year (this motion was raised by 8 MPs of the Awami League); raid by Islami Chatra Shibir at the Rajshahi University; condition of medical colleges in northern region of Bangladesh; hoisting of national flag at the Washington embassy (this motion was raised by 2 Awami League MPs); trafficking of women and children (this motion was tabled by 8 MPs of Awami League); illegal dam; mismanagement in land record system; and disrespect for national flag. Jamat-i-Islami's 7 adjournment motions incorporated the following issues: Ferri problem at Aricha and communication system; Haji Camp maintenance; national bank loans; police raid on the masses during observance of independence day; effects of the radiation of X-ray machine; closure of shrimp cultivation project; and women trafficking. NDP's 3 notices included: maintenance of Haji Camp; police attack on the people on the independence day; and the killing of 4 Bangladeshis by the Indian BSF at Meherpur border. The rest 3 motions of the Workers Party, JSD, and Jatiya Party respectively were: clash of two student groups at Dhaka University; police attack on the people on independence day; and women trafficking. Of the above 38 adjournment motions tabled by the Opposition, 14 were discussed in the House, 23 were referred to the concerned committees and 1 was time barred.

Another parliamentary device commonly used by the Opposition is Calling Attention to Urgent Public Importance. According to Jatiya Sangsad Rule any member may with the permission of



of the Speaker call the attention of a Minister to any matter of urgent public importance and the Minister may make a brief statement or ask for time to make a statement at a later hour or date.<sup>24</sup> During the thirteen sessions of the Fifth Parliament there were 251 Calling Attention notices raised by the Opposition in the House as can be seen from the following table.

Table-III

List of Calling Attention to Matters of Urgent Public Importance (Rule 71) in the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad and Opposition Participation

Sessions	Notices received	Notices dismissed	Notices accepted	Opposition notices
First	364	349	15	11
Second	444	425	19	19
Third	290	277	13	10
Fourth	833	789	44	28
Fifth	169	160	9	7
Sixth	626	559	67	36
Seventh	526	479	47	26
Eighth	529	476	56	38
Nineth	157	145	12	9
Tenth	307	285	23	17
Eleventh	246	225	22	14
Twelfth	320	302	18	14
Thirteenth	345	313	32	22
Total	5156	4784	377 (100%)	251 (66.57%)

Of the 251 Opposition notices 151 were raised by the Awami League; 56 by Jamat-i-Islami; 19 by Jatiya Party; 7 by Workers Party; 7 by Islami Oikka Jote; 4 by CPB; 2 by Ganatantri Party, 1 by JSD; and 4 by NDP. The issues which were raised included among others the following: damage of food grains at Sunamganj; drought and supply of diesel for pump machines; Talpatti island and Indian occupation; Killing of Bawalis by tiger at the Sundarbans; flood in Moulvibazar; environment pollution in Dhaka city; issue of Khulna medical college; river erosion; Dahagram-Angarpota issue; cluster villages; sending of Bangladeshi workers to Kuwait; Barisal-Bhola road construction; impact of Farakka; rural electrification at Bhola and Bogra districts. Of the 251 Opposition notices 100 were time barred and on 151 notices concerned ministers gave their statements in the House.

Yet another important legislative device at the hands of the Opposition in the Parliament has been the Discussion on Matters of Urgent Public Importance for Short Duration. Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure<sup>25</sup> provides that any member desirous of raising discussion on matters of urgent public importance may give to the Secretary, not less than two days before the date on which he intends to raise the discussion, notice in writing supported by the signatures of at least five other members and specifying clearly and precisely the matter to be raised. Table-IV illustrates Opposition participation on the Discussion as per Rule 68 in the thirteen sessions of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad.



Table-IV

Discussion on Matters of Urgent Public Importance for Short  
Duration in the Fifth Parliament and Opposition Participation

Sessions	Notices received	Notices dismissed	Notices accepted	Opposition Notices
First	57	51	6	4
Second	118	107	11	9
Third	57	51	6	6
Fourth	87	78	9	9
Fifth	26	25	1	1
Sixth	24	21	3	2
Seventh	30	24	6	5
Eighth	55	48	7	7
Nineth	28	22	6	6
Tenth	86	81	5	5
Eleventh	65	60	5	5
Twelfth	49	46	3	3
Thirteenth	92	92	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>68 (100%)</b>	<b>62 (91.17%)</b>

Among the 62 Opposition notices 37 were raised by the Awami League; 11 by Jamat-i-Islami; 6 by Jatiya Party; 5 by Workers Party; and the rest 3 by NDP. The issues put forwarded by the Opposition for discussion included among others the following: employment of the Bangladeshis returned from Kuwait; water logging at Bildakatia; fish cultivation in the reserved tank; closing of the Chittagong University; river erosion at Faridpur; lack of enough bed at the Pabna central hospital; food deficiency in the northern region of Bangladesh; Rohingya refugee problem; Mongla port scandal; rising spiral of prices of essentials; Bosnia-Herzegovina issue; mobility in the banking sector; problems of the poor peasants; assault on Opposition Chief Whip by police; poverty alleviation; assault on the teachers by the students of Jahangirnagar University.

During the thirteen sessions of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad the Opposition members of parliament participated in Half-an-Hour Discussion. As per Rule 60 of the Rules of Procedure the Speaker may on three clear days' notice in writing being given by a member to the Secretary, allot half-an-hour on two sittings only in a week for discussion on a matter of public importance, which has been the subject of a recent question, starred or unstarred and the answer to which needs elucidation on a matter of fact. During the thirteen sessions the House received 133 notices for half-an-hour discussion, of which 121 were dismissed and only 12 were accepted. All the 12 notices were raised by the Opposition members of parliament. Of the 12 notices, 4 were raised by the Awami League, 7 by Jamat-i-Islami,



and 1 by Jatiya Party. The issues which were raised by the Opposition included: misappropriation of 42 crore Taka by the employees of 4 nationalised banks; explanation of a question posed earlier; discrimination in the distribution of test relief wheat; trade deficiency of 6329 crore Taka; irregularity in peasant loan distribution; problems of marketing sugar; BJMC issue; lack of cultivation in vast areas of land; illegal possession of land belonging to Forestry Department; loss in the state controlled sugar mills; Janata newspaper of Ex-President Ershad; and the development of non-government secondary schools. Most of these notices were, however, time barred.

In the thirteen sessions of the Fifth Jatiya Snagsad 1054 notices were received by the House with regard to Special Privileges of the members. The House accepted 189 notices of which 163 were raised by the Opposition MPs.

Of the different parliamentary mechanisms Committee System has been regarded as a very effective instrument of the Opposition to demand transparency of the government and get accountability from the executive. Committee system is recognised throughout the world as an important innovation in the working of the representative assemblies. It performs a very significant function of division of labour and specialisation in the assemblies for detailed examination of legislation.<sup>27</sup> It assists the people's representatives to review the actions of the government and also it serves as forums

for legislative compromise and bargaining of the competing parties.<sup>28</sup> One of the significant characteristics of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad has been to activate its committee structure as per Article 76 of the Constitution<sup>29</sup> and as such a good deal of business is being transacted through the parliamentary committees. The Fifth Jatiya Sangsad has as many as 49 Standing Committees and 63 Sub-committees.<sup>30</sup> Broad grouping of the Standing Committees in the Parliament is provided in appendix of this study. Since their inception till the thirteenth session the parliamentary committees met about 1300 times alongwith satisfactory presence of members both from the Treasury Bench and the Opposition. But the submission of timely reports of the committees has been far from satisfaction. Till March 1994 only 20 reports were placed before the House. Both the government and the Opposition MPs were displeased as the committee recommendations including the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee were hardly implemented by the government. Unlike the developed parliamentary systems e.g. Britain, Australia, the Public Accounts Committee in Bangladesh is headed by a cabinet minister which thus becomes less effective in demanding accountability from the executive. Moreover, some important committees of the Fifth Parliament remained ineffective due to lack of consensus between the Treasury Bench and the Opposition.<sup>31</sup>

With regard to the committee system in Parliament a number of Opposition MPs expressed that because of inadequacies in the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad the parliamentary



committees could not be made effective. They opined that the neutrality of the committees is greatly hampered with the Speaker and the ministers occupying the position of chairman of so many standing committees. As such Opposition members should be coopted as committee chairs especially in finance and audit committees like U.K. to ensure legislative vigil over the executive. Unwritten rule of seniority should be accepted as a norm in selecting committee heads and composing committees. A number of Opposition MPs complained that due to multifarious preoccupation of the ministers meetings of the committees were not convened regularly with effect of communication gap and coordination problem; there was also a tendency on the part of the ministers not to accept charges of irregularities in their respective departments and in many instances Opposition view points were not given due consideration.<sup>32</sup> There are also opinions among the Opposition members of parliament that the practice of introducing bill in the legislature before the examination of committees can not be accepted as a proper method. In a recently concluded workshop some members of parliament made recommendations for amending article 76 (2) (a) of the Constitution and Rule 246 (a) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament to enable the Standing Committees to examine the bills before placing in the House.<sup>33</sup>

Another feature of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad is that many of the bills have been introduced in the House after promulgation of ordinances. The Opposition members of parliament have been

especially critical of such a practice on the ground that it greatly hampers the status and prestige of the legislature. Opposition members took a hardline against the Treasury Bench on the passing of Anti-Terrorist Bill in the Parliament when the very bill was under the scrutiny and consideration of a special parliamentary committee.<sup>34</sup> Criticisms were made that the promulgation of the ordinance amounted to usurption of the powers of the parliamentary committee and so as to say the Parliament itself and as such the ordinance was not keeping with the Constitution.<sup>35</sup> It was commented that the passage of any ordinance when the same was under the scrutiny of a committee put an unwarranted restriction on the Parliament itself.

The purpose of having a compromise formula including resolving differences of the competing parties through the committee system was not achieved in the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad. On many occasions the committees failed to prepare unanimous resolution because of indecision and opposing views of the members of government and Opposition. The committee for investigating the corruption of the Agricultural Minister failed to prepare the terms of reference even after having meetings for more than dozen times. The structure of Zila Parishad remained undecided in another committee. The special parliamentary committee for Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill failed to come up with a final report. The committee for formulation of new rules of business in order to suit the parliamentary system



failed to arrive at a common resolution after doing several sessions. There were several incidents of passing bills in the House with the Opposition members of parliament walking out. Since the inception of of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad on April 5, 1991 the parliamentary Opposition parties either singly or jointly staged walkouts for 57 times with some turned into boycotts.<sup>36</sup> In the thirteenth session a comment of the then Information minister on the Hebron Mosque greatly agitated the major Opposition and they boycotted the session as a mark of their protest.

#### Opposition Outside the Legislature:

As a part of Opposition agitation against the government arising out of the developments of Magura by-election and on the increased demand of holding free fair elections under a neutral care taker government the members of parliament of the combined Opposition abstained themselves from attending the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad since the thirteenth session.

