

Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)

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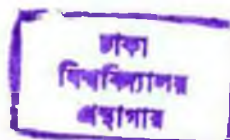
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Abstract

This thesis inquires and examines the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996). It begins with a hypothesis of Samuel P. Huntington. Samuel P. Huntington's model set forth in his essay (1968) "Political Order in Changing Societies" is used as a theoretical basis. According to Huntington, the rates of social mobilisation and the expansion of political participation in the developing countries are high. The rates of political organisation and institutionalization are low. The result is political instability and disorder. The primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change. The present study is an attempt to test the validity of this hypothesis when applied to the case of Bangladesh.

It is argued that the paces of change have brought about a continuous process of social mobilisation and political participation. The increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have given birth, among others, to a huge number of middle class populations in the country since its independence in 1972. In Bangladesh, however, the middle class population includes teachers, students, and small shopkeepers, different low paid government and non-government officials and lawyers. It also includes civil and military bureaucrats, industrialists, rich businessmen, owners of big business houses and top officials of different non-government organisations. Thus in Bangladesh the middle class people can be divided into three groups, upper middle class, middle middle class and lower middle class.

Institutionalization of democracy is not possible without conscious effort of the middle class. However, the middle class population had been the main driving force to materialise the victory in the 1971's War of Liberation. Mentionably, immediate after the independence alongside the weak institutions, the number of middle class population was not sufficient to sustain with the democratic goals of the country. There was also lack of conscious effort in this respect.

Since independence a considerable number of middle class population have emerged. Accordingly, the conscious effort of the political forces dominated by the middle class population compelled the former authoritarian ruler Ershad to hand over power to a consensus neutral person on 6 December 1990. The moment is marked as the

beginning of democratic transition. Since 1990 Bangladesh never went back to its pre-democratic status. But the country's journey for consolidating its democratic achievements is saddled with many constraints. These are the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

While explaining and analysing the issues under study it is observed that a single theory is not sufficient. Apart from any possible theoretical base line, the study on democracy also needs to be viewed and examined from multi-disciplinary approaches, i.e. sociology, economics, history, anthropology, social-psychology and also from philosophy. The study is supposed to be partaken a messy shape. Thus the study on institutionalization constraints of democracy has essentially become a comprehensive one.

However, to meet up the requirements of the study, we have defined the concept of key issues. Institutionalization of democracy means, to institutionalise democracy and thus to establish it as a part of the socio-cultural and political system or organisation. Institutionalization of democracy brings *value and stability* in the nexus between *state and society*.

The institutionalization process of democracy can be measured through the criteria provided by Huntington. They are adaptability, complexity, coherence and autonomy. In Bangladesh the institutionalization process of democracy has also envisaged with Bengalis' struggle for existence, that also tended them to armed struggle for an independent nation-state.

Institutions are the creation of society. The institutions are the channels through which democracy finds its meaning and expression. The state is an ensemble of institutions: the executive powers, which includes, president, prime minister, cabinet and other immediate advisers, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the legislative branch, political parties, civil society and various forms and levels of local and regional government. While state is said to perform the political functions of society, it is the values, tradition and culture that are regarded as the basis of the society. On the other hand, democracy as a political system could have a number of socio-economic determinants.

Institutionalization of democracy relates to democratisation, while the question of 'democratic consolidation' arises. The two parts of 'democratisation' are 'democratic

transition' and 'democratic consolidation'. In addition, institutionalization process is a part of 'democratic consolidation'.

The study would focus mainly on two major institutions like the *Jatio Sangsad* (the national parliament) and the major political parties along with relevant other institutions to measure the degree of institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. The incapacity of the institutions to cope with the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation give birth to political disorder and political instability. The existence of weak institutions alongwith personal autocratic rule of former President Ershad miserably failed to regulate and accommodate the growing disorder and instability. However, both the input institution like political party and all the out put institutions i.e. Executive (Army Ruler), Parliament (Rubber Stamp) and Judiciary were weak. However, the conscious effort of the political forces dominated by the middle class population aspired for institutionalization of democracy. Their aspiration was revealed in the historic Joint Declaration in November 6, 1990, by the three alliances of the political parties. In terms of this joint declaration, Ershad was compelled to hand over power to a neutral person, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

The general elections for the 5th Parliament were held under the caretaker government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. The event has been marked as the initial stage of democratic transition. The process of democratic transition was supposed to be followed by the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy. The conscious effort that caused the process of democratic transition was also present at the initial stage of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy.

The step towards the consolidation process of democracy could be mentioned in this regard. This conscious effort had been prevailing till the 12th Amendment to the Constitution. With the passage of 12th Amendment the country has switched over to the parliamentary democracy. It may be mentioned that the 12th Amendment of the Constitution was passed in the *Jatiya Sangsad* adhering to the process of *consent and debate*. The presence of weak institutions could have been overlaid by the conscious effort of the political forces. The latest evidence in this regard could be found in the holding of referendum for 12th amendment. Thereupon the road map for

institutionalization process of democracy has been eclipsed by serious constraints. Nevertheless, there is hardly any conscious effort for emancipation.

The continued process of social mobilisation and political participation tend to create a changing scenario, which could hardly be regulated by the weak institutions. One of the main tasks for the institutionalization process of democracy is to make institutions sufficient and effective. However, that also needs conscious effort of the political forces. Without conscious effort of the political forces none of the impediments can be overcome. Nonetheless, these are yet to be attained.

Bangladesh has a long list of success experiences to overcome the crisis with conscious effort. However, unlike its previous experiences, the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh has been encircled by weak institutions and absence of conscious effort. Hence instability and disorder persist. It may be mentioned that these instability and disorder are manifested in different forms. Nevertheless, these are nothing but the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. To find out the constraints we had conducted a sample survey. The number of sample population in this survey was 174. The respondents attempted to response a set of questions. From the answers of the questions we have found as many as 35 constraints. These constraints have been grouped into five broad categories. They are socio-cultural, economic, political, global and periodic. Nonetheless, all constraints are seemed to be evenly existent in the subsequent period (s).

Acknowledgements

Since the historical moment of 1989, when the great divide of Berlin wall was abolished, I have been thinking to undertake a research work on the strength and effectiveness of democracy for my beloved motherland, Bangladesh. In fact, Bangladesh's efforts for independence was moved by her innate cravings for democracy. The problems were mostly "inexperienced political exercise", which is of utmost importance. However, the 1990's pro-democratic movement provided suitable stimulant in this respect. After eight years of Bangladesh's democratic dispensation in 1991, the Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission, and Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka come ahead in 1998 to fulfill my desire to work on "Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)".

However, the desire to undertake the research work has been succeeded when Professor M. Sayefullah Bhuyan (former Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka) and Professor Dr. M. Nazrul Islam (present Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka) have affectionately agreed to jointly supervise my research work. Nonetheless, the task of conceptualising "institutionalization of democracy" with a universally accepted view and present it in the context of newly democratising country like Bangladesh has been very challenging. Because, data, information and related other materials have been very scant. On the other hand, even the keenest observer could not forecast the ultimate outcome of the efforts that are being engaged on institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. I had to work, therefore, under great handicaps.

During the years from 1996 to the first half of 2002 I worked in different libraries in Dhaka and Trivandrum, Kerala (India) for getting insights and collecting the relevant information and data.

I consider it a great privilege to have Professor M Sayefullah Bhuyan and Professor Dr. M. Nazrul Islam as my supervisors. Their encouragement led me to undertake and pursue this challenging investigation. But for their invaluable guidance, constructive criticism, discussion and suggestion, it would not have been possible for me to crystallize my ideas and prepare manuscript of this Ph. D. thesis.

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The world may not have "eagerly awaited" the emergence of the thesis, but my mother, elder sister, wife, younger brother, daughter Tithi and son Rana and other family members of our family and friends, certainly did. However, for their interest in my studies and for cheerfully putting up with my absence for four long years, I wish to express my heartiest gratitude to all of them.

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List of Tables and Figures

Table/Figure Number	Subject of the Table/Figures	Page
Figure 1 ✓	Schematic presentation of institutionalization indicators applied to institutionalization of democracy with reference to Bangladesh	31
Figure 2	Schematic presentation of Institutions working in a political system and indicators of Institutionalization	46
Table 1	Size and growth rate of population of Bangladesh in different years	72
Table 2	Population structure by gender and residence	74
Table 3	Religious composition of population in Bangladesh in different years before the first census in the country	75
Table 4	Percentage distribution of population by religious communities in different census years from 1901 to 1991	76
Table 5	Total Fertility rates in Bangladesh in different years	79
Table 6	Percent of currently married women of reproduction age wanting no more children, 1969-1994	82
Table 7	Per cent of rural children suffering various forms of malnutrition, 1975-1986	82
Table 8	Average capita consumption (grams/person/day) of selected food items in rural areas, 1973-1984	83
Table 9	Population projections of Bangladesh, 1995-2052	84
Table 10	Crude Birth Rate (CDR) in different years	85
Table 11	Growth of national and urban population in Bangladesh, 1960-1991	87
Table 12	Rate of Growth of Urban population	87
Table 13	Components of population Growth in 6 major cities in Bangladesh, 1961-1974	88
Table 14	Percentage contribution of migration to Urban Population Growth	89
Table 15	Percentage distribution of Population by broad age-groups and dependency ratio	90
Table 16	Possible effects of social mobilisation on demand for children	91 ✓
Table 17	Increasing trends in some selected social development indicators of Bangladesh in different years	100 ✓
Table 18	Literacy rates and school attendance, 1974-1991	101
Table 19	Literacy rate of persons of all ages by sex in census years, 1961-1991	102
Table 20	Adult literacy rate	102
Table 21	Enrolment differences in different levels of education in Bangladesh and other countries and region	103
Table 22	Labour force participation for persons aged 10-64 years by educational level, 1992	104
Table 23	Employment in broad sector in Bangladesh	105 ✓
Table 24	Sectoral change in incremental labour force, 1961-1981	105
Table 25	Medialisted newspapers and gross circulation	109
Table 26	Medialisted periodicals and gross circulation	110
Table 27	Distribution of Households by Number of persons, 1960-1981	140
Table 28	Distribution of Households in dwelling units by materials of wall and roof by residence, 1981	142

Table 29	Major agencies of global economic governance (with membership figures as the mid-1990s)	156
Table 30 ✓	Bangladesh's Experiences of governance since 1972 until June 1996	207
Table 31	Hartals (General Strikes) in different regimes	208 ✓
Table 32	Increased rates of social mobilisation in Bangladesh as evidenced by some selected indicators in different years	216 ✓
Table 33	Party wise results in February 1991 general elections	236
Table 34	Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh	238 ✓
Table 35 ✓	Division wise rate of political participation and share of major parties in 1991 parliamentary general elections	245
Table 36	Division wise indicators of social mobilization during 1991 Employment in broad economic category	245
Table 37	Changing scenario of representation in the Legislatures of Bangladesh in different years	251
Table 38	Largest and smallest constituency in February 1991 election	256
Table 39 ✓	Some selected indicators of social mobilisation and political participation of Bangladesh in different years	259 ✓
Table 40	Employment in broad economic category	264
Table 41	Urban-Rural growth differentials (URGD) in Bangladesh	265 ✓
Table 42	Population change during 1981-1991	265
Table 43	Women and men in the labour force and crude participation rates	266
Table 44	Average annual growth rate of labour force participation by residence	266
Table 45	Name of women candidates who won in 1991 election	267
Table 46	Women's political electoral participation 1979-1996	268 ✓
Table 47	Social correlates of the members of parliament (MPs)	272
Table 48	Social correlates of the population (seen as electorate)	272
Table 49	Comparison of education, age and legislative experiences of the parliament members (Legislators) in different general elections	274
Table 50	Number of multiple seat winners in 1991 parliamentary elections	276
Figure 3	Features of the 5 th Jatiya Sangsad that may facilitate or undermine the process of good governance or institutionalization of democracy in the country	297 ✓
Table 51	Plan size, actual expenditure and GDP growth rate of different years	300
Table 52	GDP composition and growth rate in different years	301
Table 53	Accounts of registration under the Board of Investment during 1991-1996	303
Table 54	Sessions and working days of the 5 th Jatiya Sangsad(JS)	309
Table 55	Number of sessions and working days of different JS in Bangladesh	311 ✓
Table 56	List adjournment motions tabled by the opposition members till the Thirteenth session of the 5 th parliament	314
Figure 4	The Issues of adjournment motions tabled during the 5 th JS	315
Figure 5	Issues of call-attention notices to matters of urgent public importance raised by the MPs in the 5 th JS	316
Figure 6	Issues for discussion of matter of urgent public importance for short time	316
Figure 7	Issues of half-an-hour discussion as per rule 60 of the parliamentary rules of procedure during JS's term	317

Table 57	Call-attention notices on matters of urgent public importance raised by the MPs in the 5 th JS	318
Table 58	Notices on matters of urgent public importance for short duration in the opposition-participated sessions of the 5 th JS	318
Table 59	Parliamentary committees in the 5 th JS	323
Table 60	Meetings of the parliamentary standing committees those nominated by the speaker	325
Table 61	Meetings of the Standing Committees those appointed by the House	325
Table 62	Figures of reported crimes 1991-1997	332
Table 63	Number and proportion of population below recommended calories intake and "hard core" poverty lines by residence	335
Table 64	The number of overseas employments in different years	340
Table 65	Devaluation of Taka in different years	341
Table 66	Annual GDP growth during 1990-1996	345
Table 67	Sectoral shares of GDP at current market prices	348
Table 68	Production of food grain	349
Table 69	Number of accounts and amount of Taka in the loan accounts having more than one crore Taka each to government and private accounts	359
Table 70	Number of accounts of private account holders having more than one crore Taka each	361
Table 71	Number of private account holders having more than Ten crore Taka deposit each	361
Table 72	Landlessness in Bangladesh in different years by category	363
Table 73	Some social and demographic characteristics of the sample	392
Table 74	Occupation of the interviewees	392
Table 75	Findings of survey on institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh	394

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AL	Bangladesh Awami League
ALPP	Bangladesh Awami League Parliamentary Party
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BIMSTEC	Bangladesh India Myanmar Singapore and Thailand Economic Council
BIS	Bank of International Settlements
BKSAL	Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BPC	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CDR	Crude Birth Rate
CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
COP	Combined Opposition Party
CPB	Communist Party of Bangladesh
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CSP	Civil Service of Pakistan
DC	Developing Countries
D-8	Developing Eight Countries
EC	Election Commission
EPCS	East Pakistan Civil Service

EU	European Union
FEMA	Fair Election Monitoring Alliance
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GATT	General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade
G7	Group of Seven
HDPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HDR	Human Development Report
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICB	Investment Corporation of Bangladesh
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOSCO	International Organisation for Securities Commission
IT	Information Technology
JIB	Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh
JP	Jatiya Party
JS	Jaitiya Sangsad (National Parliament of Bangladesh)
JSD	Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNA	Member of National Assembly
MNC	Multi National Corporation
MP	Member of Parliament
NAM	Non-aligned Movement

NAP	National Awami Party
NBR	National Board of Revenue
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NPCTG	Non-party caretaker government or CTG =Caretaker government.

These two terms are used interchangeably.

NSC	National Security Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PB	Privatisation Board
PIB	Press Institute of Bangladesh
PPR	Political Party Regulation
RMG	Readymade Garments
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SKOP	Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad ✓
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
SPA	Special Power Act
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TNC	Trans National Corporation
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activity
UPP	United People's Party

URGD	Urban Rural Growth Differentials
US	United States of America
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republic
VAT	Value Added Tax
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WP	Worker's Party
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Table of Contents

	Content	Page
•	Abstract	i-iv
•	Acknowledgments	v-vi
•	List of Tables	vii-ix
•	List of Abbreviations	x-xiii
•	Table of contents	xiv-xvii
Chapter		
Chapter I	Introduction	1-18
	I.1 Objectives and Significance	1
	I.1.a Research Questions	3
	I.1.b The Arguments	5
	I.2 Periodization	10
	I.3 Limitations	13
	I.4 Methodology and Sources of Data	15
	I.5 Thesis Structure	16-18
Chapter II	✓ Theorizing Institutionalization of Democracy	19-41
	II.1 Approaches to the Study of Politics and Dependency Theory	19
	II.2 Quest for theorizing Institutionalization Process of Democracy in Bangladesh	36-41
Chapter III	Concept of Key Issues	42-67
	III.1 The Concept of Democracy	42
	III.2 Institutions of Democracy	44
	III.3 Institutionalization of Democracy	46
	III.4 Legitimacy and Institutionalization of Democracy	53
	III.5 Institutionalization of Democracy and Democratisation	55
	III.6 Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh	59
	III.7 Social Mobilisation and Political Participation	64-67

Chapter IV	Geography and Demographic Situation	68-93
Chapter V	Factors Influencing Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh	94-163
	V.1 Specific Evidences of Social Mobilisation	100-110
	V.2 Generalised Social Mobilisation, Periodic and other Factors	111-146
	V.3 Globalisation Factor	147-163
Chapter VI	Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh (1971-1990)	164-208
	VI.1 First phase 1971-15 August 1975, Beginning and End of Democracy	164
	VI.2 Second Phase 1975-1990, Interruption of Democratisation Process	179
	VI.2.a Abrupt Constitutional Change and Army Coup D'état 1975-1981	179
	VI.2.b Pseudo Democracy, May 1981-1982	183
	VI.2.c Reign of Autocracy, March 1982-December 1990	189
	VI.3 Third Phase Quest for Democracy, 1987-1990	195
	VI.3.a End of Authoritarianism	200-208
	Beginning of Democratic Transition, December 1990	
Chapter VII	Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)	209-292
	VII. 1 Social Mobilisation and Democratisation	210
	VII. 2 General Elections for the Fifth Parliament	219
	VII. 3 Political Participation and February 1991 General Elections	248
	VII. 4 Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution	283-292
	<i>End of so called Presidential democracy</i>	
	<i>Beginning of Parliamentary democracy</i>	
Chapter VIII	Governance of BNP and Its Challenges During 1991-1996	293-381
	VIII.1 Governance of the BNP	294-306
	VIII.2 Working of 5 th Jatiya Sangsad	307-320
	VIII.3 Formation of Parliamentary Committees	321-327
	VIII.4 Challenges to Governance	328
	VIII.5 Economic Challenges,	338

	VIII.6 Political challenges,	370-381
	<i>Demand for Caretaker Government</i>	
Chapter IX	Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)	382-481
	IX.1 About sample survey	390
	IX.2 About sample population	391
	IX.3 Findings	394
	IX.4 Discussion	402
	IX.4.a Socio-cultural constraints	402
	IX.4.b Political constraints	413
	IX.4.c Economic constraints	457-473
	IX.4.d Institutionalization constraints and globalisation	474
	IX.4.e Periodic constraints	480-481
Chapter X	Conclusion	482-491
	X.1 Summary of Findings	
	X.1.a Achievements	486
	X.1.b Constraints	488
	X.2 Recommendations	490-491
	Appendix	
	Appendix -I Questionnaire of the Survey	492
	Appendix-II- Preliminary survey sheet	493
	Appendix-III (For Chapter V, generalised social mobilisation)	494
	Appendix-IV(For Chapter V, generalised social mobilisation)	495
	Appendix-V (For Chapter VI.2.a, The true copy of permission letter that allowed Awami League to function after 1975)	497
	Appendix-VI (For Chapter VI, Causes of military intervention)	498
	Appendix-VII (For Chapter VII, Persons killed during Ershad regime)	499
	Appendix-VIII (For Chapter VII, Position of different parties in the parliamentary general elections (1 st to 4 th)	501

Appendix-IX (For Chapter VII.3, The growth of Bangladeshi Electorate)	502-504
Appendix-X(For Chapter VIII, Name of opposition MPs who tabled the Adjournment motions during opposition-participated 286 working days in 13 sessions of the 5 th JS)	505
Appendix-XI(For Chapter IX, Political Constraints; President and General Secretary of Awami League in different years)	506
Appendix-XII(For Chapter IX, Political Constraints; Schematic presentation of AL's ascendancy to present position)	507
Appendix-XIII(For Chapter IX, Political Constraints; Results of survey conducted by Bengali Daily Bhorer Kagoj among 6896 respondents on fund collection and expenditure of the political parties in Bangladesh)	508
Appendix-XIV Chief Election Commissioners of Bangladesh in different period	509
Bibliography	510-544
Documents	510
Books and Articles in Books	512
Articles in Journals, magazines and news papers	534
Newspapers and Periodicals	543-544

Chapter I

Introduction

I.1 Objectives and significance:

Bangladesh's problems to consolidate her democratic achievements since 1990s impelled the present researcher to undertake the study. Democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy is the only way through which the new-nations can maintain and sustain with democracy. Unlike many other developing countries, Bangladesh had a colossal sacrifice for democracy and pertaining to that passage, for her independence. The country was consecrated to the ideals of democracy. It was the innate democratic cravings of the people that led to the sanguinary War of Liberation and successfully triturated the thuggery of the domain of Pakistan. But democracy continued to largely remain illusory. Bangladesh's scrimmage for democracy protracted 'even after independence'.¹ It is interesting to note that the country is homogeneous in geography, ethnicity, culture and language, yet it has been afflicting in 'establishing and maintaining political institutions' with 'continuity, rigidity, adaptability and change'.² 'Despite many sacrifices that accompanied Bangladesh's birth and the unique homogeneity of the nation, the country' has been 'witnessing an increasingly 'fractured polity', a dual political culture and a political leadership with irreconcilable beliefs, symbols and prejudices (Ataur Rahaman: 1999).'³ While both the new and old democracies are beset with problems like corruption, and inequality in the process of market economy,⁴ the

¹ See Dr. M. Nazrul Islam, "Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh: An Assessment" in *Perspectives in Social Science*, Volume 5, October 1998, Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. P.52.

² Mahfuzul Huq Choudhury, "Elites and Political Development in Bangladesh: An Overview" in *Seminar Proceedings*, Bangladesh Political Science Association, 1985 p.97.

³ Ataur Rahaman, "In quest for democratic governance", in *The Daily Star*, 24 March 1999, p.4.

⁴ Prof. David Beetham's lecture on "Problems and Prospects for democracy in developing countries", organized by the Department of Peace and conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, on 1 March 2000, report published in *The Daily Star*, 2 March 2000,

democratising countries are experiencing real problems of stabilisation and survival.⁵ Thus both democracy and its institutionalization are most important research problem, which need to be addressed urgently in Bangladesh.

This issue can be examined in the backdrop of despotism (before 1757), British colonial rule (1757 to 1947), Pakistani internal colonial rule (1947 to 1971), and violent movement in a society with dominant traditional political culture. 'Soon after independence, a one-party rule was super-imposed and the entire nation was rudely shocked and stultified. After the great tragedy of 1975 mid-August there followed endless series of coups and counter coups, conspiracies and political killings. The nation literally stood fleeced and haemorrhaged both politically and economically, along with continuous backsliding and erosion of moral and social values.'⁶ The political process of Bangladesh since it's existence as sovereign political entity "is marked by certain characteristics such as: the rise of charismatic and dominant leaders; ideological and symbolic approaches to solve the nation's problems; lack of respect for continuity of fundamental institutions; politics of landslide victory and perversion of electoral process; imbalance in institution building; ground stand approach to do much too quickly; and lack of commitment and exodus of politicians (Rounaq Jahan 1980:203-204)".⁷ Besides it "has been dominated either by direct military rule and martial law or military rule in civilian guise for at least 15 years. It experienced four successful and at least 27 abortive coup d' etat...within a decade since independence. Two of its heads of the state were assassinated in the process of military take-overs."⁸

✓ The mass upsurge of 1990s that brought an end to the military rule and opened the path for practising democracy in the country was hailed in home and abroad, as the profound thirst for democracy of the people of Bangladesh. Apart from brought about the downfall of the long autocratic rule, this mass upsurge, provided a unique opportunity to start afresh the country's much-vaunted journey to democratic dispensation. But the question remains whether the country will see the repetition of its past. The achieved

⁵ Geraint Parry and Michael Moran (eds.), *Democracy and Democratization*, ROUTLEDGE, London and New York, 1994, p.at the outset.

⁶ Mansoor Mamoon, "When Will Our Leaders Learn?" *The Daily Star*, 2 December 1999, p.4.