Since early 1992 the main Opposition, Awami League, became very vocal in the streets and started anti-government agitational politics on the demands of establishing the four fundamental state principles as laid down in the original 1972 constitution; banning the politics of Jamat and shibir; and implementing the verdict of the gono adalat (people's court) giving death sentence of Jamat leader Golam Azam. It called upon the people to resist the anti-

liberation forces and rise against terrorism. Awami League greatly resorted to street agitations on the demands of repealing the Indemnity Ordinance and passing the Repeal Bill which was moved by the Opposition Chief Whip Md. Nasim on August 8, 1991. The Awami League while announcing its fortnight agitational programme in late October, 1992 twined the indemnity and Golam Azam issues with the programmes of the Nirmul Committee.<sup>37</sup> Awami League organised a greater movement against the promulgation of the Anti-terrorist ordinance on 27 October, 1992. The Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina in an interview termed the ordinance as anti-Opposition ordinance promulgated only to harras the opponents of the regime; she also questioned the intentions of the government as the existing laws of the land were quite enough to curb terrorism in the country.<sup>38</sup>

Earlier in November, 1991 Sheikh Hasina distributed a letter to foreign ambassadors in Dhaka incorporating criticisms of the BNP government and in a way appealed the foreign diplomats to use their 'influence' with Begum Zia to accomplish the programmes of the Awami League.<sup>39</sup> Sheikh Hasina accused the government of carrying out autocracy and bypassing parliamentary democracy and asked her party stalwarts to take to the streets and to observe anti-regime action programmes. To some observers, Awami League's action programmes could be linked with Hasina's earlier comment that the Opposition would not allow the party in power to stay in peace.<sup>40</sup>



Main Opposition, Awami League's anti-government movement gained momentum after the Mirpur by-election. Both the government and the Opposition deployed all efforts and energies to capture this seat which eventually turned into a prestige issue for the competing parties. As such Mirpur by-election was vital for them inspite of the fact that its results would be unable to topple the government or push the Opposition to power. For the Awami League which retained the seats in the by-elections at Mymensingh-3 and Rajbari-1 constituencies and gave a good account of itself in the municipal polls the capturing of Mirpur seat would give a political and psychological victory for the party over its rival BNP. The trouble of Mirpur by-election started when the Election Commission declared the official results about 18 hours after the state controlled media gave the government candidate a clear victory.<sup>41</sup> Obvious outcome of such an incident was vehement and sharp criticism from the Awami League rejecting the results of the polls and demanding fresh election.

With the approaching of Magura by-election on 20 March, 1994 both the government and the Opposition became greatly alert. Again it was a prestige issue for the ruling party against the backdrop of city corporation elections when BNP lost two major city corporations of Dhaka and Chittagong to the main Opposition, Awami League. The Magura-2 constituency was a safe seat for the Awami League for a long time alongwith the support of the minority voters comprising 40% of the electors there. The fact of winning the government candidate in this constituency came as a surprise to the Opposition which

questioned the neutrality of the Election Commission. Thus all the three opposition parties, Awami League, Jatiya Party, and Jamat-i-Islami instantly rejected the election results and charged the government with 'massive rigging' through the intervention of administration and 'mustans'. They accused the party in power of deceiving the voters and killing democracy by holding a mock election. The Awami League leader demanded the cancellation of the controversial by-election within seven days and as a mark of protest the AL and Jatiya Party observed a half-day strike (hartal) all over the country on 23 March, 1994.<sup>42</sup>

On April 7, 1994 both the Awami League and Jatiya Party gheraoed the Secretariat and the Election Commission and reiterated their decision of boycotting the Parliament and charged the ruling party for its total failure in running the affairs of the country. The Awami League through its agitational programmes tried to project the autocratic image of the BNP government which to AL was even worse than General Ershad's government.<sup>43</sup> Jatiya Party while organising its anti-government movement simultaneously with the Awami League demanded the release of its leader, Ershad and declared that its on-going agitation would continue till BNP is ousted from power. Earlier within/six months of the formation of the BNP government the second largest opposition party, Jatiya Party came up with a demand for mid-term election.

All the three major opposition parties, Awami League Jatiya Party, and Jamat-i-Islami organised greater movement to



achieve their increasing demand for holding free fair elections under a neutral care taker government. A consensus was made among the three parties with regard to the framework of the proposed care taker government. Earlier Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamat-i-Islami placed three separate bills in the Jatiya Sangsad but simultaneous attempts were <sup>also</sup> made to frame a single bill from the Opposition side. To this end a committee was formed comprising the leaders of the opposition parties headed by the Deputy Opposition Leader in the House, Abdus Samad Azad. Though the demand for care taker government was initiated by the Opposition inside the Sangsad yet due to parliament boycott the movement was taken to the streets.

The third largest Opposition party, the Jamat-i-Islami which extended its initial vital support to BNP to form the government gradually lost its grip over the ruling party. The results of the by-elections and the city corporation elections proved that Jamat-i-Islami was not an influencing factor for either the victory or defeat for the ruling BNP. Because of the very low performance of the Jamat in the above elections the possibility of compromise from the party in power was gone. As such to make it acceptable to the main Opposition, Jamat-i-Islami tried to become <sup>more</sup> associated with the mainstream Opposition and organised simultaneous anti-government movement alongwith the Awami League and Jatiya Party.

After the formation of BNP government in the post 1991 elections, both the party in power and major Opposition parties

established parliamentary democracy on the basis of consensus thereby created a rare example in the political history of this country. At the beginning with few exceptions the role of the major parliamentary Opposition, Awami League, appeared to be constructive as revealed by its participation in the functioning of the Jatiya Sangsad and parliamentary committee system. Due attention was paid by Awami League to establish a new political pattern with a focus on the future planning. Awami League's modesty and temparence after its success in the Mayoral elections in Dhaka and Chittagong and the subsequent killing of its workers at Lalbagh, Dhaka attracted good sympathy of the public. As part of its role as responsible Opposition Awami League organised a number of discussion meetings and seminar focussing various issues ranging from economic policy, education, social welfare, currency situation to foreign policy.<sup>44</sup> These actions of the Awami League in a way strengthened the process of constitutional politics in the country. But soon this main Opposition party was accused of channelling its efforts towards a sort of negative politics not commensurate with the norms of parliamentary system.

Within short period of establishing parliamentary democracy the major Opposition parties became highly critical of the ruling party's utter failure to implement the consensus decisions of the Three Alliances prepared during the Mass Upsurge in the wake of the fall of Ershad in 1990. They charged that the BNP government was behaving like an autocratic regime as manifested by the government's



total control of Television , Radio and news media; violent police attack on the journalists at the Press Club premises; government's resort to black laws and retaining of special powers; passing of the Anti-terrorist bill; harrasment of the political opponents; unilateral decision of the government on important national issues including the vital local government sector disbanding the Upazila system; BNP's intolerant attitude towards the constitutional Opposition and the like. It was charged that in the name of parliamentary democracy the BNP, which was originated from autocratic rule, cliques and intrigues, presented the nation with a dictatorship of the Prime Minister. The Opposition Leader alleged that the Prime Minister did not attend the parliamentary sessions. The leader of the House had been the chairperson of the defence standing committee but she never turned up in the committee meetings. In all the thirteen sessions of the Jatiya Sangsad out of 1556 working hours the Prime Minister was present in only a few working hours.<sup>45</sup>

The parliamentary delegation coming from Australia led by Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives in November-December 1993 in their 80-page report to the Australian Parliament echoed almost the similar views of the Opposition regarding the role of Fifth Jatiya Sangsad. The delegation did not see much evidence of legislature's role in the law-making process; it obtained an impression of a parliament preoccupied with procedural matters and with tactical maneuvers, possibly masking the reality of government ruling by executive decrees or ordinances rather than through an orderly legislative process.<sup>46</sup> Al Leader Shæikh Hasina alleged

on 15.9.1994 that out of first 94 bills accepted by the Jatiya Sangsad only 4 were placed in the bill form and the rest were first promulgated as ordinances and later raised in the Parliament for necessary approval.<sup>47</sup>

The major Opposition parties while organising anti-government movement for their demands could not escape factional feuds and leadership crisis within their own organisations. Within the Awami League clash of opinions with the party chief led one of its important leaders, Dr. Kamal Hussain to quit the organisation formally and float a new political party called the Gono Forum which also attracted within its fold some sections of left political organisations like CPB and left leaning intellectuals. Crisis in leadership also seemed to push Jatiya Party towards the brink of a split. The crisis came to a head when in February, 1993 Joint Organising Secretary of the party M.Sajjad Hussain challenged the authority of 29 Jatiya Party leaders including the party chairman, Ershad and acting chairman, Mizunur Rahman Chowdhury; he accused these leaders of illegally ousting Shah Moazzem Hossain from the post of party secretary general. Certain leaders were accused of toying to the government and other inner conflicts were creating rifts within the party.<sup>48</sup> Recently the involvement of Mrs. Ershad in the affairs of the Jatiya Party created differences of opinions within the organisation. The third major Opposition the cadre based Jamat-i-Islami, however, has been free from leadership crisis although there



have been elements within the party with their pro-Saudi and pro-Irani affiliations. Existence of factional feuds and differences of opinions has been one significant feature of political organisations of this country. Z.R.Khan<sup>49</sup> mentioned that confusion about values, both indigenous and borrowed, and related crisis of individual/group/national identity, are reflected in the groping state of leadership and the resulting splits in political groups and parties that have occurred with increasing frequency in this country.

Within three years of the working of parliamentary system the Jatiya Sangsad has turned into a non-functioning and insignificant body mostly due to the sustained boycott of the major Opposition parties. The democratic transition process in Bangladesh has thus been in great danger. While explaining this phenomenon one commentator identified the following points: the commitment of the political parties towards a democratic polity was not adequate; the structural hindrance was too formidable to allow any attempt of arriving at a democratic polity only on the basis of intentions; by democratic polity the parties emphasised different moments; all these thus explain the phenomenon of a non-functioning parliament resulting in a political crisis in the elite domain.<sup>50</sup> Due to lack of positive politics a chasm developed between the government and the Opposition. The Opposition increasingly noticed that it was being kept out of the governmental process with the passage of a number of bills. In stead of keeping the government on track by

issue-based constructive criticism , the Opposition indulged in the politics of rhetorics neglecting the economic issues and harshness of the toiling masses. As the party in power and the Opposition failed to formulate consensus through accommodation, compromise and negotiation, the gap between them widened further resulting in boycotting of the entire Opposition from the Jatiya Sangsad.<sup>51</sup>

Opposition's agitational politics and involvement in extra constitutional activities led to their having less interest in conscious mobilisation and political socialisation activities. They took easy route by activating students as their foot-soldiers and politicising urban workers, public sector employees, unionised teachers and city slum dwellers for strikes, demonstrations, hartals and politically disruptive activities.<sup>52</sup> Only in the year 1994 the Opposition observed 14 hartals, 4 blockades, and 3 gheraos.<sup>53</sup> One Japanese corporation quoted a figure of Bangladesh's economic losses due to Opposition hartals only in January and February, 1993 of US dollars 128 millions compared to Japan's official assistance of US dollar 125 million till the end of 1992.<sup>54</sup> Opposition movement also precipitated the various divisions and conflicts between the left and rightist elements, pro and anti-liberation forces, secular and Islamic fundamentalists and gave impetus to the movements of the Sramik Karmachari Oikka Parishad (SKOP) and the Prokrichi. All these no doubt, placed an unbearable pressure on the nascent democratic



order destroying the scope of achieving a compromise formula through negotiation. The gap between the government and Opposition was aggravated as the ruling party felt that it had people's mandate to take major policy decisions without any necessity of discussing with the Opposition and the Opposition in its attempts found it proper to oppose for the sake of opposition.<sup>55</sup> As such the Opposition neither formulated any cohesive socio-economic programmes nor came up with harsh criticism on the government's economic reforms. The objective which got prominence was unseating of the party in power through agitational movement.