⁷ See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*, Dhaka. University Press Ltd., 1980, pp.203-204.

victory, free and fair general elections under caretaker government in 1991 and in its subsequent years have brought the questions regarding institutionalization constraints of democracy in the limelight.

The study is also important in view of the chronic problems that are being faced by the country. The country suffers 'real shortages of food, literacy, education, wealth, income, health and productivity,' on the other hand; it is 'deficient⁹ in consensus, community, legitimacy, organisation, effectiveness and stability.'¹⁰ It is expected that democratic governance could appropriately address the problems. Nevertheless, institutionalization of democracy is considered as the best panacea for all illness. The institutionalization process may help democratising the polity through a sustainable nexus between state and society. Accordingly, the democratic one can successfully replace the prevailing authoritarian political culture. Finally, the successful process of institutionalising democracy can yield a sustainable democratic political order.

The present study attempts to investigate into institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh against this background. It is discerned that absence of democratic practices within the political parties and in almost every sphere of life is hindering upon the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. Accordingly, this study reflects the continuing interest among students of comparative politics in the study of institutionalization of democracy. The importance of the present study, therefore, lies in the fact that it makes an attempt to find out the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh, which has an inherent desire for democracy.

1.1.a. Research Questions:

The present study is an attempt to test the hypothesis made by Samuel P. Huntington. Samuel P. Huntington's model set forth in his essay "Political Order in Changing Societies" is used as a theoretical basis. According to Huntington, in the developing countries,

⁸ Ali Riaz State, *Class and Military Rule Political Economy of Martial Law in Bangladesh*, Nadi New Press, Dhaka, 1994, pp.13.

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington depicted this picture for developing countries as a whole, which is also applicable for Bangladesh. For more, see Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University, 1969, pp.1-2.

“The rates of social mobilisation and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organisation and institutionalization are low. The result is political instability and disorder. The primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change.”¹¹

Here Huntington argues that in changing societies there exists an imbalance between the rate of equality of political participation and art of associating together into a political community. He observed that the rapid social change and the rapid mobilisation of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions are responsible for violence and political instability. Political order, as a goal depends in part on the relation between the development of political institutions and the mobilisation of new social forces into politics. The more a political system is conducted through institutionalization way the more it is democratic. (The present study is an attempt to test the validity of this hypothesis when applied to the case of Bangladesh.)

There are several reasons for choosing the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh for an ample ratiocination. Generally speaking little research has been done on the institutionalization of democracy. However, among the host of authors, no author has yet attempted to caress institutionalization as such. Although the problems of institutionalization of democracy occupies a central position in the political discourse of Bangladesh, very few scholarly studies have adequately examined the conditions favourable for institutionalization of democracy or tried to focus on its constraints. Almost all of these studies are not strictly about the institutionalization of Democracy (in Bangladesh). Even not a single work which do deal, to some extent, with the institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh are neither up-to-date nor strictly on institutionalization process of democracy as they seldom refer to the institutionalization. However, the following important questions immediately arise, for testing the hypothesis and to find out the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh;

- (1) What is meant by institutionalization of democracy?
- (2) What are the factors influencing institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh?

¹¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order...* 1969, New Haven and London.

(3) What are the major institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh?

1.1.b. The Arguments:

In the modern world, there seems nowhere to hide from the forces of changes. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus articulated this view in the fifth century BC. His famous dictum, "You can never step in the same river twice," is an extreme version of the viewpoint that every thing is in constant flux. From this perspective, change is inevitable. It is presumed that just as individuals undergo a developmental sequence from birth to death, social organisations (groups, organisations, and societies) also have some form of evolutionary development. Change is the mechanism of growth, development, and progress, all of which are assumed to increase knowledge, extend control over the environment, and thus improve the human condition. Accordingly, in addressing the questions of the study, it will be argued that;

1. In Bangladesh since independence there have been a great deal of changes in social, economic and political arena.
2. Changes incorporated at any of the "system", whether economic, political, social or psychological, will have an impact on the other dimensions (S.M.Lipset 1969:xiii).
3. The changes have brought about increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation.
4. The growing imbalances between the *increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation* and *weaknesses of existing political institutions* correspond the major sources of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

5. Increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have given birth to a substantial number of middle class population in the country. The conscious efforts of the political parties, dominated by the middle class, made the process of democratic transition inevitable. However, the conscious effort of the political forces became rare in the subsequent period that constrains the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy.
6. The weaknesses of the existing political institutions coupled with the absence of conscious efforts from the political forces turned the political disorder and instability into constraints to institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

In carrying out this study, the works of other scholars have also provided the valuable insights and background. Some relevant idea on the topic could be built from the works of Huntington (1968,1984,1991); Geoffrey Pridhum and Tatu Vanhanen (1991); Tatu Vanhanen (1997); Almond and Powell (1960); David Easton (1965). However, for democracy and democratic institutions in Bangladesh, any significant work is hardly available. Nevertheless, some relevant ideas could be drawn from the works of Ralph W.Nicholas (1965), Peter Bertocci (1977), J.H.Broomfield (1976), Craig Baxter (et.al. 1987/1991), Emajuddin Ahamed (1979,1992), Rodert S.Anderson (1976), Talukder Maniruzzman (1976,1977,1988), Rounaq Jahan (1972,1980,2000), Aaur Rahaman (1999,2000), Shamsul Huda Harun (1984), M Sayfullah Bhuyan (1990), Nazrul Islam (1998) and many others who have made significant contribution to the study of political system of Bangladesh per se democracy and democratic institutions of the country.

The basic contention of this study is that weakness of political institutions in Bangladesh hinders the stability and peace in society. It also stands as major obstacle to the process of institutionalization of democracy in the country. It will be argued here that the important factor(s) that contributed to the process of institutionalization in the developed polities is democratic political culture, which is the upshot of institutionalized democratic order. But the process of institutionalization is hindering in a developing nation like Bangladesh because of its parochial political culture. Nevertheless, in one sense, political disorder is the outcome of parochialism.

Political institutions of a country often work as a catalyst of political views of the people of that country. The health of a given government is nourished or atrophied largely according to what extent the political society itself is salubrious. In other words, to create a healthy political society of a country, above all, needs to have viable institution of political, economic and social nature, symbolic of the people's consensus or deference.¹² If political institutions are built up democratically, that are supposed to reflect the democratic attitude of the people and thus help building up democratic political institutions vis-a-vis political system. In a developing country like Bangladesh, though most of the pre-requisites of democracy are absent, yet she has a long history of struggle for democracy.

Sustainable democratic polity is the foremost pre-condition for economic development. The reality of Bangladesh gives a gloomy picture in this regard. Imbalance of social, political and economic life creates some sorts of instable conditions everywhere. Gap of inequality could be found in different spheres of Bangladesh. Gap, between expectation and reality, gap between the rich and the poor, between the rural and the urban, between the literate and the illiterate, between women and men, between civic politics and corrupt politics, between new generation and old generation, between traditional set up and changing trends have been existing and emerging in the system.

The changing trends in the society could be traced in increasing rate of social development indicators i.e. rate of literacy, expectation of life, per capita GDP, consciousness, participation etc. As a result, the 'simple political community' with purely ethnic, religious or occupational base has been replacing by "more complex and heterogenous" society. The achievement and maintenance of political community becomes dependent upon the working of political institutions. Due to changing condition, the rate of equality of political participation is increasing at a faster rate than 'the art of associating together'. The process of 'globalisation', together with the 'free market economy' since 1990s, is further affecting the situation. Traditional political authority and political institutions are being undermined by rapid social and economic change. Modernisation, urbanisation, increases in literacy and education, industrialisation, mass

¹² Shamsul Huda Harun, *Parliamentary Behavior in A Multinational State 1947-1959, Bangladesh Experience*, Asiatic society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1984, p.2.

media expansion, increased political consciousness, multiple demands, broadened political participation resultant into problems of creating legitimate and effective political association and political institutions. The development of political institutions is lagging behind social and economic change. All these necessitate the study of institutionalization of democracy as unavoidably important.

Most of the industrialised countries especially the USA and UK never had to worry about creating institutions or government. In these countries political participation and institution building went on simultaneously. In fact, the developed countries are faced with the problems of over-institutionalization, while the developing countries are in a situation of 'under-institutionalization'. Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh has a long experience of British rule. The British rulers had initiated most of its political institutions. The colonial masters had done it to make an order, which can facilitate their colonial administration. The pre-independence constitutional developments in the Indian sub-continent during the British regime provided a political infra-structure from which the new states; namely India, Pakistan, were to take-off, when powers were handed over to them. The British, at the out set, did not introduce representative institutions in India to the full requirements of the Westminster system, since the sub-continent was devoid of a viable, participant political community.¹³ Many authors designated this as the 'enabling' plans for the natives by the British rulers.¹⁴ The effects of the constitutional developments initiated by a host of Acts, such as those of 1853, 1861, 1892, 1909, 1919, and 1935, oozed into the body politic of the sub-continent.¹⁵ Present day Pakistan and Bangladesh were carved out of India in the form of Pakistan in 1947.¹⁶ The Muslim League leadership did not envisage in detail a full social, economic, political and ideological programme for the future state Pakistan. The Muslim leadership was solely engrossed in the struggle for achieving Pakistan, rather than in the art of self-government, and all other considerations vis-a-vis the potential new state, were left to the future. So, when Pakistan came into being, it had the marginal characteristics of a

¹³ Shamsul Huda Harun op. cit. p.3.

¹⁴ Percival Spear, in *India, Pakistan, and the West* (Oxford University Press: 1949), p. 149; and Sir Stanley Reed and P.R.Cadell in *India: The New Phase* (Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., London: 1928), p.8 designated 'the increasing association of Indians with the work of Government, and the establishment of an elective system in practice' as 'enabling' and 'encouraged by education and opportunity' respectively.

¹⁵ Shamsul Huda Harun op. cit. p.4.

developed polity.¹⁷ Apart from the existence of natural and political disparity and abnormal distance between its two wings, Pakistan ‘...was poor, it lacked an institutionalised political process, and its leaders were seeking great change.’¹⁸ The governmental structure of Pakistan had been relied ‘...more on civil servants than on politicians for major policy decisions.’¹⁹ The rise of Bangali Nationalism, on which the independence of Bangladesh is based, could be traced in the early period of independent Pakistan. The socio-economic-politico oppression has added fuel into the agitation of Bangalees against the Pakistani internal colonialists. The disagreements of Pakistani rulers, to act according to the result of 1970’s general elections, further aggravated the situation, which ultimately led to the war of liberation. ‘The system of government in Pakistan has undergone fundamental changes’²⁰ for at least six times during its co-existence with Bangladesh and before secession and victory of liberation struggle of Bangladesh. Bangladesh became an independent State, completely separated from Pakistan, on 16 December 1971.²¹ In fact, except the declaration of independence on 26 March 1971, Bangladesh inherited no other legal document.²² This document provided presidential form of government for the newly born country. Paradoxical to this situation the inherent demand of the Bangalees was for parliamentary form of government. Presence of demand for parliamentary form of government in the Lahore Resolution and later on in the six point’s movement, is the best witness of this fact. On the other hand, the country has undergone a variety of regimes since its independence.²³ But the subsequent changes of various regimes could not change the nature of political power. The experience in post-independent Bangladesh reveals that colonial exploitation (exploitation by West Pakistan) has been replaced by internal class exploitation. The

¹⁶ Paramanand, *Political Development in South Asia*, Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1988, p.3.

¹⁷ Shamsul Huda Harun op cit. p.6.

¹⁸ Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*, Dhaka, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1988, p.5.

¹⁹ Ibid p.6.

²⁰ Muzaffer Ahamed Chaudhuri, in his *Government and Politics in Pakistan*, mentioned from 1947 to 1968/9 four times fundamental changes. From 1969 to 1970 Pakistan was conducted by LFO of Yahya Khan, 1970(Dec.) General election to 1971 March non-co-operation movement. From 1971 March to December Liberation War and its victory. These all come to six times. With in these six times fundamental changes the rulers of Pakistan always tried to avoid democracy.

²¹ Paramanand, op cit. 1988, p.3.

²² See Professor M. Nazrul Islam, op. cit. 1998, pp.52-75.

dominant middle classes, which often share power and privileges with the ruling elite, have emerged as the most powerful element of exploitation in Bangladesh social formation... Political power in Bangladesh has come to be concentrated in the hands of the professional middle class because of the absence of a large land owning class and industrial bourgeoisie.²⁴ If the institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, 1990-1996, is to judge, the inherent limitations with which Bangladesh began her political career, should be taken into account. Judged from a newly used criterion i.e. the approach used by Huntington, the Bangladesh political system was not operating in an institutionalised way. But considering the prevailing -politico-socio-economic constraints of political development, it is to be granted that Bangladesh during the period 1990-1996, 'registered tangible improvements characteristics of a developed polity' and for that matter of the institutionalization of democracy.

12. Periodization

The study is an attempt to assess the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh between the years 1990 and 1996. The period under consideration is important because these were the crucial years when serious efforts were made for a complete restructuring of the Bangladeshi polity. In 1990 the opposition alliance formulated its momentous 'declaration' of tri-party alliance. The aim of this declaration was a sustainable democracy or institutionalization of democracy. The chequered but intensive anti-autocratic movement led by the opposition alliance, transforming it into a mass movement involving majority sections of the Bangladeshi population. By the time in 5 December 1990 according to the declaration of the opposition alliance General Ershad handed over power to the alliances' nominated vice-president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. Before that the then vice-president Barrister Moudud Ahmed resigned from his post to facilitate the ascendancy of alliances' nominated president. However, the February 1991 General elections held under the Caretaker Government was recognised by the national and international observers as free, fair and neutral. All

²³See Craig Baxter, Yogendra K. Malik, Charles H. Kennedy, and Robert C. Oberst, *Government and Politics in South Asia*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, and USA, 1987/1991, p 257.

²⁴Sayefullah Bhuyan, "Underdevelopment of Bangladesh: An Analysis of Socio-Economic Policy Implications" in *Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* (Humanities), (vol.35, No 2, December 1990, pp.11-23).

political parties of the country participated in this election with their respective manifestos. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) formed the government after winning majority seats in the *Jatiya Sangsad* (National Assembly). The Bangladesh Awami League (AL) remained as the major opposition political party. Other political parties who won in this election were Jatiya Party (JP) of former President Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (JIB), Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Workers Party (WP) and Independent candidates. Latter on BKSAL merged with the AL and almost all the independent candidates were joined either BNP or AL. The 5th JS has also performed a historic task by providing 12th amendment to the constitution, which discarded the presidential form and returned to parliamentary type of government for the republic.

The successful holding of free, fair and neutral elections under a caretaker government on February 1991 and holding of flawed by-elections under party government like Magura, and Mirpur in 1994 compelled the opposition parties to raise the demand for caretaker government in the constitution. However, the ruling BNP was not ready to accept the demand. The AL-led opposition parties then started boycotting the Parliament since 1994. Again a mass movement emerged in Bangladesh with the demand for Caretaker government. All the political parties of the country but one, the ruling BNP, boycotted the February 1996 general elections for the 6th Parliament. However, the BNP only tabled the 13th amendment of the constitution in the 6th JS, which contained the provision for caretaker government, and passed it. The 6th JS was dissolved on March 1996. According to the provision of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia handed over power to the chief of the Caretaker Government Chief Justice Mohammed Habibur Rahaman as the head of caretaker government according to constitutional provision. The free and fair general elections for the 5th and 7th JS under the caretaker government earned a credible position, which was, thus, a step ahead towards institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

The June 1996 Parliamentary General elections under the caretaker government were also praised by all quarters. The AL formed the government by winning majority seats of the JS. The BNP also emerged as the largest opposition party in the political history of the country.

Thus Bangladesh through two credible general elections for 5th and 7th JS has arrived to a credible position toward institutionalization of democracy. Furthermore, an advantage gained in starting of democratisation process during this six- year period. Numerically considering, however, this may be nothing, but the very period of six years (1990-1996) could be considered as luminous radiance in terms of democratic institutions. However, the remarkable events of this short span of time have far-flung consequences for institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

Nevertheless, the thesis emerged from just a sequence of comparative analysis and illustrations from Bangladesh during 1990-1996. The political parties and the alliances of the political parties are usually considered as the vehicle of democratic transition in the country during 1990s. The most common perception in this respect is to overlook the aspect of social mobilisation and political participation. However, the hypothesis of the study stems up from these aspects which compelled to an unavoidable situation of democratic transition in the country.

The initial interest on this matter was motivated by a concern with social, political and economic changes and the observation at the period (1990-1996) that Bangladesh had grown very significantly in 1990s and subsequent years and, in fact, had enjoyed an average growth rate substantially fillup with great opportunities and less erratic than previous years, at least since 1960s and 1970s. It appeared during this time that the democratic movement in the country had generally succeeded and as a result democratisation process had taken a new pace than had those of other similarly circumstanced countries. Nonetheless, in succeeding years, Bangladesh had never back to the authoritarian rule.

The way in which the 1990's democratic transition evolved to fashion present-day institutionalization process of Bangladesh, constitutes the main theme of this thesis and depicts the constraints in terms of problems, struggles and progress. Thus the institutionalization process of democracy has been going on shouldering many constraints.

1.3 Limitations:

Man does not and can not know everything, and when he acts as if he did, he invites trouble. It may indeed prove to be far the most difficult and not the last important task for human reason rationally to comprehend its own limitations.²⁵ However, there were several constraints on the way to carry out the study. While the varied institutions of politics, society and cultural are no less important than those of our undertaken one do. The practical constraints have made it necessary that we exclude many of them from the analysis.

The theme taken up by the thesis smacks a very wide range, both in terms of period or time, topic and its adjoining areas. In fact the topic is selected to address the understanding on institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh, alongwith the factors in this regard. ~~While focussing directly on issues and problems that have characterised institutionalization process of democracy during 1990-1996.~~ In a situation like this, one has, of necessity, to draw up a methodical guide line, suggesting a list of important and relevant points expected to be covered by the thesis, for an adequate treatment and meaningful understanding of the subject as a whole. Keeping this view in mind the researcher has limited performance. / Though utmost effort has engaged to support the demand at par of the topic but some more incisive investigations are necessary to settle the point. The social, cultural, political, economic, global, and periodic vantage-grounds of institutionalization of democracy in a developing country like Bangladesh are sufficient and adequate, that need more systematic, objective and planned study. Undoubtedly that would be robust and time consuming. Both of which are limited for present thesis.

On the other hand, democracy could be survived with a concerted effort of the entire role playing institutions and individual where unity in diversity would be the principled stand. In fact it becomes a process and we also consider 'institutionalization of democracy' as a process of between the state and the society, rather than about making any particular institution prominent. Of course, parliament would be the central institution and political parties would be the main actors. But above and over all, what is

²⁵ The 1974 Noble Prize Winner Friedrich A. Hayek in his famous book "Prices and Production" commented, mentioned by Edwin J. Feulner Jr. "Freedom's Prophet" in *The Daily Star*, May 18, 1999, p.5.

needed for institutionalising democracy is that it should be taken as a process, more specifically an open-ended process for democracy. Accordingly, even though our analysis would be centred around parliament and political party, but we do not discard the importance of other institutions. Because the institutionalization of democracy encompasses all the prevailing institutions in the society and state.

Thus in quest of finding the factors influencing institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, this study limits itself with socio-cultural, economic, political and global perspectives in a limited form. On the other hand constraints of main political institution like Parliament have been enquired.

Since, the topic is a vast one, it is possible to make in-depth study on various individual aspect of the topic, which we have rather avoided for logical connotations. However, the thesis prefers not to hammer out to identify reasons for favouring democracy. That is we did not address the question of why or whether democracy is a better political system than other systems. Because we have taken it granted that with all its limitations democracy is the best political system. Thus the institutionalization of democracy is necessary concern for a newly democratise country like Bangladesh.

To grasp the fragility of democratic regimes following their authoritarian antecedents, the researcher has tried to develop and pursue an essential theoretical perspective, which may have some weakness and limitations. However, as a helpful tool, apart from theoretical framework of the study a perspective wise discussion of the nature of Bangladesh democracy has done, which could be possible to interpret differently. Nevertheless, the growth of democracy and democratic institutions in Bangladesh were dealt in at length to substantiate the theoretical framework.

Democratic practices and institutions go hand in hand. In this thesis, though constraints of institutionalising democracy have been focused the practices have automatically and apparently emerge within the paradigm of analysis and discussion. However, elaborate discussion on practice as well as all the institutions other than Parliament has not been touched for obvious reasons. However, to look at the full range of this research is beyond the scope of this thesis.

It is very difficult to form a definite picture of increased rate of social mobilisation in Bangladesh due to mainly the lack of official statistics on many of the

indicators of social mobilisation. The indicators of social mobilisation have been taken from the study of Huntington, Deutsch, and Putnam. However, data on many aspects of social mobilisation and political participation are hardly available. Even though, the rate of cast votes in different elections could be treated as indices of political participation. Other images of political participation could not be possible to capture i.e. number of people who participate in the gatherings or rallies, number of general members of major political parties, Awami League and BNP etc. On the other hand, time series data on different indices of social mobilisation is scarce. For example, percentage of newspaper readership, listeners and viewers of radio and television seem to remain as a matter of impossibility. However, the data on social development indicators may be, in large measure, used as the indicators of social mobilisation. But to get a definitive picture we have tried to keep the most possible similarity with the indices of Huntington, Deutsch and Putnam. Nonetheless, there is no denying the observations regarding increased rate of social mobilisation in Bangladesh.

1.4 Methodology and sources of data:

The thesis utilises the data and information extracted from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were (i) Field survey, (ii) Reports published by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), (iii) Reports published by Bangladesh Election Commission (EC), (iv) Information included in reports published in different print media i.e. Daily Newspapers (both national and foreign), and electronic media (national and foreign Radio Services, and Television and e-mail, Internet etc.), (v) Information gathered from conversation and interview with different persons, and (vi) other government and non-government documents.

The researcher has consulted a wide range of existing literature concerning the theme of each individual chapter of the thesis. In some cases, to maintain the sequence and size of the analysis only the name of the authors have been mentioned while the name and other particulars have been mentioned in the Appendix and in Bibliography section. However, the main secondary sources were (i) different published books, (ii) articles in different books, journals, daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspaper and newsmagazines, (iii) different unpublished research works. It may be mentioned that as an Assistant Professor in Political Science in Bhola College, the present researcher had



begun to collect a considerable part of the material on democratisation process since the demise of cold war in 1989.

During the field investigation from July to December 1999, a survey was conducted by the present researcher to collect people's perception regarding institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. The survey was conducted among 174 respondents from middle class. More detail information about the sample survey and sample population has been incorporated in the related section of the thesis (Chapter IX). However, as mentioned earlier, the data and information on institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh have been collected mainly from field survey.

The seminal and tentative ideas came to be refined and expanded through participation in seminars, workshops and informal discussions with teachers, researchers and students chiefly at Dhaka and Jahangirnagar Universities.

1.5. *Thesis structure:*

In devising an appropriate structure for the thesis the researcher has followed, as far as possible, conventions prescribed by Bangladeshi Universities. Besides, the prescribed formats for thesis followed by different internationally acclaimed universities, like Griffith University, Australia; Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India; and Syracuse University, New York, USA have been consulted to construct the thesis structure. The present chapter, which forms Chapter I is the introductory chapter. It is a statement of the objectives and significance of the thesis. It also provides an account of the methodology and the database used in the study, as well as a brief discussion of the contents and layout.

Chapter II provides a survey of the political science literature on the subject on institutionalisation of democracy. Since there is no existing theory on institutionalization of democracy, this Chapter attempts to search for a suitable theoretical framework for the present study. Accordingly, this chapter of the thesis is essentially a review and critique of the theoretical literature that is current and is of substantial relevance to the topic of the present thesis. This chapter has two sections Section 1 deals with approaches to the study

of politics and dependency theory. On the other hand, quest for a suitable approach to the study on institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh has been done in Section 2.

Chapter III clarifies the concept of different issues, which arise in the way of the present study.

In Chapter IV the geography and demographic aspects of Bangladesh have been examined.

Chapter V explores the major factors that have played a crucial role in determining the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. In view of the hypothesis of the study this chapter has a wide scope. Accordingly, it is divided into three sections: Section 1 has produced specific evidences of social mobilisation and political participation; Section 2 presents generalised social mobilisation and political participation and Section 3 presents the globalisation factor influencing institutionalization of democracy in the country.

Chapter VI may be seen as the background of the present study as it has been carried out on the preceding period of the study i.e. institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh during 1971-1990. This chapter is divided into three broad sections. Section 1 deals with the initial phase of independent Bangladesh that witnessed the beginning and end of democracy from 1971 to 1975. Section 2 has been designated as interruption of democratisation process; this period spreads from 1975 to 1990. Section 3 is termed as quest for democracy. In fact during 1990s Bangladesh witnessed the end of nine-year old autocratic rule of ex-President Ershad. The event is also remarkable for Bangladesh's democratic dispensation.

Chapter VII presents and analyses the events of the main period of the thesis. The title of the chapter is "Institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)". In view of its wider scope the chapter has been divided into 4 sections. Section 1 examines social mobilisation and democratisation. Section 2 analyses the general elections for the 5th

Parliament in February 1991. Political participation and February 1991 general elections have been discussed in Section 3. Last section of this chapter, Section 4 attempts to investigate into the process of approving the twelfth amendment to the constitution.

Chapter VIII examines the governance of BNP during 1991-1996. This chapter has six sections. Section 1 presents the governance of BNP in general. The next section, Section 2 examines the working of the 5th Parliament. Section 3 analyses the formation of parliamentary committees during 1991-1996. The challenges of BNP government are examined in the subsequent sections. Section 4 provides challenges those were generally posed during the BNP regime of 1991-1996. In section 5, the economic challenges of the country during the period (1991-1996) are analysed. Political challenges and the process of approving 13th Amendment to the Constitution in the single-party sixth parliament are analysed in Section 6.

Chapter IX presents the survey findings on “Institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)”. It also offers pertinent discussion on the survey findings.

In the final Chapter, Chapter X, the researcher presents the concluding remarks. This chapter has two sections. One is summary of findings and the other is the recommendations. The summary of findings have two parts one is that the study does decisively accept the hypothesis, another is a good number of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh are alarmingly present. We have found it in the responses of our respondents in this respect. Besides, the analysis of facts and figures since 1990's democratic dispensation and in the governance of 1991-1996 has also disclosed it. However, in view of the findings on institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996) some recommendations are also made to validate the study.

Chapter II

Theorizing institutionalization of democracy

There is no single theory that alone might be sufficient and adequate to meet the requirements of the study on institutionalization of democracy. Huntington (1991), while analysing the nature of his *Third wave, Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, recognises that, "Inevitably, no theory can explain fully a single event or group of events"¹. It may be mentioned that a theory is an idea about how facts are related. It is a device for pulling together isolated facts into some intellectual order. "A good theory is precise, austere, elegant, and highlights the relations among a few conceptual variables"². Theorizing is an attempt to form a theory. Customarily, review of existing literature on different approaches and issues related to the facts are required in this respect. Mentionably, vastness of the present study may lead it to a comprehensive one. Theoretically, which may be unsatisfying. However, Huntington has also termed his work comprehensive. In fact study on democracy, broadly speaking, may be successful for not being austere but for its comprehensiveness.

The present chapter attempts to *theorize institutionalization of democracy*. Thus it begins with the review of existing approaches to the study of political science. In view of the expansive area of the present study, understanding on related theories and concepts would require another chapter. Accordingly, the present chapter attempts to theorize the study on *institutionalization of democracy*. This would be followed by the chapter on the concept of key issues; i.e. the next chapter will be dealing with the concept of key issues.

II.1 Approaches to the Study of Politics and Dependency Theory:

In recent years, the traditional approaches of political science have become increasingly inadequate to the researchers. Accordingly, for systematic and scientific study of politics, the political scientists engage themselves to find out new approaches. In fact the root causes to queries for the new approaches are hidden in the newly emerged situation. The situation after Second World War and even after the end of cold war have

¹ See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave, Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1991, p. xiii

pushed the political scientists in a bewildering situation. This situation compelled the authoritarian rulers to step down and paved the way for democracy. Nonetheless, most of the developing countries have become independent after World War II and some have had in 1970s. It may be noted that these newly emerged countries did not get back to their pre-independent status. However, the fall of erstwhile Soviet Union and the end of cold war in 1990s have further changed the situation. Moreover, the leaders of these newly independent countries were equipped with the experience, education and institutions of the colonial masters. Though, they were committed to democracy during their fight for independence, most of the countries had been putting a “second thoughts”³ on their way of governance after independence. Military rule, authoritarian tendencies of the political leadership and in administration, compounded by demagoguery, nepotism, corruption and apathy had been more the rule than the exception. On the other hand, there was a growing concern regarding the way of governance in the newly democratising countries that they may go back to the authoritarian regime if the recently achieved democracy is not institutionalized. In such perspectives, much of the approaches, which had drawn attention in the post-world war era, have come under serious scrutiny. Even though some elements of these approaches may still be relevant, a considerable portion might be obsolete. As has been rightly pointed out by Olle Tornquist⁴, “The original modernisation and dependency paradigms can therefore be regarded as matters of history in the main.” Of course many researchers, who have developed their out look before the end of cold war in general and most specifically before the 1990s wave of democratisation, prefer to deal with the said approaches.

‘Many researchers still carry the old orientations with them like a kind of ballast-for the most part in the positive balancing sense, but also to some extent like skeletoned in the closet.’⁵

The revised versions of the said approaches may still successfully help producing attractive research works. And there is no denying the fact that ‘many of today’s

² Ibid

³ See Richard L. Park, “Second Thoughts in Asian Democracy”, in *Asian Survey*, April 1961, Volume 1, Number 2, pp.24-27.

⁴ Olle Tornquist, *Politics and Development, A Critical Introduction*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, 1999, p.87.

⁵ See Ibid.

democracy studies have roots in revised modernisation perspectives.’ Nonetheless, there is strong possibility to create ‘valuable insights and hypothesis from earlier schools.’

However, from a host of approaches we tend to search for theorizing the problems of the present study. Accordingly, in quest of theorizing institutionalization of democracy, an attempt is being taken to crystallize the existing approaches into mainly three broad categories, approaches to the study of politics, dependency theory and the quest for theorizing institutionalization of democracy.

The existing approaches to the study of politics can be delineated into following four main categories. They are,

- (a) Improving the quality of political system;
- (b) Evolutionary process of modernisation;
- (c) Theory of social mobilization;
- and
- (d) Political institutionalization.

II.1.a. Improving the quality of political system:

A good number of Political Scientists provide some approaches those were meant for improving the quality of political system. They want it mainly for the developing countries⁶. The authors of this group mean the developing countries to shape themselves like ‘western model of development’. Basically, this type of political development is ‘typological’ in nature. The political scientists of this group are influenced by the sociologists like Weber⁷, and Parsons⁸. The famous authors of this group are Almond⁹,

⁶ Other alternative terms in this regard are Third World, New Nation, Newly Independent States, Changing Societies, Developing Countries, Underdeveloped Countries etc. While there are some Least Developed countries (LDC) among these countries.

⁷ The text for Max Weber is *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons, Free Press, Glencoe, 1947, paperback 1964; cited in Tom Campbell, *Seven Theories of Human Society*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, pp.169-196.

⁸ Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, Free Press, Glencoe, 1951; and *Essays in Sociological Theory*, Free Press, Glencoe, 1957, see Tom Campbell, *Ibid*.

⁹ Gabriel A. Almond & G.B. Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston, 1966, pp.9-26.

Pye¹⁰, Apter¹¹, Diamont¹², Eisenstadt¹³ and Rustow¹⁴. These authors 'understand political development as the capability of the political system'. One of the valuable contributors of these authors is Gabriel A. Almond. Though Almond and Coleman jointly edited their one of the earlier books and the book dealt with "Comparative Politics" of developing countries. It did not even mention the phrase political development. Latter on, after six years (in 1966) Almond along with Powell 'concentrated explicitly on the concept of political development...' Accordingly, Almond presented a definition of political development. According to him "political development results from changes in the political system due to inputs from the international system, such as threats of external aggression, or to internal factors, such as increasing pressures from the masses, and appropriate responses from the elites." Almond and Powell have defined political development as "the increased differentiation and specialization of political structures and the increased secularization of political culture.

Eisenstadt argues that the fundamental problem of political development is the ability of a political system "to adopt itself to (the) changing demands, to absorb them in terms of policy-making and to assure its own continuity in the face of continuous new demands, and new forms of political organisation. ... The ability to deal with continuous changes in political demands is the crucial test of such sustained political modernization." Diamont also defines political development as "a process by which a political system acquires an increased capacity to sustain successfully and continuously new types of goals and demands and the creation of new types of organizations." Both Diamont and Eisenstadt place sizeable emphasis on the responsive capacity of the political system.

Rustow believes, in order to reach the goal of political development, a political system has to be able to deal with the various crises. The key requirements of political development are "the growth of authority, the formation of national identity, and the quest for equality." David Apter believes that political development implies an integrated

¹⁰ Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development*, Boston, 1966, pp 31-48.

¹¹ David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, Chicago, 1965, p.67

¹² A. Diamont, "The Nature of Political Development", in Finkle and Gable (eds), *Political Development and Social Change*, John Wiley, New York, 1966, p.92.

¹³ S.N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change*, Prentice Hall, Princeton, 1966.

¹⁴ D.A. Rustow, "Modernization and Comparative Politics", in *Comparative Politics*, October 1968, p.37.

qualitative and quantitative structural growth. Political development “results from the proliferation and integration of functional roles in a community.”

Lucian Pye lists ten definitions of political development; those are, i. the political prerequisites of economic development; (But in many political systems economic development has taken place without this types of political development. So, Lucian Pye has rightly criticised this definition as insufficient.), ii. the politics of industrial societies; (As a political criterion this view is inappropriate.), iii. political modernization; (Since political modernization is equated with westernization, it can not apply to everywhere of developing countries. Pye opposes the view in the name of cultural relativism.), iv. administrative and legal development. (This view derives from colonialism. Lucian Pye found citizenship training and popular participation missed/missing from this concept.), v. mass mobilization and participation. (Since public order is not considered in this concept, the view becomes partial.), vi. building of democracy. (Since this is relative view, it differs from society to society. Besides this is a value concept.), vii. the operation of the nation state, viii. stability and orderly change, ix. mobilization and power, x. one aspect of a multi-dimensional process of social change. (partially agreed by Pye.)

By critically examining the aforementioned definitions of political development Pye presents his own concept. According to him, the process of political development is characterized by three major features, the cumulative growth of which constitutes development syndrome: equality, capacity and differentiation. Pye argues, equality implies, a) opportunity for equal participation, b) universality of law, c) recruitment for political office according to achievement of standards. Capacity means, a) governmental performance b) effectiveness and efficiency, c) rationality in administration. And finally, differentiation and specialization are meant for the distinct and limited functions of the government offices.

Pye concludes that the three dimensions of equality, capacity and differentiation” constitute the heart of political development.” By attaining these characteristics, Pye believes, a political system can deal with the five crises pointed out by Social Science Research Council (SSRC) on comparative politics: these are the crises of identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, and distribution. Apart from these concepts related with political development, Pye puts forward seventeen propositions as a deliberately

schematic (structural-functional), generalized model “in the form of rather bold and unqualified statements,” so that they might provide a point of departure for comparative analysis, by identifying “ways in which particular Non-Western countries differ from the generalized model.”¹⁵

Sidney Verba¹⁶ states that if a country can resolve its identity crisis first, it can easily resolve other crises such as legitimacy, penetration, participation and distribution.

The above mentioned social and political scholars have provided prescription for the prevailing ailments, mainly in the developing countries. While confronting the constraints to institutionalising democracy, Bangladesh could be one of the best grounds for experimentation of the above mentioned research works. In fact the present study has considerable similarities with the implicit aspiration of the above works. The present study (*Institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh*) simply assumes that institutions of the country are weak in quality and quantity to contain the constraints

II.1.b. Evolutionary process of modernization:

This basically a development tenet compiling with different ‘stages of growth’. Authors of this group are Bendix¹⁷, Rostow¹⁸, Levy¹⁹, Black²⁰, Packenham²¹, Marx²², Comte, Hegel, Maine, Spencer, Durkheim²³ Organski²⁴ and others. These authors vary among themselves in designating their self-designed ‘stages of growth’. For example

¹⁵ L. W. Pye, “The Non-Western Political process”, in Eckstein and Apter (eds.), *Comparative Politics*, 1965 pp.657-665.

¹⁶ Sidney Verba, “Comparative Political Culture”, in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba (et al), *Political Culture and Political Development*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1965.

¹⁷ R. Bendix, “What is modernization”, in Beling and Toten (eds), *Developing Nations: Quest for a model*, New York, Free Press, 1970.

¹⁸ W. W. Rostow, *Politics and the Stages of Growth*, Cambridge, 1971.

¹⁹ Marion Levy, *Modernization and the Structure of Societies*, Princeton, 1966, pp 1-11.

²⁰ Cyril E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization*, Harper and Row, New York, 1966.

²¹ Robert A. Packenham, “Political Development in the American Aid Programme”, *World Politics*, Vol. 18, 1966, p.194.

²² The best initiation of Karl Marx and Frederich Engles is the *Communist Manifesto*. See Lewis S. Feuer(ed), *Marx and Engles*, Fortana Library, Collins, Glasgow, 1969, S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968, cited in Tom Campbell, *op cit*.

²³ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, Glencoe: Free Press, 1947.

²⁴ A.F.K. Organski, *The Stages of Political Development*, Knopf, New York, 1965.

Karl Marx devised socialist form of political development through different stages. The stages are 'primitive communism'; 'slavery'; 'feudalism'; 'capitalism'; 'socialism'; and 'communism'. W.W.Rostow delineated five stages of non-communist economic growth, they are; 'traditional society;' 'the pre-conditions of take-off;' 'the take-off;' 'the drive toward maturity;' 'the age of high mass-consumption;' In his later book, 'Politics and the stages of growth' Rostow mentioned another stage i.e. 'the search for equality'. A.F.K. Organski delineates four stages of (non-Marxist) development: 'the politics of primitive unification;' 'the politics of industrialization;' 'the politics of national welfare;' and 'the politics of abundance.' The concept of stage development implies that underdeveloped countries will pass through the same stages, which the now developed countries passed through long ago. Marx observes: "The nation that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future."

But no single course of assumed means and ways of development can be applicable for the development of whole lot of countries. Because there are several patterns of development. Rostow and Ward in their book 'Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey', rejected a unilinear stage theory of political development and showed that Japan and Turkey after passing through their take-off stage, developed quite differently. They argue further that the rates and patterns of development are determined by the environmental conditions of the society.

The above mentioned two types of development can be criticised as they delineated development as 'unilinear, and not reversible', and that they imply an identifiable historical point of departure and terminus. This situation tended some authors to designate the process of political development as continuous and evolutionary. This way of development thinking makes the political system as 'changed and improved.'

There is no denying the fact that different aspects of development keep on changing. It depends on the governance, whether the change would lead towards an improved situation. The basic contention of the present study is that institutionalization of democracy can provide good governance. Nevertheless, the indicators of modernization are almost same as the indicators of social mobilization. The instability and disorder emerge from the growing imbalance between increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation on the one side and incapacity and weakness of

the institution. The institutionalization constraints of democracy stem up from the instability and disorder.

II.1.c Theory of social mobilization:

According to the theorists of social mobilization, political development is not the product of economic growth or industrialization; it is the out come of societal interaction. Some authors emphasize on the process of societal interaction; they do not want to put emphasis on industrialization. They treat political mobilisation as the most important criterion of political development. The main author on identifying political mobilization with political development is Karl Deutsch²⁵. Deutsch considers “social mobilization as the general condition of political mobilization. The latter results from the exposure, in the process of social mobilization, to political structures, values and issues.” According to him, social mobilization is “the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour.” The process of social mobilization can be measured by certain economic, social and political determinants, such as the per capita GNP, or the percentage of literacy, of urban population, of party affiliation and so forth. This process has some implications for the politics of development. People become politically conscious; expansion of people’s demand changes the quality of politics; and political and administrative reform become inevitable because of pressure on the political system.

Emphasizing differently on the importance of social process approach Lerner points out the importance of participation for political development. Distinguishing between traditional and modern society he says that due to non-participant character of traditional society political development has not taken place. Participation takes place through going to school, reading newspapers, casting votes in election and expressing “opinions on many matters, which are not their personal business.

The impact of social mobilization theory on the institutionalization process of democracy can not be overlooked. The hypothesis of present study is based on “increased

²⁵ Karl Deutsch, “Social Mobilization and Political Development”, in *American Political Science Review*, 3, (September 1961), pp.493-514.

rates of social mobilization and political participation". In fact the indicators of social mobilization keep on changing. Through the process of institutionalization the increased rates of social mobilization and political participation could be contained so that "instability and disorder" can not arise in the country.

II.1.d. *Political Institutionalization:*

The process of political institutionalization is the most important factor for political development. In a 'simple community' the question of institutionalization may not arise. The simple community dominates by the traditional political authority and traditional political institutions. But due to 'urbanization, increases in literacy and education, industrialization, mass media expansion extend political consciousness, multiply political demands, broaden political participation,' the social and economic situation change, thus creation of legitimate and effective political association and political association becomes complicated. Historically, political institutions have emerged out of the interaction and disagreement among social forces, and gradual development of procedures and organizational devices for resolving those disagreements (Huntington 1968:11). Changing situation make the society more complex and heterogeneous. Hence the achievement and maintenance of political community become dependant upon the workings of political institutions. Political institutionalization is a process by which an organization gets value and stability. It is to operate the organization through some rules, regulations and procedures. The more a political system is conducted through institutionalization way the more it is sustains with democracy. On the other hand, the more a system is democratic, the more it is institutionalized. To run a political system according to its constitutional procedure is institutionalization. Here question may arise whether the said procedure is sufficient even if a dictator or authoritarian ruler makes it? The answer is no. The people or representatives of the people would make the procedure or what is called constitutional procedure. Then comes the question of election. Huntington emphasizes on free and fair elections. Government should be based on free and fair election. The level of institutionalization can be measured by four variables; they are adaptability-rigidity, complexity-simplicity, coherence-disunity, and autonomy-subordination.

Adaptability-rigidity: Adaptability stands for higher level of institutionalization while rigidity less adaptability are for lower level thereof. The symptom of adaptability-rigidity is the 'function of environmental challenge and age'. The existence of 'static environment' gives birth to non-adaptable 'old organisations and procedures'. Organisations which have successfully faced the environmental challenges and those have greater age are more adaptable. According to Huntington 'rigidity is more characteristic of young organisations than of old ones. Successful facing of one set of previous problems may not enable to face new set of challenges. The new set of challenges need new ways and means to solve. The solution of biggest 'first hurdle', possibility for successful adaptation to subsequent environmental challenges would enlarge. Huntington marks the probability of successful adjustment in an arithmetic manner as '50 per cent success in overcoming first challenge brings 75 per cent for the second challenge, 87.5 per cent for the third and 93.75 per cent for the fourth challenge. He stresses on changes in environment such as change in personal, for all organizations. Through successful completion of its original task the organization itself can foster environmental challenges. Since different environment can pose different challenges for organizational, 'the adaptability of an organization can in a rough sense be measured by its age. According to Huntington adaptability can be measured through '*chronological existence*' and '*generational age*'. Besides, '*functional adaptability*' is to be considered.

One of the main problems of Bangladesh is the lack of adaptability in the politicians and political institutions, led by its leaders. The other sectors of the society are more or less trying to keep up the changes in the global trends of the times, but the local politics continue to cling to old methods, models, concepts and styles, causing chaotic traffic jam in the road to development.

The main reason for this state of affairs is the break in the democratic practices after independence. The base or foundation for the normal political platform is not yet complete or ready. The people have been paying the price for decades for this shortcoming. However, the democratisation processes since 1990s have provided the chance to correct the course.

Complexity-Simplicity: The level of "complexity-simplicity" is determined by (a) the function of differentiation, (b) the function of an articulation of an institution. An

organization can be reached to an excellent level of institutionalization through complexity. The nature of complexity can be understood through the accretion of organizational sub-units and differentiation of separate types of organizational sub-units. The possibility of the loyalties from the members to the organization increases as per increment in number and variety of its sub-units. The greater the number and variety of sub-units, the greater the ability of the organization to secure and maintain the loyalties of its members.²⁶ Complexity of the system helps it to adjust to the modernization process. Japan, for instance, was able to adjust its traditional political institutions to the modern world because of its relative complexity.

Autonomy-Subordination: Autonomy refers to the extent to which political organizations exist independently of other social groupings and methods of behaviour. Political organizations, in a highly developed system, are free from the impact of non-political groups. In this sense institutionalization means the development of political organizations that are not simply expression of interests of particular social groups. Political organizations may easily be penetrated by agents, groups and ideas from other political system. Thus a coup d' etat in one political system may easily "trigger" coup d' etats by similar groups in other less developed political system.

In order to determine the level of "autonomy-subordination" one has to check the degree of a (a) the distinctness from other institutions, (b) the specificity of its jurisdiction, and (c) its self-determination.

Coherence-disunity: A vital measure of the level of institutionalization is the coherence of the organization. An effective organization requires, at a minimum, substantial consensus on the functional boundaries of the group for resolving disputes, which come up within the boundaries. Britain, USA and former USSR have been admired for their coherence in armies. Discipline and development go hand in hand. The tendency and level of "coherence-disunity" can be measured by evaluating the consensus and internal unity prevailing in the organization.

Thus higher rate of social mobilization and expansion of political participation becomes adjusted with the rate of political organisation and institutionalization. The

²⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, London, 1968, p.18.

more adaptable, more complex, more autonomous and more coherent an organization is the more highly institutionalized it is. Thus the necessary prerequisite of political development is the high level of institutionalization.

It is clear from above discussion that different scholars have viewed at political development in different way, and all of their views are valued in shaping the idea of political development. Each of the views has their own limitations. In the quest for political development, Montgomery points out; political scientists have faced with three problems. First, a number of scholars have identified political development with political modernisation. This identification has limited the application of the concept in both time and space. Secondly, political scientists have not been able to define whether political development is a unitary or a complex concept. The third problem is whether the concept of political development is descriptive or teleological. Montgomery concludes that these problems have raised real questions about the usefulness of the concept (Montgomery 1969).²⁷

The present study intends to find out the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. Accordingly, hypothesis of the study has been picked up from one of the major works of Huntington (1968), "Political order in changing societies". Detail discussion about the hypothesis has been presented in the related section of the thesis. However, we presented different indicators of institutionalization in this section that might be helpful for the subsequent analysis and explanation. In summing up, the following schematic presentation of the criteria of institutionalization, its relation with institutionalization of democracy along with a special reference to Bangladesh context could be viewed as the theoretical points to enquire into the constraints to institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

²⁷ J.D.Montgomery, "The Quest for Political Development", in *Comparative politics* (January 1969), pp285-295.

Figure-1

Schematic presentation of Huntington's indicators of institutionalization applied to institutionalization of Democracy with reference to Bangladesh

Indicators of Institutionalization	Question of sustainable Institutionalization of Democracy	Reference to Bangladesh
i. Adaptability-Rigidity Indicators		
Generational age		
*Longer age of first set of leaders	-	Not existed but the main leaderships of the two major political parties are inherited from the first set of leaders.
*Longer age of first set of procedures	-	Exists
*Longer existence of organization and procedure	+	Exists
Chronological Age		
ii. Complexity-Simplicity Indicators		
*Greater number of sub-units(hierarchical and functional) of political institutions	+	Exists
*Many purposes of political institutions	+	Exists
*A few/purposes of political institutions	-	Also exists
*Simple nature of government	-	Exists
iii. Autonomy-subordination Indicators		
*Differentiation between political organisations, procedures and other social groupings and methods	+	Not dominantly exists
*Interest of particular social group being served by institutions	-	Exists
*State as 'executive committee of the bourgeoisie'	-	Exists
*Political Institutions emerged as a result of competition among social forces	+	Not necessarily
*Judiciary adheres judicial norms	+	Not exists
*Judiciary as independent of other political institutions and social groupings	+	Not exists
*Political party express the interests of a particular social group	-	Exists
*Legislatures, executives and bureaucrats express the interests of several groups	+	Yes
*Role of violence in politics	-	Exists alarmingly
*Influence of wealth	-	Exists alarmingly
*Penetration of agents, groups and ideas from other political system	-	Exists
*Entry of new groups through political socialisation	+	Not exists dominantly

*Inner core (important leaders)of the political system filtered through less important positions and peripheral and semipolitical organisations	+	Not necessarily
*Sacrificing Institutional Integrity(through absolute majority support or any means)	-	Sufficiently present
*Entry of new persons, viewpoints, and social groups with bewildering rapidity	-	Random
iv. Coherence-Disunity Indicators		
*Consensus on functional boundaries and procedures for resolving disputes	+	Not exists
*Effective participation of the members	+	Not sufficient
*Uphold the interests of individuals	-	Very much present
*Coherent and Unified	+	Not
*Major deficiencies in maintaining coherence and discipline	-	Abundantly exists

+ (plus) sign implies positive impact, - (minus) sign implies negative impact.