In the face of Opposition's sustained boycott of the Parliament and the increasing demands for constitutional amendment to hold future national elections under a neutral care taker government the ruling party moved a bill to amend the People's Representative Order 1972 aimed at strengthening the electoral process and the Election Commission. But such a concession from the government did not satisfy the Opposition at all. Rigid attitude of both the Opposition and the government thus created a political stalemate and deepened the crisis which led the concerned sections to call for a solution of the crisis through dialogue. As a part of this process Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyoaku's offer of a formal dialogue was accepted by both the government and the Opposition. As such the former Governor General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen arrived Bangladesh in October 1994 as the facilitator of Commonwealth-brokered dialogue between the Treasury Bench and the parlia-

mentary Opposition on the care taker crisis. In the wake of the dialogue both ruling party and the Opposition began to reiterate their rigid positions. Like the Prime Minister, the Opposition leader also roared out at a mass rally that Awami League would walk out of the dialogue if modalities of forming the proposed care taker government was not discussed.<sup>56</sup> Several round of dialogue proved a futile exercise as both sides kept their uncompromising attitude. Thus Sir Ninian Stephen's attempts to steer the dialogue and overcome unmitigated stalemate did not produce tangible results. The AL-led Opposition rejected the formula of an evenly-balanced inter-parliamentary parties' interim government advanced by the party in power.<sup>57</sup> Being unable to make both sides to agree to a compromise formula Sir Ninian formally gave up his mission. Side by side the efforts of the foreign diplomats led by the U.S. ambassador to bring the two sides in a common table also failed.

The on-going movement of the mainstream Opposition took a new turn with the announcement of its ultimatum to the government to accept the demand of care taker government by 27 December 1994 failing which the Opposition would resign en masse on 28 December '94. In the meantime the ruling party side moved the boycott issue to the High Court. But the declaration of the High Court Bench of Opposition's boycott as unconstitutional with a direction to join the Jatiya Sangsad was not heeded by the mainstream Opposition. The passing of the government bill to strengthen the Election Commission on December 1, 1994 was again criticised by the Opposition which



organised its anti-government movement with greater vigour in the streets by observing frequent agitational programmes. With the approaching of the final date of Opposition ultimatum the Speaker on his own initiative tried to mediate between the Opposition and the ruling party but could not become successful. The mainstream Opposition thus resigned en masse on 28 December 1994 keeping their parliament boycott for 300 days and creating an unprecedented example in world's parliamentary history. The Speaker, however, delayed his decision regarding the Opposition's resignation letters for scrutiny. The issue of en masse resignation of 147 Opposition MPs was further complicated with the filing of two separate writ petitions in the High Court, one challenging the validity of the Opposition resignation and the other challenging the legality of delay in acceptance of the resignation letters thus creating a conflict between the legislature and the judiciary. Afterwards the rejection of the two writ petitions by the special branch of the High Court followed by the Speaker's ruling on the en masse resignation could not improve the situation in any way to resolve the country's on-going political impasse. The mainstream Opposition again rejected another fresh call of the Prime Minister to return to the Jatiya Sangsad for negotiations. They expressed pessimism regarding further dialogue and vowed to realise their care taker demand through various political programmes and agitations. Bangladesh's parliamentary democracy restored in 1991 thus has come to a point of jeopardy only after three years of its journey. People's hard earned democracy has become the casualty in the midst of extreme stubborn politics being played both by the Treasury and the Opposition.

Notes:

1. Craig Baxter, 'Bangladesh: A Parliamentary Democracy, If They Can Keep It' Current History, March, 1992, p.133
2. Muhammad A. Hakim, Bangladesh Politics The Shahabuddin Interregnum (Dhaka : UPL, 1993) pp.51-53
3. Craig Baxter, op cit
4. Ibid
5. Talukder Maniruzzaman, Politics and Security of Bangladesh (Dhaka: UPL, 1994) p.146
6. Ibid pp.144-145
7. Ibid
8. S.A.Hakim, Begum Khaleda Zia A Political Biography (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT.LTD. 1992) p.160
9. Muhammad A.Hakim, 1993 op cit, pp.61-62
10. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op cit pp.149-155
11. Abdur Rob Khan, 'Political Challenges of Bangladesh The Twenty First Century' paper presented at the national seminar on Bangladesh Facing the Twenty First Century organised by the BIISS, Dhaka.05-06 Februray, 1995, p.11
12. Dhaka Courier, 12 March, 1993
13. Dhaka Courier, 21 May, 1993
14. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op cit, p.159
15. Dilara Choudhury, Constitutional Development in Bangladesh Stresses and Strains (Dhaka: UPL, 1995) p.80
16. Hakim and Huque, 'Constitutional Amendments in Bangladesh' Regional Studies vol.XII, No.2, Spring 1994, p.88
17. D.Choudhury, 1995 op cit, p.90
18. The Bangladesh Observer, October, 1991



19. Dhaka Courier, 21 May, 1993
20. Weekly Friday, 25-31 December, 1992
21. Dhaka Courier, 21.5.1993
22. The Bangladesh Observer, 13 August, 1992
23. Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (As modified up to 5th Feb.1992) Dhaka, 1994
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Michael Curtis, Comparative Government and Politics (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978)
28. Cummings and Wise, Democracy Under Pressure 4th Edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1981)
29. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
30. Parliament Secretariat, 1994
31. Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, 'Parliamentary Committee System in Bangladesh' Regional Studies, Islamabad, 13 (1), Winter Issue 1994-95 pp.31-40
32. Based on personal interview with a number of Opposition MPs.
33. Summary Proceedings of the Workshop on the Committee System organised by the CAC, 1993
34. Weekly Friday, 16 October, 1992
35. Ibid
36. Dhaka Courier, 11 March, 1994
37. Weekly Friday, 23-29 October, 1992
38. Dhaka Courier, 20 November, 1992
39. Craig Baxter, 1992 op cit, p.135
40. Weekly Friday, 30 October-5 November, 1992

41. Dhaka Courier, 12 February, 1993
42. Weekly Friday, 25-31 March, 1994
43. Weekly Bichitra, 13 May, 1994
44. Weekly Bichitra, 10 June, 1994
45. Janakantha, 22.9.1994
46. Dhaka Courier, 23 September, 1994
47. Daily Ittefaq, 16 September, 1994
48. Dhaka Courier, 12 February, 1994
49. Zillur Rahman Khan, 'Bangladesh in 1993 Values, Identity and Development' Asian Survey Vol.XXXIV No.2, Februray, 1994, p.162
50. Holiday, August 26, 1994
51. D.Choudhury, Holiday 26 August, 1994
52. Ataur Rahman, 'The Future of Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh' paper presented at a seminar organised by the Department of Government & Politics, J.U. on 5.6.1994 and  
'Three Years of Democratic Governance in Bangladesh'  
Asian Studies, No.13, June, 1994
53. Bichitra, 30 December, 1994
54. Daily Star, April 22, 1994
55. Dilara Choudhury, 1995 op cit,
56. Dhaka Courier, 7 October, 1994
57. Holiday, November 18, 1994



## Chapter-VI

### Summary and Conclusion

An Opposition political party has been the part and parcel of democratic form of government. As noted in Chapter-I great many scholars and political scientists have highlighted the importance, significance, and role of constitutional Opposition in practicing democratic politics. The system of organised constitutional Opposition first flourished in Britain, the classic land of parliamentary democracy. The concepts of democracy and official Opposition have been Western and are translated in to practice mostly in the Western world. With the development of democracy a political tradition has been established that both the government and Opposition in a democratic polity function on the basis of clear understanding that it should be the right of the majority party to rule the country for a fixed term and the Opposition being the minority should have the right to discredit the ruling party and appear as the alternative government alongwith its participation in the governmental and political processes. The essence of democratic political culture as developed in the West has been the tolerance of Opposition and dissent in the political order. As an integral part of the democratic structure the Opposition not only ensures its constant vigil over the executive but also bears the responsibility of smooth functioning of the democratic system. Constructive role of a responsible Opposition both inside and outside the legislature is thus a major requirement of a democratic order.

Unlike the developed democratic systems as represented by Britain and the United States where Opposition is legitimately institutionalised in the political system, a quite different picture is seen in most developing societies regarding practicing democracy or role of constitutional Opposition. Many new nations although adopted the path of their colonial powers in establishing liberal democracy yet they encountered great many difficulties in practicing the same in a dissimilar environment. A number of these societies thus experienced erosion of democracy leading to authoritarian rule. Several factors including unfavourable socio-economic structure; fragmented political culture; cleavages centering around language, race, culture, religion, region, and ethnic groups; lack of organisational continuity, permanent structure and leadership within the political parties; lack of political institutionalisation and effective leadership; absence of effective civil society; and presence of overdeveloped bureaucracy, politicised army and praetorian society put severe limitations upon these countries either to carry thorough democratic set up or to establish responsible government and Opposition. Though a number of developing societies have undergone authoritarian rule for years yet there have been efforts at democratisation and resurgence of democratic order in these countries which has been termed as 'third wave transitions to democracy' by eminent political scientist S.P.Huntington.

Bangladesh belonging to the Third World experienced colonial



rule for centuries and share most of the above mentioned characteristics of other developing countries. While struggling against the foreign rulers democratic ideals remained a source of inspiration among the people and their movements were thus organised with the aim of establishing democratic polity in the free soil. With the achievement of independence in 1971 Bangladesh's quest for democracy was met with the introduction of westminster variety of parliamentary democracy as per the constitution of 1972. But the parliamentary system was characterised by the dominance and brute majority of the ruling party. In the initial years there was no viable Opposition although controversy arose over the formation of Awami League government and the constituent assembly. As a result of formal split in the Awami League, JSD was formed and emerged as a challenge for the party in power. But in parliamentary election of 1973 the Opposition parties including the JSD suffered very badly. Marginal representation of Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad had a dysfunctional effect on the working of parliamentary system in the country. Moreover as the ruling party failed to recognise official Opposition in the parliament, it drastically reduced the strength of the Opposition in the House. Despite marginal presence, the feeble Opposition led by Jatiyo League chief, Ataur Rahman Khan raised different questions and issues through the use of some common legislative devices but without any impact on the government. The government was intolerant of Opposition in the country and failed to allow their free play. Promulgation of various ordinances

greatly diminished the rule-making power of the First Parliament. The ruling party's resorts to arbitrary practices were opposed to parliamentary norms and practices. Although the parliament was under the total control of the Awami League yet outside the legislature it faced severe challenge and threat especially from the underground opposition revolutionary parties. The government retaliated by adopting various legal and coercive measures. Although the revolutionary opposition parties through their violent actions posed a great challenge to the authority of the government yet due to ideological and internal conflicts they could not offer any alternative leadership with a broad political framework. The concept of Opposition was formally gone from the political scene when one-party presidential rule was introduced in the country in 1975 replacing the parliamentary system. With the brutal killing of Shiekh Mujib and overthrow of his government by a coup in August, 1975 Bangladesh went under army's praetorian rule.