II.1.e. *Dependency theory*: Dependency theory has emerged by contesting the literature of comparative politics. A good number of scholars have contributed to develop this theory. According to this theory the blockage mechanism to political development in Third World countries is nothing internal rather it is deeply rooted to their integration with the international system.

The present under-development of Third World countries is not due to the slow growth of institutionalization or social mobilization or due to the lack of capability of the political system; rather it is due to their "metropolis-satellite" relations; it is a product of their past economic and social history. Therefore in order to achieve political development Third World countries have to bring about social revolution.²⁸

Generally the question of the dependency theorists is "can one disregard the influence of international forces on mobilization and political order in changing societies? Given their stress on historical sequence, mobilization and development it is curious that western scholars have virtually ignored the impact of imperialism, de-colonisation, neo-colonialism and the cold war. Kesselman²⁹ points out,

²⁸ Andre Gunde Frank "The Development of underdevelopment," in Charles K. Wilber (ed.), *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment* (New York: Random House, 1993) p.94.

²⁹M. Kesselman, "Order or Movement" the Literature of Political Development as ideology", *World Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 1(1973), PP.149-150.

“Political development in the Third World cannot be dissociated from the colonial origins and the contemporary international context. Western military, economic and spiritual conquest has been a major cause of instability. Moreover, the fragility of rulers is due as much to external intervention and the cold war contexts as to internal factors. The picture is less than complete if one treats developing countries as isolated and autonomous without reference to foreign military assistance, covert external political intervention and overt military invasion, the power of multinational corporations over the political and the economic processes of Third World countries, dependency relationships more generally, and the manipulation of the international monetary system and trade relationships to favour the interests of the wealthy and powerful nations. In particular, by failing to consider the destabilising (and occasionally devastating) effects of American Power on other nations, the literature of comparative politics abstracts theoretical processes of modernization, development and change from contemporary reality.”

Another major weakness of the approaches to the concept of political development is that the Western theorists have ignored the basic inherent realities exist in Third World countries. In none of the Third World countries, political development is possible without meeting the primary requirements of the people. From the Marxist point of view Avinery³⁰ comments,

In order to be successful, modernization has to be total and change the whole order of society. This can not be achieved by purely political or administrative reform, but has to be predicted upon a prior structural change in socio-economic relations.

Irving Harowitz also points out that if these Western models were to be introduced by political and administrative fiat in the underdeveloped areas it would well result in intensified and social conflicts.³¹

Moreover, many scholars also allege that by approaching their theories on political development they categorically tried to divert the attention from both the nature of politics and problems of development.

Finally, many scholars point out that Western models of political development has the effect of systematically diverting attention from both the problems of development and the nature of politics. Johnson and Ocampo point out that contemporary political scientists deny, avoid, ignore and refuse to accede the basic consideration regarding

³⁰ Sholmo Avinery, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969) p.28.

³¹ See Irving Harowitz, *Three Worlds of Development*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1966.

politics and development. The class structure, structural constraints of the state have to be taken into consideration for explaining the concept of political development. In general, the literature on political development considers development only in terms of a capitalist economy, social mobility, cultural values, pluralist democracy and the essence of political development is the institutionalization of these phenomena. Virtually, development involves the liberation of man from conditions of exploitation and oppression.³²In order to reach such a goal of political development, Ramos³³ says,

“We must overcome the prevalent deterministic, speculative and parochial character of contemporary theories of modernization. Any nation, whatever its contemporary configuration, always has its own qualification of modernization the implementation of which can be distributed by the super imposition of a frozen, normative model extrinsic to those possibilities.”

The general question, of dependency theorists, regarding influence of international forces on mobilization and political order of changing societies, can not be avoided. In view of historical context, mobilization and political order, it is interesting to note that Western scholars have in fact ignored the impact of imperialism, de-colonization, neo-colonialism and cold war.

Nonetheless, the end of cold war and dissolution of former USSR in 1990s have further changed the world scenario. However, in context of the above analysis, it becomes obvious, both from the internal and external dimensions that Bangladesh has been suffering from the crises of political development. Internally people's vision for democracy has been repeatedly belied. In fact the country has been suffering from the crisis of legitimacy and institutionalization of democracy. Most, if not all, of the regimes (from 1972 to 1996) so far experienced by the country, have suffered seriously from legitimacy crisis. Thus in view of system analysts Bangladesh political system is not fully capable and responsive to the demands of its people and society. Huntington's 'Political Order in Changing Societies' was first published in 1964, and it was meant for both democracy and authoritarian regimes. Nonetheless, much of his observations are equally applicable for 1990s democratic transition and its subsequent consolidation process. The increased rates of social mobilization and political participation, as has been argued by

³² J.F. Ocampo and D.L. Johnson, 'The concept of political development', in J.D. Cockroft, et al *Dependence and Underdevelopment*, Garden City, New York, 1972, p 400.

³³ A.G. Ramos, "Modernization: Towards a possibility Model", in Belling and Toten (eds)...p.59.

Huntington, give birth to political disorder or instability. In line with this argument we further proceed to argue that *after all* the incapacity of the prevailing institutions, to tackle the growing problems generated from increased rates of social mobilization and political participation gave birth to the pro-democratic movement in 1990s. In latter portion 'quest for a suitable approach to the study of democracy', we further go into the matter.

However, even after the 1990s democratic transition the political institutions are also seemingly weak to tackle the situation with adaptability, complexity, coherence and autonomy. Apart from the existing weak political institutions i.e. parliament and political parties, civil society plays a very important role in the institutionalization process of democracy. Besides, though bureaucracy has no designated active political role to play in the institutionalization process of democracy, but their advanced background compelled them to play important role both in decision making and implementation level. The bureaucracy's "overdeveloped" role is also due to weak appearance and performance of political institutions. Political parties are supposed to play due and important role in the process. But they have generated factionalism and corruption.

As we know Bangladesh's economy is heavily dependent on foreign economy. However, due to its weak economy it is not capable to cope with multinational corporations and foreign companies. This weak and dependent economy of Bangladesh has led to dominance-dependence relations with external powers, which play very important and crucial role in the determination of the major policies of the nation. As a result, the country is entangled with the complexity of external forces.

Besides, the impact of globalization on the process of institutionalizing democracy in the country is immense. Due to globalization the living process of the people is becoming faster than before but the existing political institutions are quite unable to accommodate the way. The changing scenario of the globalize society is some how different from previous one. While globalization brings about change in people's choice, thinking, life style, it also affects the institutionalization process of democracy. Among numerous theories it is difficult for researchers to agree on the most appropriate theoretical interpretation of democracy and democratization; it is also more difficult to arrive on an acceptable definition of institutionalization of democracy.

Though none of the approaches alone can adequately meet the need of the present study. None can be ignored. Rather each one of the approaches can contribute according to its capability. Some of the elements of an approach may seemingly be used, while others may remain in distance. However, in another given situation that distanced element may come to a great help while the earlier useable one may again be distanced. On the other hand, there may be some broad similarities among the elements of different approaches. For example, in none of the approaches the impact of the elements like literacy, mass media exposure, income, urbanization, industrialization and penetration of western values have been ignored. Besides, dependency of the developing countries on the developed countries has not explicitly exposed in most of the approaches. However, all authors have tried to address the underdevelopment political situation of the developing countries. The basic mind-set of the theorists from developed countries implicitly recognises the fact that dependency of the developing countries persist. And it does persist. The dependency theorists have only pointed their fingers on the reality. Mentionably, this might not be the complete story. The wave of democratisation in 1990s has brought about the so-called dependent-developed dichotomy in a common paradigm. It has been on the way to a complete shape through the process of globalisation. It may be mentioned that human behaviour is not flawless. However, the delay in declaring the results of electoral battle between Bush Jr. and Al Gore had created much curiosity in the newly democratising countries, where election irregularities are nothing new. The street agitation by the conservatives in France after the defeat of their President candidate provides a parallel tool for the newly democratising countries where the democrats always remain in fear of 'fierce fighting' after any election.

II.2. *Quest for theorizing institutionalization of democracy:* In Bangladesh the responsible leaders who were devoted to democratic ideals during their fight for independence, with dismay after independence, for a considerable period of time they had only a failed attempt to adhere with the democratic norms. And as such democratic institutions and ideals seemed to be inadequate to fulfil public expectations in the crucial years of nation building. Second thoughts were in order.³⁴ However, after 1990s

³⁴ See Richard L. Park, "Second Thoughts in Asian Democracy", in *Asian Survey*, April 1961, Volume 1, Number 2, pp. 24-27.

democracy has got a fresh momentum for being surfaced. The resurgence of democracy during 1990s has been generated the need for a suitable approach to study the process of democratic transition and its subsequent process of democratic consolidation. It is argued that, after 1990s much of the possibilities of military rule have been evaded. But rest of the constraints remain to be faced hence there is also apprehension that with the pace of these constraints the authoritarian regime may come back. In such a situation the approaches to the study on 'Institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)' might be dealt with much sincerity.

11.2.a Study on the process of democratic transition: There may be several schools of thought to study the process of democratic transition. However, here we mention mainly two schools of thought that dominate the literature on the transition to democracy.

1. Revision of Social Mobilization theory:

Huntington (1968) has pointed out that growing rates of social mobilization and political participation led to political disorder and instability. This situation also lead to democratic transition inevitable. Karl Deutsch³⁵ and Robert Putnam³⁶ have also adequately defined social mobilization. Despite decades of exposure of the people to representative institutions, and a fair amount of knowledge and experience in their workings, the value of these institutions has been constantly undermined. Again, despite a history of successful working of the legal, administrative and coercive apparatus of the state, these institutions have been gradually losing their effectiveness as the state becomes increasingly sacrificed on the altar of money and muscle power. Thus the imbalance between the rates of social mobilization and political participation on the one hand and inadequacy of political institutions on the other are responsible in large part for the political disorder and instability present in the country.

³⁵ Karl W. Deutsch, 1961, *op cit*, pp.493-514.

³⁶ See Robert D. Putnam, "Toward Explaining Military Intervention in Latin American Politics", *World Politics* (October 1967): 83-110. Cited in Rakhahari Chatterji, *Methods of Political Inquiry*, The World Press Private Limited, Calcutta, India, 1979, p.54.

However, the continuity of social mobilization and political participation gives birth to sufficient number of middle class population. With their conscious attempt the leadership of the middle class population makes democratization process inevitable. This revision approach also sounds similar with the argument that socio-economic modernisation generates democracy. Which was put forward by Seymour Martin Lipset³⁷. Actually it is an updated version of the revised modernisation perspective. Because much of the indicators of social mobilisation are same as that of modernisation. Such as the rate of urbanisation, literacy, newspaper reader or media exposure, shift of occupation from agriculture to non-agriculture sector. The conscious section of the population, middle class tends to participate increasingly in the political activity. While this phenomenon is some how universal in the developing countries, for the people of Bangladesh, this element seems to be present abundantly. Because Bengalis are widely recognised as *more political* than any other linguistic group in the Sub-continent. Huntington (1968) aspired for stability while he said, 'the rates of social mobilization and political participation are high, that result into political disorder and instability. May be he wanted to provide some instruments or tools for future democracy. However, in a latter period in his famous book *Third Wave*, Huntington upholds the aspect of democracy with the changing perspective. However, a long list of intermediate variables are now taken into consideration- political culture, regime legitimacy and effectiveness, historical development, class structure and the degree of inequality (especially the rise of the middle class), national cleavages, state structure, centralisation, political and constitutional structure, development performance, international factors and, most importantly, political leadership.

2. *Democratic transition as incomplete process of liberalisation:* This school of thought cast democratisation as part of the unfinished processes of liberalisation during periods of economic and ideological crisis and institutional disintegration. A shared structural precondition is that most of the bourgeoisie has turned against authoritarianism, but the

³⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics* (expanded edition), Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981[1960].

central argument is that crisis and decay provide more freedom to the leading parties and leaders involved-and make their rational action most important. Hence, the point of convergence is upon the conflicts and compromises and pacts between 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners' within the role players over constitutions, electoral rules, the control of the army etc. One argument is that the chances for a Western democracy to spread are best if there are compromises among the role players without too much influence and pressure from radical forces from below. This school of thought has grown primarily out of the research programme on transition from Authoritarian Rule in Southern Europe and Latin America, co-ordinated by Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter. However, this has also relevance with the Bangladesh's democratic transition during 1990s. It is in this sense that the three alliances of political parties (dominated by middle class or bourgeoisie) have fought against the authoritarian rule of former President H M Ershad. According to their declaration Ershad had transferred power to a caretaker government. The elections for the 5th Parliament in 1991 was held under this government.

II.2.b. Study on institutionalization of democracy or democratic consolidation: Like 'transition', study of democratic consolidation follows two mainstream approaches. One defines consolidation in positive terms. Another delineates institutionalization of democracy in negative terms.

1. Positive terms of institutionalizing democracy: According to this approach the role players must adhere to democratic norms. They have to channelise their actions through institutions of democracy.

"The actors must adhere to the system of political democracy and subordinate their actions to the institutions of political democracy. The institutions, in turn, must reinforce this process and must promote free elections."³⁸

A wide inclusiveness of participation into, mainstream institutions can lead to positive results.

³⁸See O'Donnell, "Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes", in Mainwaring, S., O'Donnell, G. and Valenzuela, J.S. (eds), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation. The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, University of Notre Dame Press, Dame Press, 1992.

2. Institutionalization of democracy in negative terms: This way of thoughts emphasize on the points of exclusion such as reserved domain of authoritarian rule, tutelary powers by lords and unfair elections. As has been mentioned by Valenzuela,

“Consolidation of democracy negatively by pointing to what has to be excluded, including reserved domains of authoritarian rule, tutelary powers by still dominating lords, and fraudulent elections”³⁹.

Apart from these approaches, rigorous survey research, historical and descriptive studies, and important theoretical work are now generally acknowledged to be making contributions to the understanding of democratization. These processes are now understood as having significant psychological dimensions for the understanding of which these various methodologies are essential⁴⁰. This study does not adhere itself to any particular approach rather it uses a variety and combination of approaches.

We have taken Huntington’s earlier view on political disorder in the changing societies as the entrance. Of course latter on, he expressed that his analysis (*in Political Order...*) was meant ‘for people wishing to democratize their societies’⁴¹. Apart from Huntington, Karl Deutsch and Robert Putnam have also mentioned social mobilization indicators. To explain the social mobilization we enriched our discussions with the help of ‘social mobilization’ analysis and indicators from Samuel P. Huntington, Karl Deutsch and Robert Putnam. We also mend their indicators according to our present need. Besides, to explain the aspects of political participation we analyse, among others, the ideas of Milbrath.⁴² Furthermore, for explaining democratization we borrowed the idea of a host of authors who have been referred properly. Finally, to find out the constraints we conducted a field survey. This testifies the exploratory nature of the present study. Besides, in course of our explanation we have strengthened our points with the help of ideas delivered by a host of scholars. Accordingly, the study on ‘institutionalization

³⁹ Samuel J. Valenzuela, “Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings: Notion, Process and Facilitating Conditions”, in S. Mainwaring, G. O’Donnell and S. J. Valenzuela (eds.), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation. The new South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame, 1992.

⁴⁰ See Gabriel A. Almond, “Foreword: The Return of Political Culture”, in Larry Diamond (ed.), *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*, Text book edition, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder London, 1994, pp.ix-xii.

⁴¹ See Samuel P. Huntington, 1991 op cit, p xv.

⁴² Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation how and why do people get involved in Politics?* Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1966.

constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)' has partaken both theory and history. Nevertheless it 'is neither a work of theory nor a work of history'. The study is primarily an explanatory type. On the other hand, an explanation, is inevitably complex, dense, messy, and intellectually unsatisfying. It succeeds not by being austere but by being comprehensive. The present study is essentially a comprehensive one.

Chapter III

Concept of key issues

The preceding chapter attempted to theorize institutionalization of democracy for one of the least developed countries (LDCs)¹ like Bangladesh. However, the long drawn struggle to theorize institutionalization of democracy ended up by recognizing the notion with the well-worn term “Democratization.” Soon after recognizing this co-existence, the very problem of exclusively defining and theorizing the term institutionalization of democracy emerges. Besides addressing the aspiration of Bangladesh, ‘has always been problematic’² to keep pace with institutionalization of democracy. As mentioned in the limitations, the study would be limited to dealing within the hypothesized area of concepts. Hence to prove or reject the hypothesis. Mentionably, in most of the relevant research works, institutionalization of democracy has been treated both as a part of democratization and an approach of political development. By keeping these meanings in view, the study would essentially focus on prominent political institutions of the country, parliament and political parties.

III.1: The Concept of Democracy:

Since this study is an attempt to test Huntington’s model of institutionalization, it is necessary to examine this thesis and to make clear the meaning of several concepts which are used throughout, clarification of these concepts is necessary because many of these concepts used in comparative political analysis are undifferentiated and suffer from ambiguity (G.Sartori 1970).

¹According to the United Nations, the criteria for being designated as an LDC are, i) per capita income US \$ 800 or less, ii) physical quality of the life combining health, nutrition, education is 47 or less, iii) economic diversification index (share of manufacturing, labour in industry, per capita commercial energy consumption and export concentration) is 26 or less, and iv) population is less than 75 million for LDC’s designated after 1971. At present there are 49 Least Developed Countries (LDC). Bangladesh is one of the LDCs. Since the introduction of the LDC category only Botswana has graduated from the list. The last country included in the list is Senegal. See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 7, 2001, p.1, 11.

The literal meaning of original Greek word 'Democracy' is 'rule by the people'. The word has come from the Greek but it did not provide us a model. In the writings of all Greek scholars including Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides, democracy was depicted as government by the ignorant or government by the poor (Birch 1995:46). However, modern meaning of democracy differs from that of the meaning prevailing during the ancient Greek period. It is in this sense that the ideal of today's democracy is not at all the same as that of the Greeks.

"It is our way of using the words 'democracy' and 'democratic government' that brings about the greatest confusion. Unless these words are clearly defined and their definition agreed upon, people will live in an inextricable confusion of ideals, much to the advantage of demagogues and despots." - TOCQUEVILLE, cited by Sartori, 1965³.

The famous politician of Athens Pericles defined, 'administration' by 'many' 'a democracy'. Aristotle defined democracy that allows every citizen to 'share'. Abraham Lincoln in his famous two-minute long Gettysburg trial of 19 November 1863 defined, democracy almost in the same way, "that the Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Besides different authors defined 'democracy' in different ways some called it as government by consent', some as 'sovereignty of the people', some termed it 'rule by the majority', and some also called it 'limited government' (Carl Cohen 1971). Hallowell (1965) has termed democracy as the art of compromise. In almost same tone Robert A. Dahl mentioned that 'democracy' 'rests upon compromise'. However Dahl (1989) has presented seven institutional pre-conditions of democracy. They are, elected officials, free and fair elections for electing and removing officials; inclusive suffrage, right to run for office, surety for freedom of expression and criticise, alternative information and associational autonomy.

There are numerous theories and explanations of democracy and democratisation, but it has been difficult for researchers to agree on the most appropriate theoretical interpretation of democratisation or on the causal factors of democratisation (Tatu Vanhanen 1997:10). However, Ross Harrison (1995)⁴ has critically analysed the history of democratic theory. He

² Vicky Randall designate the countries of the "Third World" as a whole in "series editor's introduction" in Robert Pinkney's *Democracy in the third world*, Issues in Third World, Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia, 1993,UK, p.vii.

³ See Giovanni Sartori, *Democratic Theory*, Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, New York, Washington and London, 1965.

⁴ See Ross Harrison, *Democracy*, Routledge, London and New York, 1995.

found two general traditions in this regard. The argument of one of these traditions is that the wants of the people are varied and incompatible. The state seeks to hold a ring between these incompatible desires. Elections are considered essential as 'one way of holding the ring'. Harrison called it the classic liberal tradition. The other tradition emanates from the mistakes of the people to express their desires. Accordingly, state has a positive role for creating right kind of desires. Thus right kind of structure is needed to make the real desires effective.

Daniel Bell and his colleagues⁵ have presented some scholarly works, which can be summed up: Asians do not understand democracy in the same way as westerners, for they have "alternative cultural baggage". They do not seek equality because they have a hierarchical worldview. Nor do they want freedom. Asian countries that have conducted democratic elections have done so to promote stability, not freedom. Even though the authors have not considered Bangladesh's perspectives, however, much of their observations could equally be applicable for a typical Asian country like Bangladesh. This may be more evident from the subsequent analysis of this thesis.

However, it would be relevant to consider that only elections are not sufficient for institutionalizing democracy in the country. Both elections and institutions are needed for democracy. The following sections would be devoted to inquire into the related issues like institutions of democracy, institutionalization of democracy, institutionalization of democracy and democratisation, legitimacy and institutionalization of democracy and finally institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

III.2 Institutions of Democracy:

While confronting the 'fundamental questions about the ontological status of political institutions and their effects on political behaviour, Robert Grafstein maintains in his theory of institutional realism that the institutions are "real things" that both limit and structure political behaviour. He argues that institutions should be understood quite differently from conventions. In fact institutions regulate human behaviour. Institutions bring order and create patterns even when many people are not aware of the purposes that are being served.⁶ Shepsle does not treat an institution simply as a "settled pattern of behaviour", as Grafstein asserts

⁵ See Daniel A. Bell, David Brown, Kanishka Jayasuriya, and David M. Jones, *Towards Illiberal Democracy in Pacific Asia*, St. Martins Press, New York, 1995.

(p.85). Institutions are rules and procedures-things that exist apart from convention- that may or may not in due behaviour patterns.⁷

There are mainly two types of institutions: one is *input institutions*, and the other is *output institutions* (Figure 2). Five categories of input institutions could be seen i.e. institutions for socialisation and recruitment, institutions for interest articulation, institutions for interest aggregation, political communication and institutions for other influence and interest group. On the other hand there are four basic types of output institutions, which are available in a society. These institutions are needed to pursue the common interests of the people. The output institutions are 1. Rule making institutions. These institutions are needed to regulate the common interests of the people. 2. Rule applying institutions. These institutions are needed to implement the decisions. 3. Rule adjudication institutions. These are needed to take care of individual disputes about how to interpret the general rules laid down by the first institution in particular cases. Finally, 4. Rule enforcing institutions. These institutions are needed to take care of and punish rule-breakers, whether outsiders or insiders.

The institutions are basically same in both the democratic and undemocratic society. While one type of institutions may have both input and output functions, in any society political parties, civil society, mass media and different interest groups are considered as input institutions. Legislature, executive and judiciary, on the other hand, are regarded as output institutions. However, in democratic as well as undemocratic society, there exists a great variation in the specific form of institutions. The variation of institutions could successfully be attributed to the increased rates of social mobilization and political participation. Besides, the processes to contain and regulate these increased rates are also important. The continuous process of social mobilization and political participation always bring about the change. The change, in turn, brings both opportunities and crisis. While conscious effort can translate the change into a better result. Unconscious or willful handling of the situation can make a disaster. Participation from every strata of the society can lead to a better result, while rule making without any broad based participation can increase the possibility of disorder and instability. Democracy can ensure the process of participation from all spheres of the society. Autocracy, in any form, shrinks the scope of participation.

⁷ Ibid-

The institutions are channels of democracy in Bangladesh as in elsewhere. In any political system all the prevailing institutions are not equally important. As Tatu Vanhanen (1997) has correctly pointed out, "All types of social structures and political institutions are certainly not equally appropriated to support the establishment and consolidation of democratic politics." However, the following schematic presentation of institutions may help understanding institutionalization process of democracy.

Figure-2
SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF INSTITUTIONS WORKING IN A POLITICAL SYSTEM AND INDICATORS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

	POLITICAL SYSTEM		
INPUT INSTITUTIONS	Institutionalization of Democracy through,	of	OUTPUT INSTITUTIONS
Institutions for socialisation and recruitment,	*Adaptability-rigidity,		Institutions for Rule-making(Legislature),
Institutions for interest articulation,	*Complexity-simplicity,		Institutions for Rule application(Executive),
Institutions for interest aggregation,	*Autonomy-subordination,		Institutions for Rule adjudication (Judiciary)
Institutions for political communication,	*Coherence-disunity.		Rule enforcing institutions.
Institutions for other influence and interest group,			

III.3 Institutionalization of democracy:

By institutionalization of democracy we mean, a process to establish democracy as a part of the cultural, social and political system, or organization. As mentioned earlier, it brings democratic value and stability in the structures, organisations and procedures of the political system. Huntington also pointed out that 'value and stability' are acquired through institutionalization. But there is enough scope of confusion in this regard, unless it is clarified. The question arises; if the 'value' is authoritarian and every body is agreed not to speak against the system, then that 'value' also brings 'stability' for the organisation. Pre-nineteenth century's human civilisation witnessed it in Europe and North America; pre-cold

war Soviet Union was the best example of such types of processes. Even in the twentieth century, the dynastic rulers, the feudal rulers or kingdom or the emperors all had been of this kind. Only democratic value is synonymous with institutionalization of democracy. Moreover, Huntington's (1968) more comprehensive and detailed explanation of the indicators of institutionalization (adaptability, complexity, coherence, autonomy) along with his definition was tailored for measuring the institutionalization of the political system both from the developing Third world and developed first (capitalist), i. e. U.K., USA. etc. and second (socialist) world led by Soviet Union, the last one is no more existed after the end of the cold war. His explanation for expected "value and stability" arrived through institutionalization, may be with democracy or without democracy. Of course he had aspired it, as he claimed in a later period, for the future democrats. On the other hand, Huntington (1968) strongly argued that modernisation is threatened by political instability. For him, strong government and political order were required if growth and development were to succeed. Many of the governments of South-East Asia struggled against political instability and Huntington's ideas provided a rationale for the suppression of opposition.⁸ Later on Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharaf (in 2001) tried to justify his coup d'etat referring South-East Asia's undemocratic way of stability and development. Nevertheless, some sorts of incomplete bias seem to be present in this definition. It is in this sense that for any 'changing society' acquisition of 'value and stability' is a must for its 'organisations and procedures', but only 'hollow' or skewed institutionalization may provoke disorder specially, if the process of institutionalization fails to address the nexus between state and society. Then comes the question of democracy, which become meaningful with institutionalization.

It may be mentioned here that some time the terms, 'institutionalization of democracy', 'institutionalization', and 'political institutionalization' are interchangeably used and understood. But it seems misleading while conducting the research on 'institutionalization of democracy'. However cautious use of the term(s) is essentially and urgently needed to avoid misunderstanding and misuse.

Institutionalization refers to the effective establishment of governmental authority over society through especially created political structures and organs. (Mehran Kamrava 1995:2)

⁸ Garry Rodan, Kevin Hewison, and Richard Robison, *The Political Economy of South-East Asia An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford Auckland Newyork, 1997, p.4.

Accordingly, institutionalization may refer to democratic as well as undemocratic political system (or elected as well as unelected). Even a democratic institutionalization may be proved as hollow.⁹ The democratically elected representative may behave autocratically. Hitler, for example, was elected, but he used the institutions according to his personal will. Voice of all classes and professions of people were not reflected in the institutions under Hitler. Many new democracies also lack democratic values in their political culture. It often leads to neo-authoritarianism. In most cases the institutional integrity is sacrificed on the altar of majority rule. Hollow institutionalization makes a democratic system an autocratic and non-accountable one.

However, institutionalization is an unavoidable phase in the process of political development. Kamarava (1993) observes in its most elementary form, political institutionalization is a state building process. It involves the 'extent to which the entire polity is organised as a system of interacting relationships, first among the offices and agencies of the government, and then among the various groups and interests seeking to make demands upon the system, and finally in the relationships between officials and articulating citizens (Lucian Pye 1973:51).¹⁰ Political institutionalization may be viewed as a linear and evolutionary phenomenon whereby 'a political structure is made operational in accordance with stipulated rules and procedures, enabling more regularised, hence predictable, patterns of behaviour, minimal trauma in power transfer, and a foundation for the effective development of policies as well as the application of justice.' Robert Scalapino¹¹ argues,

"Ideally political institutionalization enables a movement from the erratic practices and arbitrary decisions stemming from a high dependence on personalised rule. In its success, it also reduces the likelihood of abrupt, drastic change in basic structure, including revolution, since change is made possible in legal, evolutionary manner by established procedures."

This type of directional definition of political institutionalization selectively implies the fact 'where political actors have made deliberate attempts at engineering specific political institutions and practices in particular directions (Kamrava 1993:2). But such efforts have

⁹ See Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, "Rajnoitik Sanskriti O Janatar Mancha" (Political Culture and People's platform) in *The Daily Janakantha*, 9 April 2000, p 7.

¹⁰ Pye gives the label of "integration crisis" to this development. See Lucian Pye, "The Concept of Political Development", in Harvey Keshchull, ed. *Politics in Transitional Societies*, New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1973.

¹¹ See Robert Scalapino, "Legitimacy and Institutionalization in Asian Socialist Societies", in R. Scalapino, S.Sato, and J. Wanandi (eds), *Asian Political Institutionalization*, Institute of East Asian Studies, Berkeley, California, 1986, p.59.

resulted into failure, as the African continent sadly testifies, stands as testimony to the futility of ascribing to institutionalization politically evolutionary characteristics. Instead, institutionalization needs to be seen as precisely what it stands for the penetration, both objectively as well as subjectively, of society by existing political institutions (Ibid p.2). The degree to which a particular system is institutionalized depends not on the practices but on its success in penetrating the various levels of society, hence resulting in popular compliance with the body politic, whether voluntarily or through an actual or perceived threat of coercion". Thus institutionalization carries "with it an emotional and ideological acceptance".

Successful penetration of democratic rules and practices does not disclose the degree of institutionalization. Rather it depends on its successful penetration into the various levels of society, based on 'popular compliance with the body politic' 'voluntarily or through an actual or perceived threat of coercion'. Thus institutionalization of democracy involves more than mere presence of rules and procedures. The extent of the solidity of the nexus, between state and society is determined by institutionalization.

'The greater and more in-depth the institutional bonds between state and society, the less likely it is for political alternatives to gain hold among the popular classes. Adversely, the more fluid such nexuses, the higher is the probability of political change and the less permanent are state structures likely to be.' The 'skewed and incomplete institutionalization' results into 'inherently fragile political systems, and the even more tenuous bonds that bridge political and social actors together.'

Without a dominant center of power capable of enforcing its authority over other social forces' political institutionalization cannot occur.' Meharan Kamarava (1993)¹² has delineated several mechanisms through which political institutionalization takes place at various levels.

Firstly, institutionalization access specifically 'in the narrow confines of the political establishment itself. For this purpose the national constitution provides details of 'norms and explicit as well implicit codes of conduct,' 'the rules of the game among principal actors and institutions.

¹² See Meharan Kamarava, *Politics and society in the Third World*, Routledge, London and New York, 1993, pp.4- 5.

Secondly, through various political institutions which links political system to the broader confines of society. The important among these institutions are 'the bureaucracy and other administrative arms of the state such as parastatals, its coercive organs such as the military and the police, and other organisations through which the state solicits popular support and participation.

Thirdly, 'the provision of constitutions that lay down the nature and the characteristics of political institutions in elaborate detail.' This is most prevalent but (perhaps) least effective. It is regarded as 'the first and the most fundamental step toward the creation of an ideal state. Two diametrically opposed goals are intended to serve by constitutions;

(i) Constitutions hold promises of institutionally guaranteed civil liberties and democracy'. They outline the contours of the political establishment and keep in check the powers of politicians and other public figures (Kamarava 1993:4). Constitution is hurriedly made 'in order to enhance' 'popular legitimacy and supposed sacrosanctity'.

(ii) Democratic system is not outlined in all constitutions. 'In numerous Third World countries, especially those ruled by authoritarian regimes, constitutions are tailor-made to fulfill specific political purposes and to present a mere cloak of legitimacy to norms and practices otherwise considered as unpopular and illegitimate'. In 1962 constitution of Pakistan by Ayub Khan, in the 1970s, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Kim IL Sung in North Korea, and General ParkChung-hee in South Korea...devised constitutions convenient for their own personal ends, as to this day successive military governments in Thailand and the new regimes of Africa. The Bangladesh constitution of 1972, though a democratic one, the 'diehard supporters of the founder President Sk. Mujib termed four principles of the constitution as Mujibism.¹³

The constitution of Bangladesh that was drafted by the first parliament was democratic and egalitarian, in tone and tenor. But it failed to instill in the minds of the ruling elite the concept of equality, democracy and dignity. Probably no constitution can help people overcome their personal prejudice, beliefs, religious bigotry or values.

¹³ Principles of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism, were not unique they were but aspects of already established ideological systems in different parts of the World. Yet their full significance in the political culture of Bangladesh were different; see Zillur R Khan, *The Third World Charismat Sheikh Mujib and the Struggle for Freedom*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1996, p.204.

Politicians, who represent the community, are content with the chaff, not agitating for changes in the society from within for adopting a scheme of morality and ideal of justice.

For a pittance, the people on the periphery have not been treated equally. 'The political freedom means nothing and will disappear without economic and social freedom.' However, the poverty and landlessness in the country are alarming (more than half of the population is below poverty line). However, poverty and landlessness have created some ripples in the society. Government has also taken it as challenge and in fact it is a major constraint in empowering the people (main ethic of democracy) and it thus hindering the institutionalization of democracy in the country.

Many observers have generalised all the "forceful personalities" in different regimes of post-independent Bangladesh as dictatorial.¹⁴ Moreover, every person whether elected or unelected- develop and nurtures a peculiar way of handling administrative matters.... (Muhammad Anisuzzaman 1998).¹⁵ "In first few months Mujib ruled by means of his charisma, but he also began a deliberate process of building a political structure and he put all his charisma behind this effort." (Rounaq Jahan 1980:68)

The above and overall charisma of Mujib created somewhat extra-constitutional and extra-institutional image. Which often hamper the normal operation and integrity of constitution and institutions. This hampering trend attributed both on input institutions like political party and output institutions like parliament, cabinet, bureaucracy, and in other spheres as well. Mentionably, the parliament during the Mujib period was under his grip. It was under his 'charismatic' leadership and strong hold that the 2nd amendment of the constitution was passed 'to curtailing democratic rights in the name of political stability and national unity.'¹⁶ Later on, the drastic amendment of the constitution i.e. 4th amendment of the constitution, passed in the Parliament on 25 January, 1975, which changed all the features of the 1972's Constitution. It introduced one party system, Presidential form, ban on press etc. The tragic end of Mujib-regime shattered the least existence of democracy in the country. The regime of military-cum-civil ruler Zia and Ershad also observed among others the creation of state patronised political parties.

¹⁴ See Weekly 2000 and 98 days, 7 April 2000, Year 2 Number 46, pp 25-30.

¹⁵ Muhammad Anisuzzaman, "Democratic versus Bureaucratic Management: A Quarter Century of Experimentation", in *Perspectives in Social Science* a Compilation Volume of Seminar Papers, 5, Centre for Advanced Research in Social Science, 1998 pp.1-51.

However, whether democratic or authoritarian by themselves, constitutions have largely proven to be incapable of assuring the durability of the systems for the safeguard of which it was created. Political structures and institutions have evolved largely independent of constitutional restraints. It is interesting to note that in Bangladesh there is no provision of registration for the political parties. Hence they are free to amend anything of these documents for any individual interest or interest of "existing centres of power". In case of parliament, the members do not always follow rules of business. Thus this 'rule making' institution is not working appropriately.

It could be interpreted that the political institutionalization has not taken place in accordance with constitutional means and procedures but according to the capabilities and the wishes of those who happen to hold the reins of powers.

This unworkability of the (democratic) constitutions in the Third World can largely be attributed to their failure to take into account indigenous social and political conditions.¹⁷ In most of the newly independent states the roles and relationships characteristic of parliamentary regimes usually underwent drastic transformation in substance even where the original form survived more or less intact and where the European-derived terminology continued to embellish political systems that had developed along quite different lines (Rupert Emerson).

The evolution of political institutions, based on imported Western model is mostly present in the third world countries. The degree of this importation differs among these countries. Unlike African centrifugal settings, the European colonisers themselves in the South Asian sub-continent introduced these institutions. Thus they were familiar with the political psyche of the people, in the long-term duration. Axle Hadenius (1992) has marked the 1947 independence of the dominions of South Asia as 'transition being the main peaceful and institutionalised', which was 'on many counts an advantage for democracy.'¹⁸ This could be attributed more to India than to Pakistan. The subsequent autocratic rule of post-1947 Pakistan, failed to hold Pakistan united, and gave birth to independent Bangladesh. Political stability came to India, but never to Pakistan. (Zillur R Khan 1996:43) The impact of 'peaceful and institutionalised' transition of 1947 and 'traumatic birth' of independent

¹⁶ Mehran Kamrava, *Politics and Society in the Third World*, ROUTLEDGE London and New York, 1993, p.6.

¹⁷ B.O.Nwabeze, *The Presidential Constitutions of Nigeria*, p 5 cited in Mehran Kamrava, *ibid* p.5

¹⁸ Axle Hadenius *Democracy and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.129

Bangladesh in 1971, is quintessentially important for institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. The maintenance of integrity of representative institutions showed by the British, and its erratic imitation by the Pakistani rulers affected the subsequent political development in post-independent Bangladesh.

“The forceful personalities, coupled with their distaste for limitations imposed by democracy, have left little or no room for the growth and maturation of constitution (Kamarava 1993:6).”

The tradition, culture and politics prevailed in the country encouraged the predominance of leaders with strong personalities over political institutions and principles, thus further reducing the practical viability of constitutions.

S.N.Eisenstadt (1973:290-291) has also marked that the Third world bureaucracies often the main agent of social change and of political socialisation are frequently highly involved in the political process and play a major role in implementing political goals.¹⁹ Bureaucracies are, in fact, by far the most omnipresent symbols and extensions of the political establishment. (Kamrava 1993:7). Bureaucracies, as the only government agent are the recurrent service provider to the average citizen and thus become the sole source of contact between the people and the government. Hence, the only ‘...forum for political input and participation’. The role of bureaucracies in most of the Third World countries is often purely administrative rather than one of innovation and policy-making, the latter frequently being the domain of politicians (Frederick Bent 1969: 191). Due to performance of numerous tasks and cumbrous duties the bureaucracies have grown up enormously in size. Besides the developmental goals are also carried, through this primary agent. Due to over dependency on the bureaucracy there is every possibility of it being corrupted. The recent comment of the members of Bangladesh Development Forum that a control of corruption in the administration could increase the per capita GDP to 2.1 percent more could be seen in this view.

III.4 Legitimacy and Institutionalization of democracy:

Only institutions are not sufficient to justify the rule. Without a ‘moral authority’ to enforce its rules, the polity’s institutions remains socially unintegrated and the governing abilities of political incumbents are greatly reduced. Whereas institutionalization provides the

¹⁹ Cited in Mehran Kamrava(1993)op cit p.7

mechanical nexus between *state and society*, legitimization links the *two* emotionally and psychologically. Kamarava (1992 op cit) has identified broad and integrated mechanisms through which political legitimacy is acquired and is in turn sustained. They include charismatic authority, patrimonialism, clientalist relations, the appeal to ideology or to emotionally significant historical events, and politically inclusionary policies aimed at expanding a regimes popular support base.

Within the context of skewed institutionalization and ongoing struggles to attain popular legitimacy, four broad types of political establishments can be found in the Third World. They are (i) 'Sultanistic' and neopatrimonial regimes, solely on the force of their, leaders' personality. This types of regime 'are now dwindling in number and are rarely found in their pure form. (ii) Personalist regimes develop increasingly specialized agencies and come to rely on more institutionalized procedures and coercive means, such as the bureaucracy and the armed forces in order to stay in power. The result is authoritarian-bureaucratic regimes. (iii) Populist, inclusionary regimes rely not only on personal appeal and on institutional means to power but include the additional element of mass collective behaviour. (iv) A growing number of experiments in democracy have dotted the Third World since 1980s.

Both the concepts of institutionalization and legitimacy are applicable to any form of regime. Max Weber stressed the unique position of the state as the institution, which has the legitimate monopoly of the instruments of force. But in societies committed more and more to a democratic legitimization of forms of authority, there is growing assumption that the right to command, to exercise power over the wills of others, must come from the approval of the majority.²⁰ These have particular application in case of a democratic regime. In a democracy power vested in the people and is exercised by the representatives of the people who are chosen through periodic elections. Elections are primarily the means of legitimising the right of the rulers to govern. Legitimate government represents the will of its citizen's i.e. Consent. The term 'institutionalization of democracy' thus automatically encompasses legitimacy of the concerned democratic regime. So when we talk about 'institutionalization of democracy', that means a legitimate nexus between state and society by way of democracy, that creates

²⁰ Cited in Seymour Martin Lipset(ed) Politics and the social sciences. Oxford University Press, New York, 1969, p. xxi

value and stability in the organisation. Though many of the Third World countries have stepped into 'democratic regime' but legacy of previous regimes and newly emerged challenges are hindering the 'process of institutionalization of democracy'. The task of this study is to find out those challenges.

III.5 Institutionalization of Democracy and Democratisation:

Institutionalization relates with democratisation, while the question of 'democratic consolidation' arises. The two parts of 'democratisation' are 'democratic transition' and 'democratic consolidation'. In addition, institutionalization process is a part of 'democratic consolidation'. Democratic consolidation involves, as mentioned by Pridham and Vanhanen, 'removal of uncertainties that invariably surround transition and then full institutionalization of its rules and procedures and the dissemination of democratic values.' Institutionalization of democracy is a part of democratisation. While analysing the democratisation process of Arabian countries Jean Leca maintains that 'democratisation is nothing other than the process leading to democracy.'²¹ 'Democratisation' is seen as the overall process of regime change from beginning to end, including both stages of what are generally called in the comparative literature 'transition' to a liberal democracy and its subsequent 'consolidation' (Pridham and Vanhanen 1994:2).²²

On the whole, institutionalization of democracy can be termed as a part and parcel of overall process of democratisation while democratisation starts at the breakdown of authoritarian or totalitarian regime; institutionalization process consolidate it with 'value and stability'. These democratic values and norms may be defined or undefined, written or unwritten, codified or uncoded; but above and overall there might have been a consensus among the role players in a political system so that the institutions of democracy can be operated in an agreed manner.

²¹ Jean Leca, "Democratisation in the Arab World: uncertainty, vulnerability and legitimacy. A tentative conceptualization and some hypotheses," in Ghassan Salame (Ed), *Democracy without democrat? The renewal of Muslim politics in the Muslim World*, London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1994, p 48

²² Geoffrey Pridham and Tatu Vanhanen (Eds.) *Democratisation in Eastern Europe Domestic and International Perspectives*, 1994, ROUTLEDGE, London.

The end of authoritarian rule, however, marked as the initial stage for democratisation. This is followed by the efforts of democratic consolidation. The efforts of democratic transition may include, among others, a brief guideline regarding the future course of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy. If needed, on the other hand, this might be revised or new rules may be made in course of time. Mentionably, this guideline or the rules of the game must be followed by the role players. The transition of governmental power from the authoritarian ruler is only one step for democratic transition. Other steps in this regard are, trustworthy electoral arrangement, institute representative government and democratic governance. Accordingly, only elected and representative government may not fulfill the requirements of proper democratic transition. Roughly speaking, transition of authoritarian power by an elected representative government may be viewed as democratic transition. In common parlance this process is followed by the process of democratic consolidation.

Democratisation takes place under conditions in which power resources have become so widely distributed that no group is any longer able to suppress its competitors or to maintain its hegemony (Tatu Vanhanen 1997 op.cit p.66).

Once universal adult citizenship rights have been secured in a society, democratisation is mostly a matter of the more authentic political inclusion of different groups and hide continued exclusion or oppression (John S. Dryzek 1996:474).²³ According to O'Donnell et al. "democratisation is the process by which citizenship is either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles or expanded to include those not previously enjoying citizenship (from women, youth, illiterates to foreigners), or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation, which implies that nothing is immune from politics as a self-creating process".²⁴

There is fairly general agreement about which system can be called democratic, ...but '...there is endless disagreement about whether democracy should be defined in terms of institutional arrangements or in terms of the ideals which those arrangements are claimed to promote.'²⁵

Democratic procedures make lower the stakes of political competition allowing players to live to play another day. They help resolve disputes that deadlock political factions and paralyse societies. They do not require committed democrats to put them in place. That said, some contexts would be more favourable than others in nurturing democratic experiments would. As far as democratisation is concerned, Bangladesh today offer both nurturing and non-nurturing environment.

Samuel P. Huntington argued years ago that as economic growth accelerated, the likelihood of political instability would grow in a curvilinear fashion. That is, in the middle stages of growth, instability would peak and praetorian government would spread in order to repress the demands of an increasingly mobilized civil society. As growth continued, he argued, these material demands would be increasingly met, the causes of instability would diminish, and the need for authoritarian repression would disappear (Waterbury 1994: 44).²⁶

Transition tasks involve, above all, negotiating the constitutional settlement and settling the rules of procedure for democratic life. In comparison, democratic consolidation is usually a lengthier process, but also one with wider and possibly deeper effects. The process of democratic transition is,

²³ John S. Dryzek, "Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratisation" in *American Political Science Review* Vol.90 No.1 September 1996 p.475.

²⁴ Mentioned by Jean Leca, op cit Pp.48-83.

²⁵ Anthony H. Birch, *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*, Routledge London and New York, 1995, p.2.

²⁶ John Waterbury, "Democracy without Democrats? The potential for political liberalisation in the Middle East", in Ghassan Salame (ed), op cit 1994, pp.23-47.

'The stage of regime change commencing at the point when the previous totalitarian/authoritarian system begins to collapse, leading to the situation when, with a new constitution in place, the democratic structures become routinized and the political elite adjust their behaviour to liberal democratic norms. Transition tasks involve, above all, negotiating the constitutional settlement and settling the rules of procedure for democratic life. In comparison, 'democratic consolidation' is usually a lengthier process, but also one with wider and possibly deeper effects. It involves in the first instance the gradual removal of the uncertainties that invariably surround transition and then the full institutionalization of its rules and procedures and the dissemination of democratic values (Ibid: 1-2)'.²⁷

Huntington both documents and advocates increasing attention to the investigation of change in the components of political systems. In essence, his contention is that this "change to change" promised to avoid the conceptual difficulties stemming from the use of the "Great Dichotomy"-modernity and tradition-and from the use of the concept of political Development in other than an evaluative sense.²⁸ 'The question of the ability of the political system to channel and contain conflict, without being driven to authoritarianism or chaos, leads us logically to consider the role of political institutions (Robert Pinkeye 1993:27)'. 'Once universal adult citizenship rights have been secured in a society, democratisation is mostly a matter of the more authentic political inclusion of different groups and hide continued exclusion or oppression (John S. Dryzek 1996:474).'²⁹ According to O'Donnell (et al.) 'democratisation is the process by which citizenship is either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles or expanded to include those not previously enjoying citizenship (from women, youth, illiterates to foreigners), or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation, which implies that nothing is immune from politics as a self-creating process.'³⁰

The end of authoritarian rule, however, marked as the initial point of departure for democratic transition. This is followed by the efforts of democratic consolidation. The efforts of democratic transition may include, among others, a brief guideline regarding the

²⁷ Ibid pp 1-2

²⁸ Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernisation, Development, and Politics," in *Comparative Politics*, Vol.3 (April 1971), pp.283-322, cited in Garry D. Brewer and Ronald D. Brunner (et.al.), *Political Development and Change, A policy Approach*, The Free Press A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. NewYork, 1975,p.487.