Reappearance of Opposition was permitted within the framework of multi-party system during Zia's quasi-democratic presidential rule. There were mushrooming of political parties and massive factional trends among the major parties in their revival process under PPR. Though faced restrictions and constraints the major Opposition led by the Awami League challenged the Zia regime by participating both the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 1978 and 1979 respectively. The main Opposition was highly critical of Zia's changing of the nationality and the fundamental



state principles of the constitution. It opposed the diminishing of the status of the legislature whose existence depended on the pleasure of the president. The election of 1979 returned Awami League as the largest parliamentary Opposition whose leader was officially recognised as the Opposition leader of the House. Despite curtailment of the powers and status of the legislature, the Opposition duly participated in the legislative transactions in all the eight sessions of the Second Parliament. Their taking part in raising adjournment motions, calling attention to urgent public importance, and participation in question hour, discussion on matters of importance for short duration, half-an-hour discussion and committee system indicated Opposition MPs' responsibilities to perform duties both as parliamentarians and people's representatives. But because of lack of parliamentary sovereignty and absence of cabinet responsibility and most importantly the existence of an all powerful president, Opposition's attempts to scrutinise government activities were of little effect. It also could not do anything to stop President's using the elected parliament to legalise his undemocratic moves. Opposition's objective to continue their movement within the legislature was thus not achieved and as such anti-regime movement was organised by them in the streets. The Opposition was also resentful of General Zia's policy of appeasing the anti-liberation elements and distorting national history. Major Opposition parties were not a united force as they suffered from crisis of leadership, factional splits, ideological differences and mutual distrust. Zia 's policy of distri-

bution of goodies was, however, greatly responsible for encouraging intra-party feuds and disagreement in the opposition camp. Owing to the above weaknesses Opposition movements failed to generate enough public support and reached no goal. After the demise of Zia the major Opposition parties could not form a united alliance against the BNP's presidential candidate, Justice Sattar and became unable to present itself as a valid alternative of BNP government. There were a few resistances from the political front against General Ershad's demand for army's constitutional role and his taking over state power in March 1982.

During Ershad rule due to suspension of political party activities the initial opposition came from the student community. With the lifting of ban on politics Opposition parties's major demand centred on restoring democratic order in the country. This period witnessed great factionalism in all the leading political parties and the regime's 'carrot and stick' policy also led to mushrooming of political organisations in the country. The necessity of organising anti-regime movement induced the major parties to form political alliances and as such two major alliances, 15-party alliance led by Awami League and 7-party alliance led by BNP emerged in the political scene playing a crucial role and leading the anti-Ershad movement. Having mutual differences on national issues the two alliances forged a semblance of unity vis-a-vis the regime. They opposed Ershad's quest for legitimacy and his proposals for restoring democracy. Opposition's anti-regime movement was thwarted with the



sudden participation of the Awami League in the Third Jatiya Sangsad election in 1986 breaking the 15-party alliance. Awami League while defending its above participation emphasised on the need to organise movement both inside and outside the parliament. Awami League came up as the major parliamentary opposition but boycotted the very first session protesting sitting of the parliament amidst martial law. Although Awami League was very critical of legitimising Ershad's activities yet its very participation in the Jatiya Sangsad elections helped Ershad to form the Third Parliament with majority seats and pass the Seventh Amendment Bill validating all martial law actions. There was limited Opposition participation in the legislative transactions of the Third Jatiya Sangsad as they boycotted the first and second sessions. The Opposition tried to use the parliamentary mechanisms during their participation in the third and final sessions of the parliament. Though the Third Sangsad had considerable Opposition MPs yet they had a very limited scope to organise anti-government moves within the legislature which was used by the praetorian regime as a rubber stamp. The Opposition thus had only option to take its movement to the streets. Facing massive election rigging the mainstream Opposition boycotted the presidential and Fourth Jatiya Sangsad elections held during Ershad rule. The Fourth Parliament thus lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the people. As such the 'loyal Opposition' failed to obtain popular image though it sincerely participated in the legislative transactions in all the seven parliamentary sessions. The major Opposition excepting the Jamat

were very critical of Ershad's passing the Eighth Amendment and using Islam for political purposes. Anti-Ershad movement, however, continued with various political programmes of the Opposition. Mainstream Opposition's movement lacked enough strength because of the surfacing of factional trends and lack of trust and rivalry between the AL leader Hasina and BNP leader Begum Zia. This gave General Ershad an opportunity to obtain strategic advantage in his favour. The coalescence of the major student groups through the formation of All Parties Students Unity proved catalyst for uniting Awami League and BNP and the signing of a joint declaration by the major alliances. In spite of the regime's repressive measures the Opposition's anti-autocracy movement and the Mass Upsurge of 1990 finally succeeded in forcing Ershad to handover power to a caretaker government for smooth transition towards democracy.

In the post 1991 parliamentary election BNP formed the government alongwith a initial support from the Jamat-i-Islami. Awami League emerged as the main parliamentary Opposition in the House with Sheikh Hasina being the official Opposition leader. Ershad's Jatiya Party became the second largest parliamentary opposition party followed by the Jamat-i-Islami. Unlike the previous four parliaments the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad began its journey with a strong organised Opposition. In order to prevent future autocracy the Awami League-led Opposition effectively pressurised the party in power to switch over to parliamentary democracy. To this end Awami League also moved constitution amendment bill in the very



first session of the Fifth Parliament. After examination of both the government and Opposition bills by a select committee the Twelfth Amendment Bill was adopted by the House introducing parliamentary system in Bangladesh anew. Objections were, however, raised by the Opposition as the newly introduced parliamentary system in a way established prime ministerial government by incorporating punitive clauses against the members of parliament and similar other provisions. Mode of election of the president was also not acceptable to the Opposition as this would only bring a subservient head of the state to the prime minister. The validity of the Presidential Election Act and Presidential Election Amendment Ordinance were thus legally challenged by the Opposition in the High Court. Knowing its minority position in the House the main parliamentary Opposition, Awami League contested the elections of the Speaker and the President mainly as a mark of its protest against the government's nomination of a controversial person for these posts and the ruling party's inability to consult the parliamentary Opposition to fill up these neutral positions. Although initially the major Opposition extended its cooperation to the party in power to return to parliamentary democracy and activate the legislature yet disagreements on various issues like indemnity ordinance, Golam Azam issue led it to withdraw its cooperation and organise anti-government movement. The parliamentary Opposition unsuccessfully moved a no-confidence motion against the government on the charges of ruling party's total failure in running the affairs of the state and deteriorating law and order situation. the Opposition also

used other parliamentary devices including question hour, adjournment motion, calling attention to urgent public importance, half-an-hour discussion and the committee system to ventilate public grievances, put forward Opposition issues and objections, and criticise the government and bureaucracy. The Opposition alleged that the legislature's rule-making functions were greatly hampered because of the government's promulgation of ordinances and later bringing those in the House for legislative approval. The Prime Minister was also accused of her extreme tardiness in attending the parliamentary sessions. The Opposition was resentful of the ruling party's keeping the emergency provisions and resort to autocratic laws and its utter failure to implement the decisions of the joint declaration signed by the three alliances. Opposition's <sup>movement</sup> anti-government/gained momentum after the alleged rigging of the ruling party in the by-elections at Mirpur and Magura-2 constituencies. Thus the Awami League-led combined Opposition came up with vigorous demand for holding future national elections by a neutral caretaker government by making necessary amendment to the constitution. In order to forge greater unity vis-a-vis the government the major opposition parties, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamati-Islami came closer despite their mutual ideological differences and disagreement on other national issues. In order to realise their above demand the parliamentary Opposition parties continued sustained boycott of the Jatiya Sangsad since the thirteenth session and recently resigned en masse creating political deadlock



in the country. So far all attempts for negotiations and dialogue have been unsuccessful to resolve the on going political crisis due to uncompromising attitudes of both the Treasury and the Opposition. As such within three years of its journey parliamentary system has become non-functioning in Bangladesh and the country is beset by unmitigated crisis and confusion.

Successful working of Western liberal democracy depends to a great extent on fulfilling certain conditions, and these include presence of rule of law, peaceful contention among competing political elites, mutual trust, cooperation, compromise and the like. Upholding the cause of democracy thus becomes a great responsibility borne equally by both the party in power and the Opposition. Since independence Bangladesh's politics is characterised by the absence of the above conditions and an overwhelming presence of a feeling of intolerance mostly emanating from a confrontational political culture.

Skepticisim and suspicions regarding the prospects of liberal democracy in Bangladesh abated largely with the restoration of parliamentary system anew in 1991 on the basis of consensus. In spite of the existence of great many odds it was expected that the tasks of nurturing the nascent democratic order would be duly taken care of both by the party in power as well as the Opposition. Initial period also witnessed cooperation between the two sides

but the fair beginning was soon marred as the deep rooted divisions came to the forefront. Although Bangladesh has been a homogeneous country yet social and national integration is a far cry due to gross lack of agreement on important national issues most notably nationalism, ideology, religion, national heroes, and even national flag and anthem. Consensus among the contending parties on the form of government has been a positive development but the adoption of parliamentary democracy only in form and not in substance can not help running the same. Because of a lack of fundamental trustworthiness of the politicians and political elites they rely overwhelmingly on written aspects and procedures. But liberal democracy particularly parliamentary system besides written laws depend considerably on obeying certain conventions, norms, and unwritten rules of political game. Confusion often arises in our system as those who are in power and those outside the power fail to follow the established democratic norms and parliamentary traditions. As noted in Chapter-I that political parties of this country are clustered around personalities and are seldom organised for wider national interests. Absence of democratic practice within the political organisations, little experience of working under democratic rule and colonial legacy lead the parties to indulge in agitational politics and violence using students, mustans and similar groups as their footsoldiers. Mutual suspicion and negative criticism make the party in power intolerant of any opposition and thus fails to differentiate between the Opposition against



the government and the Opposition against the state. On the other hand being left out of the governmental process the constitutional Opposition does not see the parliament much of use to achieve their goal or realise their demands and thus they employ their energies to organise movements in the streets to unseat the government through violent means and agitations. In this manner the political process of this country has degenerated into a sole struggle for power between the ruling and the major Opposition parties. After a few successful sessions the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad became the lacklustre organ of mere political sensitivities not in line with the time-honoured parliamentary fine art. The parliamentary Opposition did not form any Shadow Cabinet to scrutinise day-to-day activities of the Treasury Bench. Both the ruling party and the constitutional Opposition failed to turn the national Parliament into an effective forum of debate about national policies or programmes. As such the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad suffered from functional failures with regard to the major socio-economic problems of the masses in a new democracy.

The fair journey of newly established democracy in Bangladesh was greatly hampered as the ruling party side tracked from the major agreements of the Three Alliances; depended on the personality cult of the prime minister; took arbitrary decisions on important issues bypassing the legislature and without consulting

the constitutional Opposition; and developed intolerant attitude and incapability to accept divergent opinions from the major Opposition forces and government back benchers. Equally hampering factors were the Opposition's politics of rhetorics bypassing the real problems of the nation; inability to come up with a well prepared alternative national policies or programmes; depending on the personality cult of the leaders; resorting to extra-constitutional violent practices; becoming dysfunctional through sustained boycott of the parliament and failure to use the Sangsad to uphold their caretaker demand. Needless to mention that quick way to get power rather than improving the quality of debate and deliberations or educating the civil society greatly impede Opposition's quality of operation and destroy democratic norms and practices. Civil society which is the strong guarantee for institutionalising democracy has not very adequately developed in Bangladesh to voice the feelings of the concerned people and politically relevant strata who cry for democracy so much. Failure of the party in power and the constitutional Opposition to attain political graduation over the period 1991-1994 has led to loss of all forms of accountability and retention of control by the permanent state apparatus- the bureaucracy. Due to the failure of establishing parliamentary culture by the concerned parties parliamentary system has turned into a moribund affair. It is thus not the fault of the system but the fault of its practitioners. Many observers feel that unless pragmatism is developed among the leaders of the concerned parties and a compromise formula is worked



-246-

out the prolonged political stalemate and crisis may lead to collapse of the system. It should be remembered that it is the responsibility of all concerned to uphold the cause of democracy since there are hardly any alternative systems of rule. Thus for the sake of saving people's hard earned democracy in the country cooperation and compromise of both the Treasury and the Opposition are greatly called for. Both sides should develop a political culture of mutual trust and agree to make concerted efforts to establish an effective political sector to practice democracy free from intervention of extra-constitutional forces.

## Appendix I

Opposition Members of Parliament in the Fifth Jatiya  
Sangsad

Sl.no.	Name	Constituency	Party
1.	Md.Mojahar Hussain	Panchgar-2	CPB
2.	Md.Khademul Islam	Thakurgaon-1	Awami League
3.	Md. Dabirul Islam	Thakurgaon-2	CPB
4.	Md.Mukhlesur Rahman	Thakurgaon-3	Awami League
5.	M.Aminul Islam	Dinajpur-1	Awami League
6.	Shatish Chandra Roy	Dinajpur-2	Awami League
7.	M.Abdur Rahim	Dinajpur-3	Awami League
8.	Md.Mizanur Rahman Manu	Dinajpur-4	Awami League
9.	Md.Mustafizur Rahman	Dinajpur-5	Awami League
10.	Md.Azizur Rahman Chowdhury	Dinajpur-6	Jamat-i-Islami
11.	Abdur Rauf	Nilphamari-1	Awami League
12.	Md.Shamsuddoha	Nilphamari-2	CPB
13.	Md.Azharul Islam	Nilphamari-3	Awami League
14.	Md.Abdul Hafiz	Nilphamari-4	NAP(M)
15.	M.Zainal Abedin Sarkar	Lalmonirhat-1	Jatiya Party
16.	MD.Mujibur Rahman	Lalmonirhat-2	Jatiya Party
17.	Md.Reazuddin Ahmed	Lalmonirhat-3	Jatiya Party
18.	N.Karimuddin Bharasa	Rangpur-1	Jatiya Party
19.	Sri Paritosh Chakravarty	Rangpur-2	Jatiya Party
20.	H.M.Ershad	Rangpur-3	Jatiya Party
21.	Md. Shah Alam	Rangpur-4	Jatiya Party
22.	Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury	Rangpur-5	Jatiya Party
23.	Shah Moazzem Hossain	Rangpur-6	Jatiya Party
24.	AKM Shahidul Islam	Kurigram-1	Jatiya Party
25.	M.Tajul Islam Chowdhury	Kurigram-2	Jatiya Party
26.	M.Amjad Hossain Talukder	Kurigram-3	Awami League
27.	Md.Golam Hossain	Kurigram-4	Jatiya Party
28.	M.Hafizur Rahman Pramanik	Gaibandha-1	Jatiya Party
29.	Abdur Rashid Sarkar	Gaibandha-2	Jatiya Party
30.	Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury	Gaibandhak-3	Jatiya Party



31.	Lutfur Rahman Chowdhury	Gaibandha-4	Jatiya Party
32.	Advocate Fazle Rabbi	Gaibandha-5	Jatiya Party
33.	Md. Shahadatuzzaman	Bogra-2	Jamat-i-Islami
34.	Md. Latifur Rahman	Nawabganj-3	Jamat-i-Islami
35.	Md. Azizur Rahman Mia	Naogaon-1	Awami League
36.	Md. Shahiduzzaman	Naogaon-2	Awami League
37.	Md. Nasiruddin	Naogaon-4	Jamat-i-Islami
38.	Sardar Amzad Hossain	Rajshahi-3	Jatiya Party
39.	Tajul Islam Mohammad Faruq	Rajshahi-4	Awami League
40.	Shankar Gobinda Chowdhury	Natore-2	Awami League
41.	Md. Abu Bakar	Natore-3	Jamat-i-Islami
42.	Md. Abdul Quddus	Natore-4	Awami League
43.	Mohammad Nasim	Sirajganj-1	Awami League
44.	Motiur Rahman Nizami	Pabna-1	Jamat-i-Islami
45.	Md. Abdus Sobhan	Pabna-5	Jamat-i-Islami
46.	Prof. A. Mannan	Meherpur-1	Awami League
47.	Md. Abdul Awal Mian	Kushtia-4	Awami League
48.	Moulana Habibur Rahaman	Chuadanga-2	Jamat-i-Islami
49.	Tabibur Rahaman Sardar	Jessore-1	Awami League
50.	Md. Rafiqul Islam	Jessore-2	Awami League
51.	Md. Roushan Ali	Jessore-3	Awami League
52.	Shah Hadiuzzaman	Jessore-4	Awami League
53.	Khan Tipu Sultan	Jessore-5	Awami League
54.	Md. Sakhawat Hossain	Jessore-6	Jamat-i-Islami
55.	Md. Asaduzzaman	Magura-2	Awami League
56.	Dhirendranath Shaha	Narail-1	Awami League
57.	Sharif Khashruzzaman	Narail-2	Awami League
58.	Dr. Mozammel Hossain	Bagerhat-1	Awami League
59.	Md. Abdul Khaleque Talukder	Bagerhat-3	Awami League
60.	Mufti Moulana Abdus Sattar	Bagerhat-4	Jamat-i-Islami
61.	Sheikh Harunur Rashid Mian	Khulna-1	Awami League
62.	Mustafa Rashidi Shuja	Khulna-4	Awami League
63.	Salahuddin Yusuf	Khulna-5	Awami League
64.	Shah Md. Ruhul Quddus	Khulna -6	Jamat-i-Islami
65.	Shiekh Ansar Ali	Shatkhira-1	Jamat-i-Islami
66.	Kazi Shamsur Rahman	Shatkhira-2	Jamat-i-Islami
67.	A.M. Riasat Ali	Shatkhira-3	Jamat-i-Islami
68.	Mansur Ahmed	Shatkhira-4	Awami League

69.	Gazi Nurul Islam	Shatkhira-5	Jamat-i-Islami
70.	Dhirendra Deb Nath	Barguna-1	Awami League
71.	Mujibur Rahman Talukder	Barguna-3	Awami League
72.	A.S.M.Firoz	Patuakhali-2	Awami League
73.	AKM Jahangir Hossain	Patuakhali-3	Awami League
74.	Md. Anwarul Islam	Patuakhali-4	Awami League
75.	Tofael Ahmed	Bhola-1	Awami League
76.	Zafarullah Chowdhury	Bhola-4	Awami League
77.	Md. Abdul Hasanat Abdullah	Bakerganj-1	Awami League
78.	Rashed Khan Menon	Bakerganj-2	Workers Party
79.	Mohiuddin Ahmed	Bakerganj-4	Awami League
80.	Shudhangshu Sekhar Halder	Pirojpur-1	Awami League
81.	Anwar Hossain	Pirojpur-2	Jatiya Party
82.	Mohiuddin Ahmed	Pirojpur-3	BAKSAL
83.	Abul Hasan Chowdhury	Tangail-1	Awami League
84.	Shahjahan Siraj	Tangail-4	JSD (S)
85.	Maj.Gen(Retd)Mahmudul Hasan	Tangail-5	Jatiya Party
86.	Abul Kalam Azad	Jamalpur-1	Awami League
87.	Alhaj Rashed Mosharrof	Jamalpur-2	Awami League
88.	Mirza Azam	Jamalpur-3	Awami League
89.	Shah M.Rafiqul Bari Chy	Sherpur-1	Jatiya Party
90.	Begum Motia Chowdhury	Sherpur-2	Awami League
91.	Promodh Mankhin	Mymensingh-1	Awami League
92.	Md. Shamsul Huq	Mymensingh-2	Awami League
93.	Md. Nazrul Islam Sarkar	Mymensingh-3	Awami League
94.	Khurram Khan Chowdhury	Mymensingh-8	Jatiya Party
95.	Altaf Hossain Golondaj	Mymensingh-10	Awami League
96.	Mosharraf Hossain	Mymensingh- Netrokona	Awami League
97.	M. Jubed Ali	Netrokona-3	Awami League
98.	Dr.M.Mizanul Huq	Kishoreganj-4	Awami League
99.	Advocate M.Abdul Hamid	Kishoreganj-5	Awami League
100.	Rahmat Ali	Gazipur-1	Awami League
101.	Dr.Asfar Hossain Mollah	Gazipur-3	Awami League
102.	Abdul Wazed Chowdhury	Rajbari-1	Awami League
103.	Dr. AKM Asjad	Rajbari-2	Awami League
104.	Md. Abdur Rouf Mian	Faridpur-1	Awami League
105.	Syeda Begum Sajeda Chy.	Faridpur-2	Awami League



106.	Musharraf Hossain	Faridpur-4	Awami League
107.	Dr. Kazi Abu Yusuf	Faridpur-5	Awami League
108.	Kazi Abdur Rashid	Gopalganj-1	Awami League
109.	Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim	Gopalganj-2	Awami League
110.	Sheikh Hasina	Gopalganj-3	Awami League
111.	Nur-i-Alam Chowdhury	Madaripur-1	Awami League
112.	Shahjahan khan	Madaripur-2	Awami League
113.	Syed Abul Hossain	Madaripur-3	Awami League
114.	Hemayatullah	Shariatpur-1	Awami League ✓
115.	Col.(Ret.)Shawkat Ali	Shariatpur-2	Awami League ✓
116.	Abdur Razzak	Shariatpur-3	BAKSAL ✓
117.	Nazir Hussain	Sunamganj-1	CPB
118.	Suranjit Sengupta	Sunamganj-2	Ganatantri Party
119.	Abdus Samad Azad	Sunamganj-3	Awami League
120.	A. Zahur Mian	Sunamganj-4	Awami League
121.	Abdul Majid	Sunamganj-5	Awami League
122.	Maqsud Ibne Aziz Lama	Sylhet-2	Jatiya Party
123.	Abdul Mukit Khan	Sylhet-3	Jatiya Party
124.	Emran Ahmed	Sylhet-4	Awami League
125.	Moulana Obaidul Huq	Sylhet-5	Islami Oikka Jote
126.	Sarafuddin Khashru	Sylhet-6	Jatiya Party
127.	Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury	Maulvibazar-1	Jatiya Party
128.	Nwab Ali Abbas Khan	Maulvibazar-2	Jatiya Party
129.	Azizur Rahman	Maulvibazar-3	Awami League
130.	M.Abdus Shaheed	Maulvibazar-4	Awami League
131.	Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury	Habiganj-1	Jatiya Party
132.	Sharifuddin Ahmed	Habiganj-2	Awami League
133.	Abu Lais Md.Mubin Chowdhury	Habiganj-3	Jatiya Party
134.	Enamul Huq	Habiganj-4	Awami League
135.	Murshed Kamal	B.Barua-1	Jatiya Party
136.	Kazi Md. Anwar Hussain	B.Barua-5	Jatiya Party
137.	Abdul Matin Khashru	Comilla-5	Awami League
138.	Monirul Huq Chowdhury	Comilla-9	Jatiya Party
139.	Kazi Zafar Ahamed	Comilla-12	Jatiya Party
140.	Mesbahuddin	Chandpur-1	Awami League
141.	Zainul Abedin Hazari	Feni-2	Awami League