²⁹ John S. Dryzek op cit September 1996 p.475.

³⁰ Mentioned by Jean Leca 1994, op cit Pp.48-83.

future course of democratisation. Nonetheless, this guideline and the rules of the game must be based on consensus. The transfer of governmental power from the authoritarian ruler is viewed as a step towards democratic transition. Roughly speaking, the replacement of authoritarian power by an elected representative government may be viewed as democratic transition. However, trustworthy electoral arrangement, institute representative government through free, fair and neutral general election, acceptance of election results by both the winner and loser, democratic governance and establish the supremacy of parliament are essential for a complete democratic transition. Mentionably, to accomplish these tasks the role players must be equipped with a mind-set that is synonymous with democratic culture. There must be some favourable environment. Accordingly, only elected and representative government may not fulfill the requirements of proper democratic transition. The tasks of consolidating the democratic achievements i.e. institutionalization of democracy, may also include some transitional functions as well as some new tasks. These new tasks are the direct and indirect consequences of increased rates in different indicators of social mobilisation and political participation. Like birth and death of human being in the society the social mobilisation and political participation are also a continuous process. This process is never ending game. The conscious attempts by the role players can successfully contain the growing effects of social mobilisation and political participation. While there is no arrangement to ventilate and accommodate the opinion of the dissenters in any other system, the institutionalization process of democracy can provide necessary arrangement in this regard.

According to Huntington, four indicators such as adaptability-rigidity, complexity-simplicity, coherence-disunity, and autonomy-subordination can measure the situation of the institutionalization of democracy in a country. (Brief detail discussion on these criteria has been made in Chapter III, Theorizing institutionalization of democracy).

III.6 Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh:

In the wake of the demise of the cold war Francis Fukuyama's 'The end of history' prognosticating the democracy's triumph as ultimate creed of mankind took the world by

storm.³¹ Years later President Bill Clinton declared during his second inaugural address that 'for the first time in all history more people on the planet live under democracy than dictatorship.'³² The New York Times after a careful scrutiny of the claim 'confirmed 3.1 billion people to be living under democracies and another 2.66 billion under assorted other systems. "It is indeed true that over the past hundred years Democracy has become one of the key terms of political controversy (Ithiel Sola Pool 1952:vii)³³." Since 1990 there has been a mood of triumphalism for democracy with the fall of authoritarian regimes across the world and a great majority of third world countries either practicing or professing democracies. The political system inside which we currently operate is a democratic system (Ross Harrison 1995). "Democracy is the best solution in the fight against poverty", writes Amartya Sen, the new winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics.³⁴

Francis Fukuyama argued that there are four levels of democracy, which are to be consolidated. These include ideologies, institution, civil society, and culture.³⁵ Samuel P. Huntington prefers a procedural definition of democracy. He says that Joseph Schumpeter presented the most important formulation of this concept of democracy in 1942. Schumpeter paid attention to the crucial importance of competitive elections. Following in the Schumpeterian tradition, Huntington defines 'a twentieth-century political system as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote' (Huntington 1991:6-7). It is a very good procedural definition of modern democracy. For recent definitions of democracy, see also Arat 1991; Held 1992; Merkl 1993; Saward 1993; Whistler 1993; Parry and Moran 1994:272-4. Tatu Vanhanen in most of his works used this definition of democracy. He says '(d) democracy is a political system in which different groups are entitled to compete for power and in which institutional power holders are elected by the people and are responsible to the

³¹ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest* (summer, 1989), mentioned in John A. Hall, *Consolidations of Democracy*, p.271, in David Held (ed), *Prospects for Democracy North South East West* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992,1993,1994) pp.272-290.

³² Brigadier (Retd.) Abdul Hafiz, "Democracy Under Assault", in the Post-editorial column of *The Daily Star*, 1 November 1999 p.8.

³³ Ithiel de Sola Pool with the collaboration of Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, et al. Introduction by Peter H. Odegard, *Symbols of Democracy*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1952.

³⁴ Mentioned by Federico Mayor, *The Duty of Remembrance (1945-1999)*, in *The Daily Star*, May 13, 1999, p.5.

³⁵ mentioned in *Political regimes in South Asia: A Review*, Delwar Hossain; *Social Science Review*, Vol.XV, No.2(1998):89-101

people.³⁶ It may be mentioned here that except the Marxists the scholars discussed above seem to have more or less similar ideas of democracy. By examining the various dimensions of democracy, including its meanings, contents, basic principles and characteristics, a conclusion on conceptual discussion of Democracy can be drawn. For inquiring into the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh, we tend to build up a cloning yardstick from a host of definitions provided by different Political Scientists. The most important among these Political Scientists are Schumpeter (1941), Huntington (1991), Vanhanen (1984,1990,1997), Robert A. Dahl (1982), G. Bingham Powell, Jr. (1985), and Allan Ball (1993).

Since most discussions on democracy share similar assumptions about the elements which constitute a democratic political system. There is a robust liberal consensus about the characteristics of democracy, which is simply extended to the Bangladeshi case. The model includes following elements:

1. the holding of free and fair elections; the citizens and different groups are legally entitled to vote and compete in the elections.
2. Open competition for power based on established and accepted forms. Competition for political power is held among more than one political party, 'minimum requirement at least two political parties'.
3. From the electorate to the last committee, the issues are to be resolved by voting. The principle of majority rule relies on the wisdom of the majority. At the same time legal-safeguard for recognition and safeguard of the minorities should present, to realise the democratic principles and promoting favourable climate for democratic principles and politics.
4. Legislature and executive branches with clearly defined powers;
5. A fair and independent judicial system;
6. A free and inquisitive press;
7. The wide spread sharing of democratic values in society at large;
8. respect for human rights, at least individual rights, and possibly collective rights (for example, for ethnic minorities);
9. The presence of civil society, that is, a plurality of social organisations (Gastil, 1993).

³⁶ Tatu Vanhanen, 1997, op cit, pp.30-31.

While among numerous theories it is difficult for researchers to agree on the most appropriate theoretical interpretation of democracy and democratization; it is also more difficult to arrive on an acceptable definition of institutionalization of democracy. However to fulfill the purposes of present study, institutionalization of democracy means ‘(t) o institutionalize’, democracy and thus ‘to establish it as a part of a culture, social system, or organization.’ When democracy would get value and stability in the organizations and procedures of the political system, that would be an example of institutionalization of democracy. Huntington evaluates the institutionalization as the strength of an organization. The more an institution is institutionalized, the more it is distinguished, the more it is distinguished from other social instruments and the more it is abundant in public support. It makes the organization more than simply an instrument to achieve certain purposes.

Huntington also sees combination of political institutions and social forces into the formation and level of political community. Social forces are like custom or competition, which the state may protect or modify, but certainly does not create. Thus apart from ‘formal’ political institutions there are supposed to be present ‘social forces’ in a political system, which are informal in nature. The post-independent Bangladesh have experienced various changes in her social, political and economic life. But the number of political institutions has not increased accordingly.

The assumptions Which could, be drawn from above discussion are, (i) Democracy is based on several formal as well as informal institutions; both of these types of democracy have ‘in put’ as well as ‘out put’ shape. For formal institutions ‘in put’ and ‘out put’ shape are explicit, but for informal institutions ‘in put’ and ‘out put’ shapes are not explicit actually in this case it is implicitly present; (ii) For maintenance and achievement of political community in the pace of rapid social change and rapid mobilization of new groups into politics, ‘...the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased (Tocqueville 1955).³⁷ (iii) Without broad-based consensus sustainable process of institutionalization of democracy is not possible to materialize. (iv) Institutionalization of democracy could be measured through adaptability-rigidity, complexity-simplicity, coherence-disunity, and autonomy-subordination; (v) With the

³⁷ Mentioned by Huntington in op.cit. P.4.

presence of several factors, in varied manner, a common single effort of democratization, is also present in the process of democratisation;

Common single effort of democratization or institutionalization of democracy implies the idea of neo-Darwinian theory of evolution; 'which claims that all important characteristics of life have evolved in the continual struggle for existence and that they are more or less shared by all the members of the species concerned (Tatu Vanhanen 1997:22).'

Before secede and victory of liberation struggle of Bangladesh. Bangladesh became an independent State, completely separated from Pakistan, on 16 December 1971.³⁸ In fact, except the declaration of independence on 26 March 1971, Bangladesh inherited no other legal document.³⁹ This document provided presidential form of government for the newly born country. Paradoxical to this situation the inherent demand of the Bangalees was for parliamentary form of government. Presence of demand for parliamentary form of government in the Lahore Resolution and later on in the six point's movement, is the best witness of this fact. On the other hand, the country has undergone a variety of regimes since its independence.⁴⁰ But the subsequent changes of various regimes could not change the nature of political power. The experience in post-independent Bangladesh reveals that colonial exploitation (exploitation by West Pakistan) has been replaced by internal class exploitation. The dominant middle classes, which often share power and privileges with the ruling elite, have emerged as the most powerful element of exploitation in Bangladesh social formation.... Political power in Bangladesh has come to be concentrated in the hands of the professional middle class because of the absence of a large land owning class and industrial bourgeoisie.⁴¹ If the institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, 1990-1996, is to judge, the inherent limitations with which Bangladesh began her political career, should be taken in to account. Judged from a newly used criterion i.e.the approach used by Huntington, the Bangladesh political system was not operating in an institutionalized way. But considering the prevailing socio-politico-economic constraints of political development, it is to be granted

³⁸ Paramanand Political Development in South Asia, Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1988, p.3.

³⁹ See Professor M. Nazrul Islam, "Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh: An Assessment", in *Perspectives in Social Science* a compilation volume of seminar papers Volume 5, October 1998, Centre for Advanced Research in Social Science, University of Dhaka, 1998, pp.52-75.

⁴⁰ See Craig Baxter, Yogendra K. Malik, Charles H. Kennedy, and Robert C. Oberst, *Government and Politics in South Asia* (Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, and USA, 1987/1991, p.257).

that Bangladesh during the period 1990-1996, 'registered tangible improvements characteristics of a developed polity' and for that matter of the institutionalization of democracy.

It has been proved in many ways that democratic governance is not possible to materialise without institutionalization of democracy. To ensure democratic governance what is absolutely needed is to strengthening democratic institutions. The abysmally low political culture in the country, and the tendency of the politicians to take advantage of the lax public attitude to impose whatever is suitable for their interest are mostly responsible for political disorder in the country. People's will can not be imposed on the politicians. The process of institutionalization of democracy is flourishing in Bangladesh in this way.

III.7 Social mobilisation and political participation:

One of the major demands of our hypothesis is to define social mobilisation and political participation. This has been defined while explaining *social mobilisation and democratisation* in Chapter VII. Besides, political participation has been defined and analysed in a separate section of the same chapter. Nonetheless, we briefly define here the concept for more crystallization of the definitions.

As early as 1961 a noted Professor of Yale University, Karl W. Deutsch has studied "Social mobilization and political development". Karl⁴² Said,

"Social mobilization is a name given to an overall process of change, which happens to substantial parts of the population in countries, which are moving from traditional to modern ways of life."

Thus the concept of social mobilization encompasses 'together a number of more specific processes of change.' In his study Deutsch has used a number of indicators in this regard. They are, among others, shift into mass media, increase in voting participation, increase in literacy, change of locality of residence, population growth, occupational shift out of agriculture, income growth and income growth per capita. Needless to mention that these indicators are the major components of socio-cultural, economic, political and periodic

⁴¹ Sayefullah Bhuyan, "Underdevelopment of Bangladesh: An Analysis of Socio-Economic Policy Implications", in *Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities)*, (vol.35, No.2, December 1990, pp.11-23).

affairs. Accordingly, the questions regarding increased rates of social mobilization and political participation (as has been hypothesized for present study, borrowing from Huntington's model) are inadvertently related with these indicators. In his later book (*Third Wave...*), Huntington asserts the very existence of different social, economic and time factors for democratisation. Huntington both documents and advocates increasing attention to the investigation of change in the components of political systems. In essence, his contention is that this "change to change" promised to avoid the conceptual difficulties stemming from the use of the "Great Dichotomy"-modernity and tradition-and from the use of the concept of political Development in other than an evaluative sense.⁴³

It could be noticed that Deutsch has included *voting participation* as one of the indicators of social mobilization. In this study the political participation has been viewed as voting participation.

The process of political participation rises from the will of the individual to adjust or adapt the self with the society. The traditional society, which is distinctively non-participant,⁴⁴ has been changing, hence shaping into modern complicated society. Which is said to be participant. The wave of democratization is being followed by higher levels of political participation.

Participation gives an opportunity to express one's own point of view and secure the greatest good for the greatest number. Willingness on behalf of citizens to participate fully in the governance of their own lives is central to a thriving civil society. Such participation is an expression of citizenship, and is crucial to engendering a shared political culture (Keith Faulks 1999:143).⁴⁵

Though democracy is said to be a participant political culture, the amount of popular participation in democracies is distinctly limited.⁴⁶ The will or intention is the key element to defining political participation. Myron Weiner restricts his definition to 'voluntary action'. Similarly Verba and Pye seem to stress 'intention' of the actors by defining political participation as 'those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and /or the actions they take. Huntington

⁴² See Karl W. Deutsch, 1961, op cit pp.493-514 (493).

⁴³ Huntington, 1975, op cit p.487.

⁴⁴ See Daniel Lerner, "The passing of traditional society (1958)", in J. Timmons Roberts and Amy Hite (eds.), *From modernization to globalization*, Blackwell Publishers Inc., USA, 2000, pp.119-133 (122).

⁴⁵ Keith Faulks, *Political Sociology, A critical Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

⁴⁶ Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government and Politics, An Introduction*, Macmillan, London, 1992, p.71.

and Nelson on the other hand have argued that voluntary (autonomous) and manipulated (mobilized) participation are not clearly distinguished categories. Rather, they form only a spectrum. 'The real distinction between countries lies in the nature rather than the degree of participation.'

Participation in the voluntary form i.e. voluntary participation is the norm in liberal democracies. People can choose whether to get involved (e.g. by voting or abstaining) and how to get involved (e.g. by joining a party, signing petitions or going on a demonstration). It is also known as autonomous participation. Where activity is designed by the actor himself to influence governmental decision-making. The regimented participation is a common feature of communist states. This type of participation has no role to play in the selection process rather than expressing support for government personnel and policy.

For strengthening the authority of the government it was to mobilize the people behind the regime. Thus to some extent it may seem alike mobilized participation. In true sense, mobilized participation is a major feature of third world countries, where 'personal manipulation' is a characteristic form of participation. In this case actor can not influence governmental decision-making. The low status individual actors offer support to their patrons in exchange, for a modicum of protection. An additional distinction, between orthodox and unorthodox participation, emerges within the category of voluntary participation. The newly independent countries, which were built on disenchantment with the existing political structure since World War II, have been witnessing the emergence of new forms of participation. These unorthodox, unconventional modes of participation include democratization, sit-ins (and sit-downs), boycotts, and political strikes. In many democracies over the last two decades, unorthodox participation has extended to violent activities such as terrorism and assassination.

Political participation depends on the complex whole of several factors like psychological, social environment, economic growth, political environment, party system, campaign and propaganda, modernization and urbanization, and issues and ideologies.

However, substantial number of participation requires the creation of an enabling political environment, decentralization of decision-making to the local level, and explicit measures to empower the poor in general and women in particular, so that they may be able to

include their socio-economic priorities in national, regional and local development plans and participate fully in the implementation of those plans.

With a number of international documents the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has prepared an index of political freedom, Political Freedom Index (PFI)⁴⁷. Accordingly, it has identified Political Participation as one of the five broad clusters of PFI. However, for political participation the UNDP has recognized several indicators, freedom of association and assembly, multiparty allowed in law, and in practice, presence or absence of violence against, or harassment of political opponents. These are necessary for creating congenial atmosphere for political participation. Besides, other necessary indicators of political participation are free and fair election, continuity of the democratic system, community and local decision-making. These indicators should be taken into account implicitly or explicitly while considering participation aspect of the institutionalization process of democracy in the country.

In the third world mass participation is typically limited to quantity and manipulative in quality. But this characterisation hides substantial variation between Third World countries and especially within individual countries overtime.

However, the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have brought about a substantial change in the social structure. One of such changes could be mentioned in emergence of middle class population. It has been argued in this study that the growing number of middle class population with their conscious effort have been successful to materialise the process of democratic transition in 1990s. The process of democratic transition was followed by the subsequent process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy. Unlike the process of democratic transition, in most cases, the political forces of the country are hardly successful to show their conscious efforts to consolidate her democratic achievements. The absence of conscious efforts along with the weakness of existing institutions have made the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy most difficult.

⁴⁷ The five broad clusters are personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity. See UNDP, *Human Development Report 1992*, pp.29-31

Chapter IV

Geography and Demographic situation

Bangladesh is a South Asian country lying between the Himalayan mountains and the Bay of Bengal, in the delta of the River Ganges and Brhmaputra. The land, generally low lying, is fertile but it has to support a very large population, most of whom are Bengali speaking.

Though geography alone seldom dictates politics (W.H.Morris-Jones-1995).¹ It also explains the success story of the development of America (Harold and Margaret Sprout 1951:425)² and many identify it as the reasons for low development in Bangladesh. The ingredients in this natural strength are many (Daniel Wit 1953:20)³. The independent existence and present image of Bangladesh is also related, in general, with geographic and demographic causes. The reasons for the present state of politics could be found in many of such causes. While the River Rhine and English Channel had been thwarting the unity (Daniel Wit 1953:18) of present European Union (EU) countries for centuries; geographical distance of two parts of the then Pakistan contributed a lot in secession of Eastern part and emergence of Bangladesh. The land of high humidity and rainfall has a great impact in flourishing the rate of fertility of the country's population; hence created a densely populated Bangladesh. The country is subject to disastrous floods and cyclones.

This chapter intends to depict the natural setting and population of the country. There are mainly two sections in this chapter—section one deals with geography of the country, while section two analyses the demographic situation of the country. Besides, section two also attempts to put an emphasis on the recent demographic transition in 1980s, which precede democratic transition in 1990s. It may be mentioned that in most

¹ See W.C.Morris-Jones, "South Asia" in Robert H. Jackson and Alan James (eds), *States in a Changing World, A contemporary Analysis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp157-176.

² Harold and Margaret Sprout, "Foundations of National Power" (New York: Van Nostrand, 1951), p.425 cited in Daniel Wit, *Comparative Political Institutions A study of Modern Democratic and Dictatorial Systems*, (Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1953) p.20.

³ Daniel Wit, *Ibid*, p.18.

count the causes of both demographic and democratic transition coincides with each other. It is in this sense that, according to our hypothesis, higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation along with conscious attempt, set the stage ready for democratic transition. The indicators of social mobilisation are same as the socio-economic and administrative causes of demographic transition. Thus while increased rate of social mobilisation is defined as higher rates of literacy, education, media exposure, shift in occupation, urbanisation and income, these are also responsible for enhancing the causes of demographic transition. The relation between social mobilisation and democratisation has been analysed in Chapter V and VII. Accordingly, apart from depicting the demographic situation section two of this chapter concentrates specifically on demographic transition, caused by the above mentioned socio-economic changes vis-a-vis increased rates of social mobilisation along with conscious attempt.

V.1 Geography:

The area of Bangladesh is estimated to be 56, 977 square miles or 1,47,570-sq. km. The country is located between 20°. 34' and 26°. 31' North Latitude and between 88°. 08' and 92°. 41' East Longitude. It is surrounded in North and West by India, East by India and Myanmar and by Bay of Bengal in South. The boundaries of territorial waters of Bangladesh are twelve nautical miles and the area of the high seas extending to two hundred nautical miles measured from the foundation lines constitutes the economic zone of the country. Except the hilly regions in the north-east and south-east, some areas of high lands in the north and north western part, the country consists of low, flat and fertile land. A network of rivers of which the Padma, the Jamuna, the Teesta, the Brhmaputra, the Surma, the Meghna and the Karnaphuli are important, and their tributaries numbering about 230 with a total length of about 24140 k.m. covering the country flow down to the Bay of Bengal. However, most of the rivers are situated in the South. The alluvial soil is thus continuously being enriched by heavy silts deposited by rivers during the rainy season. River valleys offering fertile land and easy transportation have traditionally constituted centres for the growth of societies and charted the lines of their economic and territorial expansion. (Daniel Wit 1953:18)

About 14 percent of the land area covers by forest. Timber, bamboo and cane mostly produce in these forest areas. The quality timber grows mostly in the valleys, while bamboos grow in almost all areas. The most important among the timbers are *sal*, *gamari*, *chapliah*, *telsu*, *jarul*, *teak*, *garjan*, *chandan* and *sundari*. Sundarbans is the growing place of *sundari* trees. The world's biggest mangrove forest-*sundarbans* is located in the south-western part of the country, shared with West Bengal state of India and bordering Bay of Bengal. The country has recently undertaken rubber plantation in the hilly regions.

Besides, varieties of wild animals are found in the forest areas. The *sundarbans* is the natural habitat of world famous '*Royal Bengal Tigers*' and *cheetas*. Of other animals, bears, deer, monkeys, boars, leopard, and crocodiles are worth mentioning. A few hundred species and sub-species of birds are found in the country.

In Bangladesh the nature is adorned with seasons. The climate does not vary so much across the country, from East to West and North to South of the land. The country enjoys generally a sub-tropical monsoon climate. While there are six seasons in a year, three namely. Winter, Summer and Monsoon are prominent. Every season adds a new enchantment to her changing beauty. The maximum temperature recorded in summer months is 36.66 Celsius (98° F) although in some places this occasionally rises upto 40.55 Celsius (105° F) or more. 'Summer' enriches the nature with fruits. Nature in that season becomes hot. Monsoon starts in July and stays upto October. The 'rainy' season comes with a different colour. This period accounts for 80 per cent of the total rainfall. The green on the earth darkens, the clouds begin to swell and roar and the frogs croak with full-throated ease, day and night as the rain pours on. The average annual rainfall varies from 1429 to 4338 millimetre. The maximum rainfall is recorded in the coastal areas of Chittagong and northern part of Sylhet district, while the minimum is observed in the western and northern parts of the country. Poets and lyricists have found in this sympathy of nature reflections of human joy and sorrow, woe and bliss, passion and peace. With the arrival of 'autumn' the nature again takes a new turn. Gentle breeze begins to blow. Peasants go to field and sow seeds. It is a prelude of a new life full of vigour and joy. Then comes the season of 'harvesting', a season of joy and happiness. It is in this season that the green fields of crops become golden. The paddy plants bow

down their heads on the ground due to the burden of their fruits. The granary of the farmers becomes full with food-grains. They celebrate this season with harvesting dances and songs. Winter, which is quite pleasant, begins in November and ends in February. It comes with rich warm and golden sunlight. In winter there is not usually much fluctuation in temperature which ranges from minimum of 7.22-12.77 Celsius (14° F – 55° F) to maximum of 23.88 –31.11 Celsius (75° F- 85° F). The leaves of trees begin to fall down, as such the nature gets herself ready to give birth of a new season-the 'spring'. This is why the poet consoled himself that if winter comes spring cannot remain far behind. 'Spring' is traditionally gray and colourful. It stands for all that are new, joyous and beautiful in nature. As leaves sprout, the nightingales sing, the flowers blossom, one feels that nature is breathing a new life that has come after the departure of winter. Hence it has been rightly described that the spring is season of mirth and joy, songs and music, celebrations and festivities. Thus nature in Bangladesh has a sober and melodious outlook. Its rivers and rivulets, its green foliage, its soft flat land has a pleasing effect on the minds of its inhabitants. Its people are soft-tempered and affable. Their imaginations find expression in forms of music, dance, songs, literature and other creative activities. The political aspirations of the people have also been shaped by the nature in other ways.