142.	Barrister Moudud Ahmed	Noakhali-5	Jatiya Party
143.	Prof. Md. Waliullah	Noakhali-6	Awami League
144.	Mustafizur Rahman	Chittagong-3	Awami League
145.	Nozibul Bashar (Alhaj)	Chittagong-4	Awami League
146.	Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury	Chittagong-6	NDP
147.	Mohammad Yusuf	Chittagong-7	CPB
148.	Alhaj Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury	Chittagong-12	Awami League
149.	Shahjahan Chowdhury	Chittagong-14	Jamat-i-Islami
150.	M.Sultanul Kabir Chowdhury	Chittagong-15	Awami League
151.	Enamul Haq	Cox's Bazar-1	Jamat-i-Islami
152.	Mohammad Ishaq	Cox's Bazar-2	Awami League
153.	Mostaque Ahmed	Cox's Bazar-3	Awami League
154.	Kalpa Ranjan Chakma	Khagrachari	Awami League
155.	Dipankar Talukder	Rangamati	Awami League
156.	Bir Bahadur	Bandarban	Awami League



## Appendix II

## A Profile of Jatiya Sangsads (Parliaments) in Bangladesh

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Date of commencement	7.4.1973	2.4.1979	10.7.1986	25.4.1988	5.4.1991
Leader of the House	Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	Shah Azizur Rahman	Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury	Moudud Ahmed	Begum Khaleda Zia
Opposition Leader of the House	-----	Asaduz-zaman Khan	Sheikh Hasina	A.S.M Abdur Rob	Sheikh Hasina
Total Sessions	8	8	4	7	13 (with Opposition)
Total Laws enacted	154	65	38	142	154 (till 18th session)
Date of dissolution	6.11.1975	24.3.1982	6.12.1987	6.12.1990	---

Source: Compiled by the author from M.A.Hakim op cit, and Parliament Secretariat, 1995

## Appendix III

Broad Grouping of the Standing Committees in the Fifth  
Jatiya Sangsad

Ministerial committees	Finance and Audit committees	Other Standing committees	Select committees	Total
Standing Committees on each Ministry	Committees on Public Accounts; Estimates; and Public Undertakings;	Committees on Petition; Privileges; Government Assurances; Business Advisory; Private members bill; Rules; House; and Library.	Committees on Certain Specific subjects	
34	3	8	4	49

Compiled by the author from the Parliament Secretariat, 1994.



## Appendix IV

Statement of Reports submitted by the Standing Committees  
till March 1994

Sl.no.	Name of Standing Committee	Number of Reports
-----	-----	-----
a.	Public Accounts	3
b.	Public Undertakings	2
c.	Privileges	8
d.	Rules	1
e.	Petition	1
f.	Law and Parliamentary Affairs(MC)	1
g.	Shipping (MC)	1
h.	Education (MC)	1
i.	Civil Aviation and Tourism (MC)	1
j.	Special Committee formed under rule 266	1
-----		
Total		20

Source: Parliament Secretariat, 1994

MC means Ministerial Committee

## Appendix V

Comparison of Occupations of Legislators of Four Major  
Political Parties Elected in 1991

Demographic characteristics	BNP		AL		JP		Jamiat	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lawyers	25	18	21	24	7	20	1	6
Businessmen & Industrialists	81	57	44	50	20	57	5	28
Former army officers now all businessmen/ Industrialists	13	9	1	1	2	6	-	-
Landholders	3	2	5	6	3	9	1	6
Teaching in School and Madrassa	3	2	2	2	-	-	7	39
University & College Teachers	6	4	7	8	2	5	1	6
Journalists	-	-	3	4	1	3	1	6
Former Govt Officers	4	3	1	1	-	-	1	6
Doctors	4	3	3	4	-	-	1	6
Student Leaders	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Full-time politicians	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	141	100	88	101*	35	100	18	103

\* Total % exceeds 100 because of rounding

Source: Talukder Maniruzzaman Politics and Security of Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1994, p.152



Appendix VI

November 1990 Joint Declaration  
of Three Alliances

"People from all classes and professions are waging a heroic struggle. The goals are: emancipation from the misrule of the autocratic Ershad regime; ouster of Ershad regime, establishment of a stable democratic process and way of life; and re-establishment of the consciousness and values of the War of Liberation.

"People have suffered jails, torture and repression and have even sacrificed their lives at various stages of the struggle. This they have done with the goal of establishing a genuine representative system of government.

"One of the main aims and purposes of the struggle, which the people have been waging at the cost of their blood, is to end the malpractice of changing government through unconstitutional means like killings, coups etc., and to ensure, instead, change of government through the constitutional means of free, fair elections.

"Hence the central theme of our struggle is to establish a sovereign parliament through a free and fair election.

"But the Ershad regime, which usurped power through unconstitutional means, has been tirelessly endeavouring to perpetuate itself in power through all sorts of chicaneries, tricks and use of force and farcial elections.

"Every election held under this regime followed a regular pattern --vote-stealing, false voting, forcible occupation of polling centres, hijacking of ballot boxes, vote-dacoity, media coup, and finally, announcement of the results of voterless elections. Under these circumstances, no free and fair election can be held under this regime.

"We, the 15-party alliance, the 7-party alliance and the 5-party alliance shall not take part in any election held under Ershad and the illegitimate Ershad government---be the election presidential or parliamentary. We shall not only boycott such elections but also shall resist these elections.

"We, the 15-party alliance, the 7-party alliance and the 5-party alliance, shall participate only in an election to a sovereign parlia-

ment and only when such an election is held under a non-partisan, neutral government.

"Keeping this in view and reflecting the hopes and aspirations of the people as well, we are jointly issuing the following unequivocal declaration regarding the main demands and aims of the current movement.

"1. With a view to freeing the country from the clutches of autocratic Ershad and his regime which has been foisted on the nation through murders, coups and conspiracies, and establishing genuine democracy and democratic system of government in line with the consciousness and values of independence and War of Liberation.:

"(A)Ershad and his government will be forced to resign and a Vice-President, who will be acceptable to the three alliances which are engaged in the anti-autocracy and anti-communal movement, will be appointed while continuing the constitutional process and under the relevant provisions of the Constitution, i.e., Article 51(A) Clause 3 and Article 55(A) Clause 1. The President will dissolve the present government and Parliament and will himself resign and hand over power to that Vice-President.

"(B)An interim, caretaker government will be formed under that Vice-President; the prime responsibility of that government will be to ensure holding of a free and fair election to a sovereign parliament within three months.

"2.(A) The head of the caretaker government will be non-partisan and neutral, i.e., he will not be a follower or be associated, directly or indirectly, with any political party, and will not participate in presidential, vice-presidential or parliamentary elections. No minister of his caretaker government will likewise participate in elections.

"(B)The caretaker government will only run the routine administration and will reconstitute the Election Commission as well as reorganize the work and responsibilities of the Election Commission with a view to holding free and fair elections.

"(C)The confidence of the voters has to be reestablished that they will be able to exercise their right to vote freely and without any pressure in accordance with their own choice and conscience; and this has to be ensured.



"(D)The massmedia, including the radio and television, will have to be made into independent and autonomous bodies so that they become completely neutral; and it has to be ensured that all parties participating in elections will get unhindered scope for publicity.

"3. The interim, caretaker government will hand over power to the sovereign parliament, elected through free and fair elections, and the government will remain accountable to that parliament.

"4. (A) In recognition of the sovereignty of the people, the process of constitutional rule in the country will be made safe and undisturbed, and all attempts at usurping power through unconstitutional means will be resisted. An elected government must not be unseated without election through any unconstitutional or extra-constitutional means or on any other plea.

"(B) The fundamental rights of the people, the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and the rule of law will be ensured.

"(C) All laws that conflict with fundamental rights will be rescinded."

## Bibliography

---

### Books

---

- Ahamed, Emajuddin, Bureaucratic Elites in Segmented Economic Growth: Bangladesh and Pakistan (Dacca : University Press Ltd. 1980)
- ed. Bangladesh Politics (Dacca: CSS, 1980)
- Military Rule and the Myth of Democracy (Dhaka: University Press Ltd, 1988)
- ed. Bangladeshe Shangshadiya Gonotantra Prashangik Bhabna (Dhaka: Karim Book Corporation, May, 1989)
- ed. Society and Politics in Bangladesh (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1989)
- Ahmad, Borhanuddin, The Generals of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1993)
- Ahmed, Abul Mansur, Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bachar (Dacca: Nao-roj Kitabistan, 1975)
- Ahmed, Moudud , Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest For Autonomy (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. Second revised edition, 1991)
- Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1983)
- Ahmed, Muzaffar and Kalam, Abul, Bangladesh Foreign Relations (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1989)
- Ali, M.M. Shawkat, Politics Development and Upazila (Dhaka: NILG, 1986)
- Almond, G.A. and Coleman, J.S. eds. The Politics of the Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971)
- Al-Razee, Aleem, Constitutional Glimpses of Martial Law in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1988)
- Anisuzzaman, M., Bangladesh Public Administration and Society (Dacca: Bangladesh Books Int. Limited, 1979)
- ed. Bangladesher Lok Prashashan (Dhaka: CSS, 1982)



- Anisuzzaman, M. and Ahmed, Badaruddin, Planning for Local Development (Comilla: BARD, 1989)
- Bagchi, A.K., The Political Economy of Underdevelopment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Ball, R.Allen, Modern Politics and Government 2nd edition (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977)
- Banu, U.A.B. Razia Aktar, Islam in Bangladesh (Leiden, New York: E.J. Brill, 1992)
- Barker, Ernest, Reflections on Government (London: Oxford University Press, 1942)
- Barker, Rodney ed. Studies in Opposition (London: Macmillan, 1971)
- Baxter, Craig, Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting (Boulder: West View Press, 1986)
- Bertsch, G.K. et al, Comparing Political Systems: Power and Politics in Three Worlds 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978)
- Bhuiya, Abdul Wadud, Emergence of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1982)
- Burger, A.S. Opposition in a Dominant Party System (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1969)
- Chakravarty, S.R. Bangladesh The Nineteen Seventy Nine Elections (New Delhi: South Asia Publishers, 1988)
- Choudhury, Dilara, Bangladesh and the South Asian International System (London: Scorpion Publishers, 1992)
- , Constitutional Development in Bangladesh: Stresses and Strains (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1995)
- Choudhury, G.W. Constitutional Development in Pakistan 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1969)
- , The Last Days of United Pakistan (London: C. Hurst, 1974)
- Chowdhury, Najma, The Legislative Process in Bangladesh: Politics and Functioning of the East Bengal Legislature 1947-58 (Dhaka University, 1980)

- Clapham, Christopher, Third World Politics: An Introduction  
(London: Croom Helm, 1985)
- Cummings and Wise, Democracy Under Pressure An Introduction to  
American Political System 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt Bruce  
Jovanovich Inc. 1981)
- Curtis, Michael, Comparative Government and Politics 2nd ed. (New York:  
Harper & Row Publishers, 1978)
- Daadlier, The Role of the Military in Emerging Countries (The Hague:  
Mouton, 1962)
- Dahl, Robert A. ed. Political Oppositions in western Democracies  
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966)
- Poliarchy Participation and Opposition (New Haven, 1971)
- ed. Regimes and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University  
Press, 1973)
- Diamond, Larry, et al, eds. Democracy in Developing Countries Vol.3  
Asia (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, 89)
- Dodd, C, Coalitions in Parliamentary Government (Princeton : Prince-  
ton University Press, 1976)
- Duverger, Maurice, Political Parties (London: Methuen & Co. 1954)
- Emerson, Rupert, From Empire to Nation (Cambridge: Harvard Univer-  
sity Press, 1960)
- Political Modernization (Denver: University of Denver  
Press, 1963)
- Feldman, Herbert, Revolution in Pakistan: A Study of Martial Law  
Administration (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)
- Finer, Herman, Theory and Practice of Modernment Governments  
(London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1962)
- Finer, S.E. The Man on Horseback (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969)
- Franda, Marcus, Bangladesh The First Decade (New Delhi: South Asian  
Publishers, Pvt. Ltd. 1982)



- Fridrich, Carl J. Constitutional Government and Democracy 4th ed.  
(Calcutta: Oxford & TBH Publishing Co. 1966)
- Gupta, D.C. Indian Government and Politics 4th revised edition  
(New Delhi: Visak Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1979)
- Hafiz, Abdul and Iftekharuzzaman, Bangladesh in the 1990s: Society,  
Polity and Economy (Dhaka: BIISS, 1990)
- Hafiz, Abdul and Rob, K.A. Nation Building in Bangladesh (Dhaka:BIISS, 198
- Hakim, Muhammad A. Bangladesh Politics The Shahabuddin Interregnum  
(Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1993)
- Hakim, S.A. Begum Khaleda Zia A Political Biography (New Delhi: Vikas  
Publishing House Pvt, Ltd. 1992)
- Haq, Abul Fazl, Bangladesher Shashan Babosthya O Rajniti (Dhaka:  
Bangla Academy, 1988)
- Haqqi, S.A.H. ed. Indian Democracy at the Crossroads (Delhi: Mittal  
Publications, 1986)
- Harun, Shamsul Huda, Parliamentary Behaviour in a Multi-National State  
1947-56 Bangladesh Experience (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of  
Bangladesh, 1984)
- Hasanuzzaman, Al Masud, Bangladesh:Crisis of Political Development  
(Department of Govt & Politics, Jahangirnagar University, 1988)
- Held, David, Models of Democracy (Cambridge: Polity Press , 1987)
- Held, David, & Politt, C, eds. New Forms of Democracy (London: Sage, 1986)
- Hoque, A.N. Shamsul, Administrative Reforms in Pakistan (Dacca: NIPA, 1970)
- Hoque, A.N. Shamsul, Subnational Administration in Bangladesh and Its  
Role in Development An Overview (Rajshahi: Dept. of Political  
Science, Rajshahi University, 1982)
- Hossain, Golam, General Ziaur Rahman and the BNP (Dhaka: UPL, 1988 )
- ed. Bangladesh Sarkar O Rajniti (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1992)
- Huntington, S.P. The Soldier and the State (Cambridge: Harvard Uni-  
versity Press, 1957)

- Huntington, S.P. Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968)
- Huq, M.Ameerul, ed. Exploitation and the Rural Poor (Comilla: BARD, 1978)
- Huque, Ahmed Shafiqul, Paradoxes in Public Administration ( Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1990)
- Hussain, Shawkat Ara, Politics and Society in Bengal (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1991)
- Islam, Syed Serajul, Bangladesh State and Economic Strategy (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1988)
- Jahan, Rounaq, Pakistan Failure in National Integration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972)
- Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1987)
- Jahangir, B.K. Rural Society, Power Structure and Class Practice Dhaka: CSS, 1982)
- Janowitz, M. The Professional Soldier (Illinois: Glencoe, 1960)
- Jennings, W.Ivor, Parliament (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970)
- Johnson, J.J. The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962)
- Karim, A.K.Nazmul, The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1980)
- Keith, A.B. The British Cabinet System 2nd ed, ( N.H. Gibbs, 1952)
- Key, V.O. Jr. Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups 5th ed. (New York: Crowell, 1964)
- Khan, M.M. and Thorp eds. Bangladesh: Society, Politics and Bureaucracy (Dhaka: CENTAS, 1984)
- Khan, M.M. and Zafarullah, H.M. eds. Politics and Bureaucracy in a New Nation Bangladesh (Dacca: CENTAS, 1980)
- Khan, Salimullah ed. Politics and Stability in Bangladesh Problems and Prospects (Deptt.of Govt & Politics, J.U. 1985)



- Khan, Zillur Rahman, Martial Law to Martial Law Leadership Crisis in Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1984)
- Khan, Zillur Rahman and Khan, Serajul Alam, Constitution and Constitutional Issues (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1985)
- Kochanek, Stanley, Patron Client Politics and Business in Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1993)
- Kothari, Rajni, Politics in India (Boston: Little Brown and Co. 1970)
- Kukreja, Veena, Civil-Military Relations in South Asia (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991)
- La Palombara, J. Politics Within Nations (Prentice Hall : Yale University Press, 1974)
- La Palombara, J. and Weiner, Myron. eds. Politics, Parties and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966)
- Lane, Jan-Erik and Ersson Svante, O. Politics and Society in Western Europe (London: Sage Publications, 1987)
- Lifschultz, L. Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution (London: Zed Press, 1979)
- Lijphart, A. Democracy in Plural Societies A Comparative Exploration (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1989)
- Lindsay, A.D. The Essentials of Democracy (London: Oxford University Press, Sixth Impression, Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1967)
- Linz, J. The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)
- Lipset, S.M. Political Man ( London, 1960)
- Lively, Jack, Democracy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975)
- Lowell, A. The Government of England (New York: 1924)
- Lyon, Peter, and Manor, James, eds. Transfer and Transformation: Political Institutions in the New Commonwealth (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983)

- MacIver, R.M. The Web of Government (New York: The Free Press, 1965)
- Macridis, Roy, Contemporary Political Ideologies (Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1983)
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder, Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh (Dacca: Bangladesh Book Int.Ltd. 1975)
- Group Interests and Political Changes Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: South Asia Publishers, 1982)
- The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1988)
- Military Withdrawal From Politics A Case Study (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1988)
- Politics and Security of Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1994)
- Mascarenhas, A. Bangladesh : Legacy of Blood (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986)
- Mayo, H.B. Introduction to Democratic Theory ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1960)
- McLennan, Barbara, N. ed. Political Opposition and Dissent (New York: Dunellen Pub. Co, Inc. 1976)
- McWhinney, Edward, Constitution-Making, Principle, Process, Practice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981)
- Merkel, Peter, M. Political Continuity and Change (Bombay: Allied Publishers Private Ltd. 1967)
- Mills, C.W. The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956)
- Morrisjones, N.H. The Government and Politics of India (New Delhi: 1971)
- Naik, J.A. The Opposition in India and the Future of Democracy (New Delhi: S.Chand & Co. 1983)
- Novak, James, J. Bangladesh Reflections on the Water (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1993)



- Nwabreze, B.O. Constitutionalism in Emergent Nations (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973)
- O'Donnel, Peter, Bangladesh Biography of a Muslim Nation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982)
- Osmany, Shireen Hasan, Bangladeshi Nationalism History of Dialectics and Dimensions (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1992)
- Palmer, Norman, D. The Indian Political System (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1971)
- Powell G. Bingham Jr. Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability and Violence (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982)
- Preston, P.W. Theories of Development (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982)
- Pye, Lucian W. and Verba, Sydney Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965)
- Rahman, Anisur, The Lost Moment (Dhaka: Univ. Press Ltd, 1993)
- Rahman, Atiur, SAARC Political Economy (Dhaka: Univ. Press Ltd, 1985)
- Peasants and Classes (Dhaka: Univ. Press Ltd, 1986)
- Rahman, T. Shamsur, Soviet-Bangladesh Shamparka 1971-75 (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1993)
- Ram, D, Sundar, Role of Opposition Parties in Indian Politics (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992)
- Rashiduzzaman, M. Pakistan A Study of Government & Politics (Dacca: Ideal Library, 1967)
- Politics and Administration in the Local Councils (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- Russell, Bertrand, Power: A New Social Analysis (London: Unwin Books, 1975)
- Rustow, D.A. A World of Nations (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1967)

- Sabine, George, H. A History of Political Theory 3rd ed. (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. 1968)
- Sartori, Geovanni, Democratic Theory (New York: Frederick A. Praeger 1965)
- Saxena, R. The Role of Opposition in Indian Politics (Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1986)
- Sen, Rangalal, Political Elites in Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1986)
- Sharma, Pushpa, Working of Parliamentary Government in India (Delhi: Modern Publishers & Dist. 1985)
- Shelly, Mizanur Rahman, Emergence of a New Nation in a Multi-Polar World: Bangladesh (Dhaka: Univ. Press Ltd. 1979)
- Shils, Edward, Government and Opposition (London: Macmillan, 1971)
- Shrivastava, M.P. Parliamentary Accountability and Supervision Over Public Enterprises (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992)
- Silva, De K.M. ed. Problems of Governance (New Delhi: Kanark Pub. Pvt. Ltd. 1993)
- Smith, Joel, et al Legislatures in Development (Durham: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Soe, Christian, Comparative Politics 86/87 (Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishers Group, 1986-7)
- Spann, R.N. ed. Constitutionalism in Asia (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963)
- Umar, Badruddin, Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh (Dacca: Mowla Brothers, 1974)
- Towards Emergency ( Dacca: Muktadhara, 1980)
- Varma, S.P. Modern Political Theory (New Delhi: Vani Educational Books, 1986)
- Verba, S. and Kim, J. The Modes of Democratic Participation (London: Sage Pub. 1971)



- Vorys, Karl Von. Political Development in Pakistan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965)
- Weiner, Myron and Huntington, S.P. Understanding Political Development (Boston: Little Brown, 1987)
- Westergaard, Kirsten, State and Rural Society in Bangladesh (New Delhi: Select Book Service, Ltd. 1986)
- Wheare, K.C. Legislatures (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- Wood, Geof, D. Bangladesh Whose Ideas Whose Interests (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1994)
- Zeigler, Harmon, Political Parties in Industrial Democracies (Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers Inc. 1993)
- Ziring, Lawrence, Bangladesh From Mujib to Ershad An Interpretive Study (Dhaka: University Press Ltd. 1992)

Articles:

- 
- Ahamed, Emajuddin, 'Neo-colonialism: Centre-Periphery Relations Developing Countries and Political Development', Dhaka University Patrika, Vol.10, December, 1979
- 'Crisis of Democracy in Bangladesh' S.Khan ed. Politics and Stability in Bangladesh Problems and Prospects (Deptt. of Govt & Politics, J.U. 1985)
- 'Crisis of Liberal Democracy in South Asia', The Journal of Political Science, Vol.II, Issue-1, 1985
- Ahmed, Nizamuddin, 'The 2nd BNP Government: A Mid-Term Appraisal' Regional Studies Vol.XII, No.3, Summer 1994
- Alam, S.M.Nurul, 'Problems of Social Integration: Main Issues

Concerns and Tasks for the Future' Paper presented in a National Seminar on Social Development Bangladesh Perspectives organised by SSRC, Planning Div. Dhaka, 4-5 Oct. 1994

Alam, S.M. Shamsul, 'Islam, Ideology and the State in Bangladesh' Journal of Asian and African Studies, XXVIII, 1-2, 1993

Alavi, Hamza, 'The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh' New Left Review Jul/Aug. 1974

Aminuzzaman, Salahuddin, 'Institutional Process and Practices of Administrative Accountability: Role of Jatiyo Sangsad (Parliament) in Bangladesh' South Asia Studies Vol.10, No.2, July, 1993

Barone, Michael, 'Democracy and Politics' Dialogue No.103, 1/1994.