V.2 Demographic situation:

Population explosion is one of the critical issues in Bangladesh as in many other developing countries. There are lots of arguments opposing the rapid growth of population. The common parlance of such arguments focus on the inter-relationship between population and development and point out that the pressure of population growth is adversely affecting the development efforts and acting as a deterrent to the structural change in the economy. However, the attempt is rare to focus inter-relationship between population and democratisation. To identify the existing nature of demographic behaviour and extent of its impact particularly on democratisation, an attempt is made here to highlight the consequences of rapid population growth on various aspects of the economic and social system. The democratisation process in 1990s has brought forward the issue more vividly, and the hypothesis of this study can aptly get the source of

inspiration from this aspect. The increase in literacy, urbanisation, income and life expectancy at birth has fuelled not only social mobilisation and political participation but also demographic transition. This perception is based on the fact that in Bangladesh the demographic transition in late 1980s has been followed by the democratic transition in early 1990s. It is also a matter of fact that the indicators of social mobilisation which have been increasing at a faster rate have helped, in general, both democratic and demographic transition

IV.2.a Growth of population:

At the beginning of this century, Bangladesh had a population of 28.9 million. According to 1991 census the population of Bangladesh was 111.4 million. With a very limited area this huge size of population has to afford. The density of population was 755 per square kilometre. In the year 1650 A. D. (pre-census), the size of the population in this land was estimated to be one crore and in 1860 A. D., it became two crore i.e. the size of the population had become double in 210 years.⁴ The first census of the country was conducted in 17 February 1881 that estimated the size of population as 2,49,26,000.

Table-1

Size and growth rate of population of Bangladesh in different census years

Census years	Enumerated population	Annual growth rate (exponent) per cent
17 February 1881	2,49,26,000	-
1891	2,66,13,000	0.01 per cent
01 March 1901	28.9 million	-
10 March 1911	31.6 million	0.9 per cent
18 March 1921	33.3 million	0.5 per cent
26 February 1931	35.6 million	0.7 per cent
01 March 1941	42.0 million	1.7 per cent
01 March 1951	42.1 million	0.05 per cent
01 February 1961	50.8 million	1.9 per cent

⁴ BBS, *Statistical Digest of Bangladesh*, No.7: 1970-1971, p.8.

01 March 1974	76.4 million	2.6 per cent
05 March 1981	7,14,79,071	2.8 per cent
11 March 1991	10,98,76,977	2.17 per cent
27 January 2001	12,92,47,233	1.48 per cent

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

In the year 1941 (1 March) the population was 4,19,97,297, which became 89912000 in 1981 i.e. more than double within 40 years.

However, between 1750 to 1776, the area experienced a probable loss of 31 per cent of the population through scarcity of food and between 1941 to 1951, the population marked a decline in growth of 0.02 per cent due to mass exodus after partition. In 1961, again the growth rate of population became higher-1.9 per cent. Despite the devastating tidal surge in the coastal area of the country that perished ten lakh people in November 1970 and mass killing of 30 lakh people by the Pakistani soldiers in 1971, the country witnessed 2.6 per cent population growth rate in 1974. The growth rate continued till 1981 census but it was found in 1989 that a demographic transition has taken place in the country. Accordingly, the rate of growth had come down to 2.17 per cent in 1991 from 2.8 per cent in 1981. The declining trend in the growth rate of population continued in 2001 census when 1.48 per cent rate of growth has been recorded.

The latest census of 2001 discloses the size of population as around 13 crore which is more than double the size of the population obtaining in the country in 1961 (5.08 crore). It is apparent from the following table that both crude birth and death rate tend to decrease over 50 years in Bangladesh. But over this period birth rate always three times higher than the death rate. The total fertility rate per women in Bangladesh was 4.24 as estimated by 1991 census was also high. A high fertility implies high dependency ratio. The population growth rate was 2.17 in 1991, which was 334% higher than the growth rate of population over 1951. During the same period the percentage (200%) increase in elderly population (age 60 & above) was higher than the percentage (150%) increase in workforce (age 15-59 years).

The density of population is (according to primary report of the latest census in 2001) 834 persons per square kilometre, whereas in India it is 239, in Burma 55, in Nepal 125, and in Sri Lanka 247. Bangladesh is possibly the 3rd most densely populated

country after the two city-states of Hongkong and Singapore. This small area comprising Bangladesh is 3000.1th of the world's land space and presently occupies the 5th position in respect of density and 8th in size of the population.

Table-2
Population structure by gender and residence

Year	National			Rural			Urban		
		Per cent			Per cent			Per cent	
	Total (million)	W	M	Total (million)	W	M	Total (million)	W	M
1974	76.4	48	52	69.7	49	51	6.7	43	57
1981	89.9	49	51	76.6	49	51	10.3	44	56
1991	109.9	49	51	94.1	49	51	15.8	45	55
1992	111.7	49	51	95.1	49	51	16.6	45	55

Source: BBS, July 1994; Women and Men in Bangladesh 1970-1990 adapted from Arun Kumar Goswami (1998)⁵.

Religious composition of population: Religious identities in the sub-continent were never the principal identities of people. It was caste, linguistic and regional identities, which were principal identities, not the religious identities.

“ Religious identities were far from being uniform. Each religion was divided into several sects and sub-sects and these were basis of autonomous communities.⁶”

In fact during the first census in 1872, the census commissioner divided Indian population among Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and others.

A critical examination of description incorporated in the census from 1872 to 1911 proved that during the 40 years of time the number of Bengali Muslims was increased about 50 per cent (from 163 lakh to 242 lakh) and Hindu population rose upto 23.5 per cent (from 168 lakh to 209 lakh). That means during 100 years the Muslim population increased upto 125 per cent and Hindu population by 57 per cent or roughly 60 per cent. The increased number of Muslim population could be the result of polygamy,

⁵ Arun Kumar Goswami, “Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh”, in *Empowerment, A Journal of Women for Women*, Dhaka, Vol.5, 1998, pp.45-75 (46).

⁶ Asghar Ali Engineer, “Minorities cannot be at the mercy of RSS”, in *Weekly Citizen* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) April 19-25, 2002, pp.14-15.

widow marriage, and high birth rate. M.A.Rahim (1982)⁷ opposed this analysis of the census report. According to him 125 per cent increase in Muslim population seems abnormal, because conversion was rare in British period. He argued that in the hundred years before 1872, the rate of increase among Muslim population could be 100 percent instead of 124 per cent while rate of increase among the Hindu population could be 60 per cent.

Table-3

Religious composition of population in Bangladesh in different years before the first census 1872.
(number in Lakh)

Year	Total Population	Muslim	Hindu	Others
1570	89.6	25	62.6	2.0
1670	148.6	52.0	94.0	2.6
1770	254.6	109.3	141.3	4.0

Source: Adopted from M. A. Rahim (1982), p.15

However, the census report of British period and other contemporary documents reveal that among the Muslims 29.6 per cent were out sider, the rest 70.4 per cent were converted from Buddhists and Hindus. About 30 per cent of the converted Muslims were Buddhists and caste Hindus, and the rest 70 per cent were lower caste Hindus (See Rahim 1982).

However, all the subsequent census found even more and more increased number of Muslim population in Bengal. While growth rate of overall population in 1911 over 1901 was 0.94 per cent, the growth of Muslim population was 10.9 per cent. Further significant growth of Muslim population could be observed in 1941 over 1931 that was 19.3 per cent while overall growth rate of the population was 9.2 per cent only. In 1901 percentage of Muslim population was 66.1 it rose upto 88.3 percent point in 1991. The rate of increase in the Muslim population during the last decade is 22.2 percent.

⁷ Dr.M. A. Rahim, *Banglar Samajik O Sangskritik Itihash* (Social and Cultural History of Bengal) Vol.2,

Significantly, rapid growth of Muslim population was noticed since 1961. On the other hand the slow trends of overall population growth from 1931 to 1941 might have a result in high mortality due to the occurrence of famines in 1931, drought and epidemic diseases during this period. A sharp decline by 1.2 percentage points of overall population growth from 1941 to 1951 could be clarified by the migration of Hindu population after Independence in 1947. There had been more Hindu emigrants from the then East Pakistan to India than Muslim immigrants from India to the then East Pakistan. The drastic decline of Hindu population by (-) 21.3 percent in 1951 against 9.2 percent point of increase in Muslim population was remarkable.

Table-4

Percentage distribution of population by religious communities in different census years from 1901 to 1991

Year	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Christian	Others
1901	100	66.1	33.0	0.9
1911	100	67.2	31.5	1.3
1921	100	68.1	30.6	1.3
1931	100	69.5	29.4	...	0.2	1.0
1941	100	70.3	28.0	...	0.1	1.6
1951	100	76.9	22.0	0.7	0.3	0.1
1961	100	80.4	18.5	0.7	0.3	0.1
1974	100	85.4	13.5	0.6	0.3	0.2
1981	100	86.7	12.1	0.6	0.3	0.3
1991	100	88.3	10.5	0.6	0.3	0.3

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The differential growth rates between Muslims and Hindus, the migration of Hindus following the partition of the sub-continent in 1947, Indo-Pak war in 1965 and the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 are the likely causes for decline in the Hindu population proportion in Bangladesh. While the last wave of Muslim in-migration took

place in the mid-1960s (Sajeda Amin et al 1996)⁸. Hindu out-migration has kept steady pace-the proportion of the population who were Hindu was around 30 per cent before the Independence of Pakistan, fell to 22 per cent in 1951, 18 per cent in 1961, 13 per cent in 1971, 12 per cent in 1981, and 10 per cent in 1991. However, the current religious composition of Bangladesh is 88 per cent Muslim, 11 per cent Hindu and the remainder others, Buddhist and Christian population 0.6 and 0.3 percent respectively. It is not clear whether there is any relationship between Hindu population's declining trend and existence of communalism in Bangladesh. The debate over the *existence of any communalism or fundamentalism* in Bangladesh is very often stuck in the face of absence of any explanation in this regard. The gradual erosion of the Hindu population by way of migration also need to be addressed and explained by the social scientists⁹.

Sex composition of population: Almost fifty percent of the population of Bangladesh is females (Table). During 1992 of the total 111.7 million population 49 per cent was female and fifty one per cent was male. The percentage of male population in the urban area has been always high than the rural area. This may be due to higher rate of male migration from rural area to the Metropolitan areas.

Fertility and Mortality status: In the twentieth century the rate of population growth was checked by high levels of death rates; slow mortality decline began early in the twenty-first century due to control and eradication of various infectious diseases. However, still today the infant and child mortality continues to remain high. For both sexes the life expectancy at birth appears to be around 60.3 years as of 1997, and per 1000 live births the infant mortality rate was found to be 67.

Demographic transition:

Two prominent authors Prof. A.J. Coale and F.W. Notestein¹⁰ have developed the concept of *demographic transition*. The main argument of their thesis is that higher level of birth rates accompanied with high mortality rates enhance the strong urge for survival. This is prevalent in the peasant societies where women were pressurised to give birth of

⁸ See Sajeda Amin, Ian Diamond, Fiona Steele, Contraception and Religious Practice in Bangladesh, Working Papers, 1996, No.83, The Population Council, New York, 1996, pp.5-7.

⁹ See Report titled, "Communalism revisited", in The Holiday (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) April 26, 2002, p.3.

¹⁰ Cited in S.B. Mukherjee, 'Population growth and Urbanisation in South and South-East Asia', Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1988, p.25.

more number of children. Education was brief, and children began their economic contribution early in life. The economic organisation of the self-sufficient agrarian communities turned almost wholly about the family, and the perpetuation of the family was the main guarantee of support and elemental security. Opportunities open to women to achieve economic support or personal prestige outside the roles of wife and mother were scanty, and the women's economic functions were compatible with continuous childbearing.

These arrangements were woven into the religious belief and social fabric and were hard to change. Mortality declined quickly as a result of human effort, because man has always-strong desires for health and long life. The reduction of fertility, however, awaited the gradual obsolescence of age-old customs and institutions.

Due to urbanisation and industrialisation the family lost its pristine role in production, consumption, recreation and education. The anonymity of city life reduced the pressures towards traditional behaviour exerted by the family and the community. The cost of childbearing increased and the possibilities of economic contribution by children declined. In the meantime, death rates had been falling, which lowered the inducements to have many births. Women earned a good deal of independence from the crippling obligations of the family, and their new economic roles and social ambitions were less compatible with childbearing.

All these led to the emergence of a new ideal small family. The upper middle classes in the urban society pioneered birth regulation mostly through the use of folk methods of contraception. These methods had been widely known for centuries all over the world. But they were lying unused until the motivation for the birth restriction became strong. Thereafter, the ideal and follow-up practice spread down the social scales and permeated the lower-middle classes and still lower sections of the people in the socio-economic hierarchy.

Advanced and simpler methods of birth control were gradually developed and made available to the wide sections of the population. Small family became not only an ideal, but also a reality. A balance of low birth rates and low death rates was accomplished. The rate of natural increase came down sharply. The demographic transition was completed.

A lot of controversy was raised about this model of demographic transition. The role and the cause of declining mortality were questioned. Whether differences in the proportion married or differences in marital fertility played the major role was not satisfactorily explained. Whether declining mortality preceded declining fertility was debated. To what extent the decline in marital fertility was result of new techniques of fertility control or new attitudes and motivations was not and perhaps could not be answered. In spite of all these ambiguities and uncertainties, we agree with the essence as stated by Paul Demeny,

“In traditional societies, fertility and mortality are high. In modern societies, fertility and mortality are low. In between, there is demographic transition.”

Although the country has undertaken the family-planning programme for a long time, it is only in 1989 Bangladesh Fertility Survey (BFS) that the fact of fertility declines was credibly established. The 1950s and 1960s had experienced a series of fertility surveys conducted in the proclaimed fertility declines. However, the latter has proved to be *artifacts of data*.¹¹ Apart from the data from the 1989 BFS that established declining trend of fertility in the decade or so prior to the survey, the 1993 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), has further established the earlier findings. The DHS found the TFR might be as low as 3.5 births per woman (NIPORT 1994)¹². The Decline started in the late 1970s and accelerated in the mid-1980s.¹³

Table-5

Total fertility rates in Bangladesh in different years

Year	Rate of fertility	Source ¹⁴
1960-68	6.3 per cent	various
1974	7.1 per cent	BBS 1977
1975	6.3 per cent	National Research Council 1981

¹¹ See Sajeda Amin, John Cleland, James F. Phillips, and Gholam Mostafa Kamal, *Socioeconomic Change and the Demand for Children in Rural Bangladesh*, Working Papers, No. 70, 1995, The Population Council, New York, p.4.

¹² National Institute for Population Research and Training (NIPORT), *Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 1993-94*, Preliminary Report, Dhaka: NIPORT, 1994, Mitra and Associates, and Demographic and Health Survey/Macro International.

¹³ See Sajeda Amin, John Cleland, James F. Phillips, and Gholam Mostafa Kamal, op cit. p.3.

¹⁴ Cited in Monica Das Gupta and D. Narayana, *Bangladesh's fertility decline from regional perspective*, Working Paper Series Number 96.03, p.20, April 1996, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, Harvard School of Public Health, USA.

1979	7.0 per cent	Kantner and Frankenberg 1988
1980	6.6 per cent	Kantner and Frankenberg 1988
1981	4.8 per cent	Kantner and Frankenberg 1988
1988	5.9 per cent	Huq and Cleland 1990
1992	3.4 per cent	Demographic and health survey 1993-94

A cautious analysis of this and other survey data as well shows that completed family size for women in the age range 40-45 is around seven births, indicating that the fertility decline is a relatively recent phenomenon. While there is some evidence of a shift toward later marriage, this shift does not appear to be the dominant or even a major component of fertility decline. More importantly, change in fertility due to marriage postponement is tempered because the overall ages at marriage remain low and within an age range that is not likely to significantly affect overall fertility.

Although the increasing practice of fertility control has led to some degree of fertility differentiation, particularly between rural and urban areas and between regions, in other respects the fall in fertility has affected all major socio-economic groups to the same extent. There is an inverse u-shaped relationship between fertility and socio-economic status-fertility is lowest among the poorest and the richest groups classified in terms of land or other wealth scores. Increased spousal separation among the poor, who are more likely to migrate for work, has been hypothesised to explain lower fertility among the landless and may well explain the pattern of association seen for more recent data. Due socio-economic causes the use of contraceptives has considerably increased both among rich and poor alike and among the educated and uneducated (BFS 1989).

Contraception and Desired Family Size: There is a strong correspondence between fertility decline and trends in contraception use. Between 1975 and 1989, use of modern methods of contraception rose from 7 per cent to 31 per cent among women of reproductive age. The report from the 1993-94 Demographic and Health Survey quotes a figure of 44.6 percent.

The percent of respondents wanting no more children in various surveys is shown in Table-6. It is clear that in the late 1960s the proportion of women who wanted no more children was substantial. Although no data exist for the 1970s, the trend data in the 1980s show an increasing desire to control fertility paralleled by an increasing overall level of contraceptive use. Comparing the 1975 BFS to the 1989 BFS shows a fall from 4.1 children to 2.9 children. The percentage of nonnumeric responses reflect also fell from 29 to 8, which is telling since such responses reflect a degree of fatalism with respect to family size and fertility control.

However, poverty too may act as a spur to family size limitation. The proportion of population below the poverty line was 40 percent in 1988-89, since then some improvement could be noticed. Nonetheless, the proportion of poor people is deprived from many basic human rights. According to the Task Force on Poverty Alleviation formed by the Government of Bangladesh, the period following the War of Independence in 1971 saw a sharp increase in poverty caused by massive destruction of productive capacity. In addition, large numbers of refugees fled across the border during the war and had to be resettled.

As reflected in the commentary of the Task Force, the 1970s were marked by large-scale crises occurring in rapid succession: a nine-month war, an extended period of rising prices exacerbated by the international oil crisis, severe droughts and floods in 1972-74, and a devastating crop failure and famine in 1974-76. These national crises stand out in the collective memory as a period of great instability and uncertainty, in sharp contrast to the relative stability of the previous and subsequent decades (Khan 1990)¹⁵. It indeed confirms that there is a connection between the extreme poverty of the 1970s and trends in fertility, the causal mechanism must be somewhat different from a direct association. It is likely that the economic shock of the 1970s triggered a social transformation that facilitated a reassessment of the value of children.

Several national surveys indicated improvements in nutritional status: for example, the proportion of children who are severely malnourished decreased from 25.8 percent in 1975-76 to 9.6 percent in 1985-86 (Table-6).

¹⁵ A.R.Khan, "Poverty in Bangladesh: A consequence of and a constraint on growth", *Bangladesh Development Studies* 18: 1990, 19-34.

Table-6

Percent of currently married women of reproductive age wanting no more children, 1969-1994.

Survey	Year	Percent
NIS	1969	44
CPS	1983	48
CPS	1985/86	52
CPS	1989	56
BFS	1989	55
DHS	1993/94	57

Note: NIS=National Impact Survey; CPS=Contraceptive Prevalence Survey; BFS=Bangladesh Fertility Survey; DHS=Demographic and Health Survey.

Other indicators highlights the adverse economic conditions of the 1970s: per capita consumption of food fell between 1973-74 and 1976-77, then exceeded 1973-74 levels in 1981-82 and 1983-84, according to HES taken in those years (Table). The drop in per capita consumption of food was similar for different categories of food: grain, fish, and pulses. Real wage rates fell at the beginning of the 1970s, remained low throughout the decade, returned to preindependence levels in the mid-1980s, and continued to rise at a moderate rate. Real wage rates and rice equivalent rates for the 1970s and 1980s are given for male agricultural workers in Table-. It is apparent that the rising trend in real wages in the latter half of the 1980s is related to the stability of the price of coarse rice.

Table-7

Percent of rural children suffering various forms malnutrition, 1975-86.

	1975-76	1981-82	1985-86
Mild malnutrition	17.7	28.8	33.1
Moderate malnutrition	53.0	46.1	52.0
Severe malnutrition	25.8	15.1	9.6

Note: Severe malnutrition is defined as less than 60 percent of reference median weight-for-age. Moderate malnutrition is at least 60 percent but less than 75 percent of reference median weight-for-age. Mild malnutrition is at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of reference median weight-for-age.

Sources: 1975 and 1981-82 data from Institute for Food and Nutrition Sciences Nutrition Surveys, and 1985-86 data from BBS and Nutrition Status Module of the 1985-86 HES (Khan and Hossain 1989).

General macroeconomic indicators such as overall economic growth rates indicate that after several harsh setbacks associated with the War of Independence, there has been a modest trend of increasing economic stability and steady growth through the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Between 1972-73 and 1986-87 the gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 4 percent per year, corresponding to a per capita growth rate of 1.64 percent; in contrast, the growth rate during the two decades prior to independence was 3.2 per cent, but was largely offset by a relatively high rate of population growth that yielded a per capita growth rate of only 0.66 percent. The higher rate of growth for the latter period is somewhat misleading for the purposes of comparing trends because of the low base level of GDP in the immediate post-war year 1972-73. Preindependence per capita GDP levels were attained as late as 1980-81 (Khan and Hossain 1989)¹⁶.

Table-8

Average capita consumption (grams/person/day) of selected food items in rural areas, 1973-84.

Year	Foodgrain	Fish	Pulses	Total
1973-74	438.7	25.6	20.1	678.5
1976-77	378.1	18.7	13.1	623.6
1981-82	458.2	26.8	12.0	740.1
1983-84	490.9	29.0	26.2	831.3

Source: Report of Bangladesh HES, 1981-82, 1983-84.

However, the urban-rural difference in total fertility rate appears to be 1.28 for the year 1996. The situation can be attributed to relatively higher concentration of population and family planning activities in the urban area compared to rural area, prevailing social custom and uncertainty associated to child survival.

Although the current population policy is to attain the replacement level fertility by the year 2005. According to demographers, the absolute size of population in Bangladesh is destined to grow for another forty or fifty years until the age-sex composition of the population is stabilized. Still population below the age of 15 years is around 46 per cent of the total population and females within

¹⁶ A.R.Khan and M. Hossain, *The Strategy of Development in Bangladesh*. Macmillan, London, 1989.

the reproduction age (15-49 years) represent 48.4 per cent of the total population. Even in 1996, the proportion of population in 0-4 years age group to the total population has not changed much compared to 1981 level. Recent studies indicate that if population continues to grow at the present rate, it will be doubled in the next 41 years and will frustrate the development efforts of the economy. Such a high rate of population growth along with the 5.7 per cent GDP growth rate, 2.9 per cent of agricultural sector growth rate and 1.8 per cent of industry sector growth rate recorded in 1998, will further accentuate the problem for a country like Bangladesh.

Table-9
Population projections of Bangladesh 1995-2052(million)

Year	Projection 1 (High-variant)	Projection 2 (Medium-variant)	Projection 3 (Low-variant)	Projection 4 (Constant-variant)
1995	118.23	118.23	118.23	118.23
2000	128.82	128.31	127.81	129.63
2005	141.61	139.91	138.22	144.35
2010	155.45	151.89	148.32	161.15
2015	168.81	162.68	156.49	178.57
2020	181.09	171.42	161.75	196.88
2025	193.78	179.98	166.54	216.94
2030	207.70	189.06	171.32	161.75
2040	236.56	205.81	177.82	292.63
2050	264.68	218.88	178.19	355.02

Source: World Population Prospects, United Nations, 1999.

Mortality: The area that is now Bangladesh has experienced unprecedented population growth led by the mortality decline of the last 40 to 50 years. Writing in the early 1980s, Miranda (1982)¹⁷ comments:

The sort of “explosive” population growth rates, which have become so characteristic of the Bangladesh demographic profile are in fact a fairly recent feature which has characterised the period of only a single generation. Although the population has more than doubled during the last thirty years, most people currently in the reproductive ages were born in a totally different demographic environment. This encourage one to think that current growth rates are basically a transitional phenomenon, an imbalance occurring in the process of adjustment of fertility to new conditions of lower mortality (p.53).