Baxter, Craig, 'Bangladesh in 1990 Another New Beginning' Asian Survey, Vol.XXXI, No.2, 1991

----- 'Bangladesh: A Parliamentary Democracy, If They Can Keep It' Current History March 1992

Bertocci, Peter, 'Bangladesh in 1994 A Year of Protracted Turmoil' Asian Survey Vol.XXV, No.2, 1985

----- 'Bangladesh in 1985 Resolute Against the Storms' in Asian Survey Vol.XXVI, No.2, 1986

Bhuiya A. Wadud, 'Persistent Praetorianism Bangladesh's Second Military Regime' Journal of Political Science Association June, 1986

Carey, James. W. 'The Mass Media and Democracy' Journal of International Affairs, Summer, 1993

Choudhury, Dilara, 'Democracy in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects' Asian Studies, No.12, 1993

----- 'Political Accountability of a Parliamentarian as an Individual' (Mimeo)

----- 'Constitutionalism in Bangladesh' Asian Studies, No.13, 1994

Choudhury, R.I. 'Foreign Policy, Comparative Politics and International Relations: A Conceptual Framework and Research Design' Political Studies Vol.I Dept. of Political Sc, Chittagong University, 1978



- Dahl, Robert A. 'The Problem of Civic Competence' Journal of Democracy Vol.3, No.4, Oct. 1992
- Diamond, Larry, 'Three Paradoxes of Democracy' Journal of Democracy Vol.I, No.3, Summer, 1993
- 'The Global Imperative: Building a Democratic World Order' Current History, Vol.93, No.579, Jan, 1994
- Gibson, James, et al 'Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union' Journal of Politics, Vol.54, No.2, 1992
- Haider, M.Zaglul, 'The Bloodless Military Coup in Bangladesh' The Journal of Political Science Vol.II, Issue-1, 1985
- Hakim and Huque, 'Constitutional Amendments in Bangladesh' Regional Studies Vol.XII, No.2, 1994
- Halpern, M. 'Middle Eastern Armies and the New Middle Class' Johnson, J.J. ed. The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1962)
- Haque, Azizul, 'Bangladesh 1979: Cry for a Sovereign Parliament' Asian Survey Vol.XX, No.2, 1980
- 'Bangladesh in 1980: Strains and Stresses--Opposition in the Doldrums' Asian Survey Vol.XXI No.2, 1981
- 'Politics in Bangladesh: Conflict and Confusion' Regional Studies 3:2, Spring, 1985
- 'Zia's Politics & Strategies: A Peep Into Their Limitations' Asian Studies, No.13, 1994
- Hasanuzzaman, Al Masud, 'Bureaucracy-People Relations and Access Problem in Rural Development of Bangladesh' BISS Journal Vol.6, No.3, July, 1985
- 'Problems of Rural Politics in Bangladesh' Political Science Association Journal, Dhaka, 1986
- 'Overdeveloped Bureaucracy and Political Development in Bangladesh' ed. Bangladesh Crisis of Political Development (Deptt.of Govt & Politics, J.U. 1988)

- Hasanuzzaman, Al Masud, 'Interest Group Politics in Bangladesh: The Case of Sramik Karmachari Oikka Parishad (SKOP) BIISS Journal No.12, 1991
- 'Constraints of Local Government Bodies in Bangladesh: Case of Upazila Parishad' Asian Studies No.12, 1993
- 'Parliamentary Committee System in Bangladesh' Regional Studies Vol.XIII, No.1, Winter 1994-95
- Hoque, A.N.Shamsul, 'Nation Building in Bangladesh: The Process of Institutional Building' Hafiz and Kahn Nation Building in Bangladesh (Dhaka: BIISS, 1986)
- Horowitz, Donald L. 'Democracy in Divided Societies' Journal of Democracy Vol4, No.4, 1994
- Hossain, Mosharraf, 'Nature of State Power in Bangladesh' Journal of Social Studies No.5, October 1979
- Hoxie, R.Gordon, 'Democracy in Transition' Presidential Studies Quarterly Vol.23, No.1, 1993
- Huber, Evelyne et al, 'The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy' The Journal of Economic Perspectives Vol.7, No.3, Summer 1993
- Huntington, S.P. 'Democracy's Third Wave' Journal of Democracy Vol.2, No.2, Spring 1991
- 'How Countries Democratize' Political Science Quarterly Winter, 1991-92
- 'What Price Freedom?' Dialogue 2, 1994
- Huq, Abul Fazl, 'Constitution-Making in Bangladesh' Ahamed Emajuddin ed. Bangladesh Politics (Dacca: CSS, 1980)
- Huque and Akhter, 'Militarization and Opposition in Bangladesh: Parliamentary Approval and Public Reaction' Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 27:2, July, 1989
- Islam, Syed Serajul, 'Is Civic Culture Essential for Democracy' The Journal of Political Science Vol.II, Issue-1, 1985
- 'Bangladesh in 1986 Entering a New Phase' Asian Survey Vol.XXVI, No.2, 1987



- Islam, Syed Serajul, 'Polity and Politics During Mujib Era'  
Ahamed Emajuddin ed. Society and Politics in Bangladesh (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1989)
- Jamison, Linda S. 'Executive-Legislature Relations After the Cold War' The Washington Quarterly, Spring, 1993
- Kabir, B.M.Monoar, 'Movement and Elections: Legitimization of the Military Rule in Bangladesh' Political Science Association Journal, Dhaka, 1988
- Khan, Abdur Rob, 'Political Challenges of Bangladesh The Twenty First Century' paper presented at the national seminar on Bangladesh Facing the Twenty First Century organised by the BISS, 5-6 Februray, 1995
- Khan, M.M. and Zafarullah, H.M. 'The 1979 Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh eds. Politics and Bureaucracy in a New Nation Bangladesh (Dacca: CENTAS, 1980)
- Khan, Zillur Rahman, 'Bangladesh in 1981: Change, Stability and Leadership' Asian Survey 22:2, February, 1982
- 'Bangladesh in 1993 Values, Identity and Development' Asian Survey Vol.XXXIV, No.2, 1994
- Kyi, Aung San Suu, 'In Quest of Democracy' Journal of Democracy Vol.3, No.1, January, 1992
- Lipset, S.M. 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy' American Political Science Review Vol.53, 1959
- 'Reflections on Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy' Journal of Democracy Vol.4, No.2, April 1993
- Merkel, Peter.H. 'Which are Today's Democracies' International Social Science Journal Vol.45, No.2, May 1993
- Miller, Turdi.C. 'The Operation of Democratic Institutions' Public Administration Review Nov/Dec, 1989
- Mintz, Alex and Geva Nehemia, 'Why Don't Democracies Fight Each Other' The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol.37, No.3, September 1993

- Muravchik, Joshua, 'Review Essay Exporting Democracy' ORBIS,  
Fall, 1993
- Nordlinger, Eric, 'Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule  
Upon Economic and Social Change in Non-Western States'  
American Political Science Review 64 (4), Dec. 1970
- Novak, Michael, 'Democracy: The Collapse of the Alternatives'  
Freedom at Issue May/June, 1990
- Pauker, G.J. 'Southeast Asia as a Problem Area in the Next Decade'  
World Politics 11 (2) April, 1959
- Pye, Lucian W. 'The Non-Western Political Process' Journal of Politics  
20, No.3, Aug. 1958
- 'Armies in the Process of Political Modernization'  
Johnson, J.J. ed. The Role of the military in Underdeve-  
loped Countries (Princeton: Princeton Univ.Press, 1962)
- Rahman, M.Ataur, 'Bangladesh in 1982: Beginnings of the Second Decade'  
Asian Survey Vol.XXIII, No.2, 1983
- 'Bangladesh in 1983 A Turning Point for the Military'  
Asian Survey Vol.XXIV, No.2, 1984
- 'Challenges of Governence in Bangladesh' BIISS Journal  
Vol.14, No.4, 1993
- 'Three Years of Democratic Governence in Bangladesh'  
Asian Studies No.13, June 1994
- Rahman, Mahbubur, 'Dysfunctional Aspects of Political Order in Bangla-  
desh' The Jahangirnagar Review Part-II Vol.XI & XII  
1986-88
- Rahman, Syedur, 'Bangladesh in 1988 Precarious Institution-Building  
Amid Crisis Management' Asian Survey Vol.XXIX, No.2, 1989
- Rahman, T.Shamsur, 'One-Party BKSAL: An Analysis' Asian Studies No.13,  
1994
- Rashiduzzaman, M. 'Changing Political Patterns in Bangladesh:Internal



Constraints and External Fears' Asian Survey Vol. 17, No.9  
September 1977

Rashiduzzaman, M. 'Bangladesh in 1978: Search for a Political Party'  
Asian Survey Vol.XIX, No.2, 1979

----- 'Bangladesh: The Civil Society and the New Equilibrium'  
Asian Studies, No.13, 1994

Remington, Michael J. 'The Committee System in the US Congress: An  
American Perspective for the Pakistan Parliament' Keynote  
paper presented to the National Assembly Seminar, Islamabad,  
Pakistan, February 20, 1993 (mimeo)

Riggs, Fred w. 'Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical  
View' in La Palombara ed. Bureaucracy and Political Deve-  
lopment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963)

Saul, John, 'The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Tanzania' The  
Socialist Register, London, 1974

Shils, Edward, 'Political Development in New States II' Comparative  
Studies in Society and History Vol.II 1959-60

Solaiman, M. 'Opposition Politics and Mujib's Quest For Power'  
Political Science Association Journal, Dhaka, 1988

Stepan, Alfred, 'On the Tasks of a Democratic Opposition' Journal  
of Democracy Vol.I, No.2, Spring, 1990

Sultan, Naim, 'Intervention and Role of Military in Third World  
Societies: Theoretical Perspectives' Asian Studies No.13,  
1994

Wayne, Stephen J. Political Parties in the United States (Mimeo)  
1993

Weiner, Myron, 'Political Integration and Political Development'  
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social  
Sciences Vol.358, 1965

Wright, Dennis, 'Islam and Bangladesh Polity' South Asia (10)2

Zaman, N.Q., 'Ziaur Rahman: Leadership Styles and Mobilization Process'  
Khan and Thorp eds. Bangladesh: Society, Politics and  
Bureaucracy 'Dhaka: CENTAS, 1984)

Reports and Documents:  
-----

- Bangladesh Country Report on Human Rights, 1994, Prepared by the U.S. Department of State
- Bangladesh Gazette, Extraordinary
- Centre for Development Research Bangladesh (CDRB), Public Administration Sector Study, Bangladesh, Decision-Making: Issues, Problems and Recommendations, July, 1993
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Report on Women's Participation in Bangladesh Politics: Scope, Nature and Limitations October, 1993
- Election Manifestoes of Awami League, BNP, and Jamat-i-Islami
- Gathantantra of the Awami League, Revised edition, 1992
- Ghoshona patra of the Awami League, 1992
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1992/93
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (as modified upto June, 1988)
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Press Information Department, A Background Paper on Bangladesh Fifth Jatiyo Sangsad Election, Handout no. 429, Feb. 1991
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Report of the Local Government Structure Review Commission, 1992
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Statistical Year Book, 1993
- Ministry of Planning, Memorandum for the Bangladesh Aid Group 1994-95, March 27, 1994
- Ministry of Planning, Women and Men in Bangladesh Facts and Figures, 1992, April 4, 1993
- Proceedings of the First Jatiya Sangsad, 1973-75
- Proceedings of the Second Jatiya Sangsad, 1979-82



- Proceedings of the Third Jatiya Sangsad, 1986-87
- Proceedings of the Fourth Jatiya Sangsad, 1988-90
- Proceedings of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad, 1991-94
- World Bank, Bangladesh: Managing Public Resources for Higher Growth Report no. 9379-BD (Washington, April, 1992)

National News Papers and Periodicals

The Bangladesh Observer

The Bangladesh Times

Bichitra

The Daily Star

The Dhaka Courier

Holiday

The Independent

The Ittefaq

The Janakantha

The Morning Sun

The Robbar

The Weekly Friday