Table-10

Crude Death Rates (CDR) in different years

Year	CDR
1901	45.6
1911-21	46.3
1921-31	41.7
1931-41	37.8
1941-51	40.7
1951-61	29.7
1961-65	18.5
1971-74	20.8
1981	11.5
1986	11.4
1991	13.5
1996	11.0

Source: Census Reports:

The State of World Population-1996, UNFPA

Death rate upto the years of 1951 from 1901 was higher, it started to come down after 1951, but during 1971-1974 it was high. This might be as a result of the war of liberation

¹⁷ A.Miranda, *The Demography of Bangladesh*. DERAP Publication No. 144, Chr, Michelsen Institute, Department of Social Science and Development, DERAP publications. Bergen, 1982.

in 1971, for which 3 million people were perished. In 1986 the CDR was 11.4 while it went up in 1991 to 13.5.

Population Distribution: In Bangladesh the migrants are continuously on the march in to mushrooming cities, which represents or appears in to represent, opportunities for better life. The urban population is quite highly concentrated in few big cities/towns. The population of one mega city (Dhaka) and three statistical Metropolitan areas (SMS) account for 47.7 per cent of the urban population. This indicates that highest concentration of urban population is found in big Metropolises.

The tremendous expansion of cities, especially in developing countries, is transforming social dynamics throughout the world. But while it brings daunting challenges, it also brings unprecedented opportunities.¹⁸

Urbanisation: Urbanisation is one of the main indices of social mobilisation. It has crucial linkages with the political development of the country. Urban areas represent as the centre places of any country than that of rural areas. Evidence shows that densely populated urban and central areas have more party organisations and higher vote turn out than peripheral and rural areas.¹⁹ The urban areas have better transportation and communication, which facilitate for easy political participation. The possibilities of urban dwellers to perceive themselves or their group as having an impact on public policy are more likely than their rural counterpart. Thus the crowded cities, Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, and Rajshahi have been the main centre of 1990s pro-democratic movement.

Urbanisation and urban growth take place through a combination of three components, such as (a) natural increase of the native urban population, (b) area redefinition or reclassification or annexation and (c) rural-urban (or other forms of internal) migration. In a condition of developing urbanisation, role of migration is even more pronounced while in the state of advanced urbanisation, where urban growth is almost stagnated or even declining, internal migration plays a minor or almost no role. In Bangladesh, as in some other developing countries, the rate of urbanisation is extremely high, (more than two to three times that of the national population growth rate), being consistently over 5 per cent since 1974, and even upto 7 per cent in some years (Table-).

¹⁸ United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA), *The State of World Population 1996*.

¹⁹ See Lester W. Milbrath, *Political participation How and why do people get involved in Politics?*, Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1966, p 98.

In this situation, the role of all the above mentioned three components is important, but at times, and in the city specific cases, the role of migration is very dominant.

Table-11

Growth of national and urban population in Bangladesh, 1960-1991

Census year	Total national population (millions)	Annual growth rate of population (Per cent)	Total urban population (millions)	Urban population as percentage of total population (i.e.level of urbanisation)	Decadal increase of urban population (per cent)	Annual(exponential growth rate of urban population (per cent)
1961	55.22	2.26	2.64	5.19	45.11	3.72
1974	76.37	2.48	6.00	8.87	137.57	6.62
1981	89.91	2.32	13.56	15.54	110.68	10.03
1991	111.45	2.17	22.45	20.15	69.75	5.43

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

Table-12

Rate of growth of Urban Population

Year	Rate of growth of Urban Population
1951-1974	5.38 %
1974-1991	7.07 %
1951-1991	6.10 %

Source: Calculated from BBS data.

Migration contributed about 40 per cent to the urban growth in Bangladesh during 1974-81. The share was probably similar during 1981-91²⁰. For some large cities, this share could even be higher, upto 70 per cent, as in the case of Dhaka city. An ESCAP (1993) document estimated role of migration and reclassification to the tune of 58 per cent until 2005. The variable contribution of migration to urban growth by cities is evident from following Table.

²⁰ See Professor Nazrul Islam, *Urbanisation, Migration and Development in Bangladesh: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues*, Paper 1', CPD-UNFPA Programme on Population and Sustainable Development, Dhaka, 1999.

Table-13

Components of population growth in 6 major cities in Bangladesh, 1961-1974

City	Population 1961	Population 1974	Net increase in %	in-migration in %	Annexation in %
Dhaka	521034	1679572	18	74	8
Chittagong	364205	889760	28	43	29
Khulna	175023	437304	27	73	-
Narayanganj	162054	270680	41	17	42
Mymensingh	53256	182153	17	25	58
Rajshahi	56885	132909	30	36	34

Source: BBS

The impact of rural to urban migration is both diverse and deep, both at the urban destination end and at the rural origin. Urbanisation and urban growth occurring due to migration (and other factors) have both positive and negative consequences or impacts. Researchers have documented the consequences of urbanisation. Some of the positive consequences of urbanisation are the following:

- i) Political benefits: empowerment, democracy etc.
- ii) Socio-cultural benefits: modernisation
- iii) Economic benefits: higher productivity, better income etc.
- iv) Demographic benefits: lowering of age at marriage, reduction of fertility rate etc.
- v) Improved access to information technology.

The negative consequences, can be grouped as the following:

- i) Political consequences: Criminalisation of politics
- ii) Social consequences: increased violence and crime and social degradation
- iii) Economic consequences: leading to income inequality and poverty, ill effects of globalisation
- iv) Environmental consequences: encroachment on productive agricultural land and forests
- v) Extreme pressure on housing, growth of slums and the pressures on and urban services

vi) Cultural consequences: entry of alien culture, loss of national cultural identity. Each of these consequences need further separate study, which in this context is rather avoided.

Table-14
Percentage contribution of
migration to Urban Growth

Year	Percentage contribution to Urban growth
1950-70	45.9
1970-90	49.0
1950-90	47.4

Source: Calculated from (BBS) Census Reports of different years,

Trends in Age Structure: Population with a past record of high birth rates has a much higher proportion of children and lower proportion of old people than do population with history of low birth rates. It is seen from the available data that the population percentages of age group 0-4 years have declined over the past three decades. On the other hand, the percentage of population in the age group 10-14 and 15-19 years have increased till 1981. This may indicate a decline in fertility and mortality levels in the recent past. It is also found from the data that the percentage distribution of population aged below 15 years has always been high in Bangladesh. The population below 15 years age-group rose from a volume of slightly over two-fifths of the population in 1911 to nearly one half in 1974. For 1981, it is noticed that a decline of over one per cent point as compared to the 1974 figure and again 1.6 per cent in 1991. Moderate declining fertility and quite substantial decline in infant and child hood mortality levels are responsible for this decline. Simultaneously, the proportion of the population aged between 15 and 59 years has increased as compared to 1961, 1974 and 1981. Another significant fact is that, the proportion of population aged 60 years and above has increased over the past few decades. For 1981 and in 1991, however, it is noticed that a slight decline as compared to the proportion recorded in 1974. The median age of the population has also declined with the concomitant increase in the dependency ratio over

time. Dependency ratio in 1991 has been decreased from 1981. The selected demographic indicators of Bangladesh reflected that the dependency ratio, the number of dependants in population as a whole relative to the number of adults in the workforce, was 0.9 i.e. 48% of total population in 1951. While it was 51% with a dependency ratio of 1.04 according to 1991 census. In the present year this dependency ratio might have also an increasing trend.

Table-15

Percentage distribution of population by broad age-groups and dependency ratio

Year	Total	0-14	15-59	60+	Dependency Ratio
1911	100	42.3	53.3	4.4	88
1921	100	42.3	53.6	4.1	87
1931	100	41.9	54.9	3.2	82
1941	100	41.4	55.1	3.5	82
1951	100	42.1	53.5	4.4	87
1961	100	46.0	48.8	5.2	105
1971	100	48.0	46.3	5.7	116
1981	100	46.7	47.8	5.5	109
1991	100	45.1	49.5	5.4	102

Source: BBS

The population of 18 years and above are currently voters. According to 1991 census there were 53.1 million persons of voting age in the country in 1991 of which 27.1 million were male and 26.0 millions were females. They constitute about 50 percent of the total population. In the urban area proportion of males of voting age are higher than that in the rural areas. This may be mainly due to the immigration of adult males to urban areas.

Social mobilisation and demographic transition: A good number of literature support the view that there is a relationship between socio-economic development (which is equivalent to the increased rate of social mobilisation), demand or need for children, and fertility decline vis-a-vis demographic transition. The most commonly cited factors of key influence are mentioned summarily in the following Table. It may be mentioned

that there is no evidence that major changes in any of the factors listed in the table acted as essential preconditions for fertility decline. Evidence is scant that supports the contention that the labour utility of children or their value as sources of family security has changed much in the last 30 years.

Nonetheless, other “demand-side” factors have been important for the fertility transition in the country. Changes in fertility behaviour can best be understood in terms of the social changes or increased rate of social mobilisation in post-independence Bangladesh. Particularly high levels of economic uncertainty and instability have been created due to the particular circumstances of the 1970s and a series of economic setbacks created. Accordingly, the level of crop cultivation has been declining and parallel rural non-farm activities have been increasing. These developments have led to growing disillusionment with peasant agriculture. The combined effect of these events may well have precipitated a welter of increased rate of social mobilisation. On the other hand this situation has also expanded the role of women. Which again plays a constituent part of the whole process.

Table-16

Possible effects of social mobilisation on demand for children

Form of social mobilisation	Fertility effect
Replacement of subsistence by cash	Declining labour utility of children(plus increased direct costs of children)
Growth of nonfamilial security mechanisms	Declining old-age/adversely-insurance utility of children
Increased wage employment of women	Increased opportunity costs associated with childbearing
Increased school enrolments	Increased direct costs of children, Greater opportunity to invest in children(quality versus quantity)
Increased adult literacy/education	Multiple possibilities
Increased availability of consumer durables	Increase in relative cost of children
General development	Multiple possibilities

This destabilisation may have created a climate in which any conscious attempt could bring about the change in population growth. In fact the family planning

programme could take root and flourish in such a situation. Although the sociological transformation of the 1970s has not been written about extensively, in line with the main hypothesis of this study we argue that it has had tremendous consequence for demographic trends in the decades that followed.

Similarly, subjective factors, not captured by macroeconomic trends, may have reduced the demand for children. Growing material aspirations may have heightened awareness of the costs of children, and parental expectations about the likely economic returns from children may have shrunk. Such shifts in values and expectations are plausible but, regrettably, they cannot be assessed empirically.

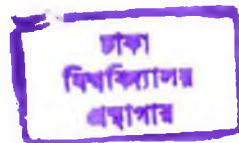
Part of the explanation of fertility change must lie in more longstanding trends. Unprecedented population growth, led by mortality decline, set off a process of improvement and land scarcity and finally brought society to a threshold at which the traditional patterns of female seclusion, family formation, and fertility are no longer sustainable. Moreover, by the early 1960s, the average couple could expect about five children to survive to maturity, a substantial increase over historical levels. These consequences of improved survival are perhaps sufficient to account for the existence, clearly documented by the surveys conducted in the 1960s, of a latent demand for fertility reduction. Thus, the remote event of a changed mortality regime set the stage for fertility decline.

We have also argued that demographic change in Bangladesh is one of several elements of change in a dynamic social environment. We have mentioned the shift in occupational composition, the growing links between villages and the outside world, the activities of a broad range of NGOs, and the growth of a more complex and monetized rural economy. It is most unlikely that a major behavioural change, such as fertility regulation, would have occurred in the absence of these other changes.

The Bangladesh family planning programme, through its “information, motivation, and communication” programme, has carried out a vigorous campaign to promote birth control. One element of the programme functionaries, and other nongovernmental development workers, those similar families increase family wellbeing. It is plausible that such messages, whether or not they fit with the economic reality of individual families, will have some impact on fertility behaviour. The intensive nature of

the programme and the extent of financial support provided to family planning can be seen as responses to an element of “Malthusian pressure” that was brought to bear on the population. It is increasingly evident that rapid population growth, and the identification of population as the country’s “number one problem”, compels people at all economic levels to consider the negative consequences of their reproductive behaviour. Thus the changing socio-economic situation has caused the demographic transition in the country in 1980s. However, in the subsequent chapters (Chapter V, Chapter VII) the specific and non-specific evidences of social mobilisation and political participation will be presented and discussed. In line with the hypothesis of the present study, the institutionalisation process of democracy in Bangladesh is immensely influenced by increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation.

400502



Chapter V

Factors Influencing Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh

A natural corollary of institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh is an absence of understanding on perspectives in analysing the constraints. No wonder the questions regarding these constraints are also embedded with such perspectives of different categories. These are the factors influencing institutionalization of democracy.

The hypothesis of the study has also stemmed up from the factors influencing institutionalization of democracy. The faster growing rate of social mobilisation and political participation, as has been hypothesised, enormously affect institutionalization process of democracy. Thus without examining the process of social mobilisation and political participation complete understanding on institutionalization of democracy is quite impossible. It is useful in analysing the internal structure of complex contemporary systems as well as characterizing the successive emergence of qualitatively new levels in historical development (Steward 1955).¹ Hence, the greatest need is an adequate conceptualization of the phenomena of socio-cultural systems, and relevant other factors influencing institutionalization of democracy. Nevertheless, stable democratic institutions; require certain social, cultural, and economic preconditions and an “appropriate” fit between those institutions and society.² Thus the study of a political phenomenon requires some understanding of how the economic, cultural and other phenomena in society are unfolding them with the pace of social change.

The idea of social change is linked, *inter alia*, with the idea of social mobilisation and political participation. The increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation compelled the researchers on comparative politics since 1960s, to look for its causes and effects along with its indices. The societies that have attained comparatively higher rates are well advanced than the societies that are lagging behind. Researchers view these backward

¹ Julian H. Steward, *Theory of culture change, the methodology of multilineal evolution*, University of Illinois Press, Urban, 1955, p.5.

societies as 'traditional' and advanced as 'modern'. Compared to traditional society modern society has greater control over its natural and social environment. This control, in turn, is based on the expansion of scientific and technological knowledge. In Deutsch's formulation, social mobilisation is the process by which "major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior."³ It is the combined effects of many things. The most important and inalienable among these are education, income, urbanisation, life expectancy, and mass media exposure. Thus social mobilisation may be measured through the indices like rate of literacy, number of university students, rate of life expectancy at birth, per capita income, rate of urbanisation, rate of people shifting occupation from agriculture to non-agriculture sector, and rate of media exposure. The upward changes that occurred in these indices of any society led to increased rates in social mobilisation. Thus social mobilisation involves changes in the aspirations of individuals, groups, and societies; economic development involves changes in their capabilities.⁴

The contrast between modern man and traditional man is the source of the contrast between modern society and traditional society. At the intellectual level modern society is characterized by the tremendous accumulation of knowledge about man's environment and by the diffusion of this knowledge through society by means of literacy, mass communications, and education. In contrast to traditional society, modern society also involves much better health, longer life expectancy, and higher rates of occupational and geographical mobility. It is predominantly urban rather than rural. Socially, the family and other primary groups having diffuse roles are supplanted or supplemented in modern society by consciously organized secondary associations having more specific functions. Economically, there is a diversification of activity as a few simple occupational skill and the ratio of capital to labour are much complex ones; the level of occupational skill and the ration of capital to labour are much higher than in traditional society. Agriculture declines in importance compared to

² Myron Weiner, "Political changes: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East", in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington (eds), *An analytic study, understanding political development*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston Toronto, 1987, pp.33-99.

³ Karl W. Deutsche, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," in *American Political Science Review*, 55 (Sept. 1961), p. 494.

commercial, industrial, and other nonagricultural activities, and commercial agriculture replaces subsistence agriculture. The geographical scope of economic activity is far greater in modern society than in traditional society, and there is a centralization of such activity at the national level, with the emergence of a national market, national sources of capital and other national economic institutions.

In fact society encompasses a host of factors. It is the composition of procreated people from mixed races. This composition encompasses the factors of institutionalizing democracy. Analysis of society or social structure can help finding these factors. Social structure consists of social relations with person to person (A.R.Radcliffe Brown 1948:191-192)⁵. According to Raymond Firth (1971)⁶ there is no difference between society and social structure. Famous English Sociologist Morris Ginsberg (1963)⁷ said that the social structure of a community includes different types of groups, which the people form, and the institutions in which they take part. Bottomore (1972) supports Ginsberg⁸. Bottomore said, "the most useful seems to me that which regards social structure as the complex of the major institutions and groups in society." The politics of a country is ultimately determined by its social structure (Karim 1980:viii).⁹ The diversified human relationships being constituted among them help emerging sustainable rules of game for any course of action. They behave with each other according to the approved custom of these rules of game. These rules of game for course of actions are known as social institutions. On the whole the institutions of any society could be identified as (a) Wealth or economic institutions, (b) Religion (c) Marriage (d) Family (e) State or Political Institutions (f) Education, and (g) Recreation etc. Almost similar to this line of understanding, it is argued that a nation comprises of these social institutions or social forces. Each of these institutions 'holds certain values, which it wants to preserve and enhance (Emajuddin Ahmed)¹⁰.

⁴ Samuel Huntington, "Political Order in Changing Societies", mentioned in J. Timmons Roberts and Amy Hite, *From Modernization to Globalization, Perspectives on Development and Social Change*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Massachusetts, USA, 2000, pp.144-156.

⁵ A.R.Radcliffe Brown, *Andaman Islanders*, 1948, pp191-192.

⁶ See Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organisation*, Tavistock Publication, London, 1971, p.30.

⁷ Morris Ginsberg, *Old Societies New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, New York Free Press, 1963.

⁸ T.B.Bottomore, *Sociology: a Guide to problems and literature*, Allen & Unwin, 1972, London.

⁹ A.K.Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society*, Nowrose Kitabistan, Dacca, 1980, p.viii.

¹⁰ Emajuddin Ahmed, "National Community and Political Institutions: A Research Note", in M. Abdul Hafiz and Abdur Rob Khan (eds), *Nation Building in Bangladesh Retrospect and Prospect*, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, P.197.

Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan¹¹ present 'five reinforcing conditions that must be present or be created for a consolidated democracy to exist'. According to these authors consolidation occurs if "democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, the 'only game in town'.

Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi¹² analyze the factors that help democracies endure. More affluent countries, good economic performance among less affluent democracies, and a favourable international political environment are among the factors that foster democratic survivability. Several country and regional specialists also argue that democracy in the third wave has been bolstered by a higher level of development and its concomitant implications for changes in the class structure.

In "Illusions about Consolidations" O' Donnell argues that the concept of consolidation of democracy is usually teleological and easily leads to a focus on formal institutions and a neglect of clientalism and other institutionalized in many third wave democracies.

Robert Michels¹³ has classified the dependants of these tendencies into three, as (a) the nature of the human individual; (ii) the nature of the political struggle, and (iii) nature of organisation. Those could be the fundamentals for studying democratisation.

Huntington's¹⁴ assertion on various factors of democratisation could be mentioned notably. His arguments that the process of democratisation is inseparable from the very existence of different social, economic and time factors, could be summarized as, (i) no single factor is sufficient to explain the development of democracy in all countries or in a single country; (ii) no single factor is necessary for the development of democracy in all countries; (iii) Democratisation in each country is the combination of causes; (iv) the combination of causes producing democracy varies from country to country. (v) the combination of causes generally responsible for one wave of democratisation differs from that responsible for other

¹¹ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien (eds), "Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives", John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1997, cited in the Book Review of *American Political Science Review*, September 1999, Vol. 93, No. 3, pp. 728-729.

¹² Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, "What makes Democracies Endure?" in *Ibid*.

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave, Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1993, p.31.

waves;(vi)the causes responsible for the initial regime changes in a democratisation wave are likely to differ from those responsible, for later regime changes in that wave.

Michels' and Huntington's views regarding the nature of human individual, political struggle and organisation alongwith different social, economic and time factors can explain the complex whole of tendencies of democracy and causes of the wave of democratisation, respectively. Generally speaking the sustainability of institutionalization of democracy depends upon its struggle or wave in different times and on the nature of participation by the individual member and various organisation of the society. One of the main hypothesis of present days institutionalization constraints of democracy may be that there are subtle inherent tendencies to thwart the process, "Democracy has encountered obstacles, not merely imposed from without, but spontaneously surgent from within (Robert Michels 1958:vi)".

Since the wave of democratisation "had to result from a different of causes (Huntington 1991)". These causes might present in the institutions of the society along with periodic and global factors of institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. However, a comparative realization on factors influencing institutionalization of democracy could be gathered from above analysis. These factors might have two dimension one is internal and the other is external. Internal dimension could be found in the geography, topography, population structure, society, economic activities, culture, tradition, politics etc. External dimension may be identified as foreign influence, colonial background, and globalization. However, it is possible to discuss a good number of issues under this heading. But for the purpose and convenience of the thesis we prefer to single out five broad categories, i) Socio-cultural, ii) Economic, iii) Political, iv) Globalisation and v) Periodic. Most of these factors, except globalisation, could be viewed through different social mobilisation indicators. The changing pattern of social mobilisation indicators could be found and observed through different social development indicators. Nevertheless, the institutionalization process of democracy is enormously influenced by these factors vis-a-vis indicators of social mobilisation and political participation.

This chapter (Chapter VII) examines the above factors influencing institutionalization of democracy vis-a-vis the indicators of social mobilisation and political participation. We begin by presenting the evidence on increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation. This is followed by a discussion regarding indices of social mobilisation and

political participation those are relevant to the context of Bangladesh. In order to examine the factors, the specific evidences of social development indicators could be taken into account. Mentionably, most of these social development indicators are same as the indicators of social mobilization. On the other hand, one of the important factors of social mobilisation, urbanisation has been discussed in the section of population in Chapter IV. Besides, in Chapter VII we present two sections in this regard. Section-1 of Chapter VII presents “Social mobilisation and democratisation” and Section-3 of the same chapter spells out “Political participation and February 1991 general elections”. Moreover, generalised or nonspecific evidences of social mobilization and political participation have been presented in the present chapter, Chapter VII. The generalised or non-specific evidences of social mobilization would be considered in terms of socio-cultural, economic, political, global and periodic changes over the past two decades. In line with the hypothesis, research questions and arguments of the thesis, we put forward the evidences of changes that might have set stage for the democratisation process in 1990s.

V.1 Specific evidences of social mobilisation:

Table-17
Selected Social Development Indicators of Bangladesh in Different Years

Area/Indicators	1970	1974	1975	1981	1985	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Life Expectancy at Birth	45	50.7	46	55	55	56.1	56.3	57.2	57.9	58.0	58.0
Male	--	51.6	47	55	56	56.5	56.8	57.8	58.1	58.1	58.1
Female	--	49.7	45	54	55	55.7	55.9	56.6	57.5	57.6	57.6
Sanitary System of Excreta Disposal(% of Population)						9			35	35.3	36.9
Access to safe Water(% of Population)			56			80			95	96	96
Persons per Physicians	8430	10000	11350	7810	6886	4526	4596	4687	4777	4870	4915
Population below poverty level:per Capita											
Calorie Intake <2122 Cal.											
National		83		73	55.7	47.5					47.5
Rural		83		74	54.7	47.6					47.1
Urban		81		66	62.6	46.7					49.7
Income Per Capita GDP											
in Taka		992	1594	2574	4174	7490	8001	8208	8754	9760	10660
in US\$		124	180	158	161	210	210	210	219	243	261
Adult Literacy											
National		25.8	-	29.2	33.0	35.3	39.7	41.5	42.0	47.3	47.3
Male		37.2	-	39.7	39.7	44.3	46.8	48.1	49.4	55.6	55.6
Female		13.2	-	18.8	18.0	25.8	25.0	33.9	34.3	38.1	38.1
Gross Primary Enrolment(6-10 Years)											
National					-	76.0	-	80.0	86.00	92.00	95.00
Male					56.2	81.00	--	82.00	88.00	93.00	96.00
Female					43.8	70.0	--	78.00	84.00	91.00	94.00
Daily Newspaper Circulation(Copies per 1000 persons)								14.9	17.3	18.5	19.0
T.V. Receivers (Sets per 1000 Persons)						4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	5.2	5.3
Female Labour Force(as % of total Labour)		4.1	4.5	5.8	4.1	13.6	14.5	-	-	-	18.2

Source: BBS/Planning Commission, Cited by Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning Government of Bangladesh, The Fifth Five Year Plan 1997-2000, pp.15-16.

It is evident from the above table (Table-17) that since 1970s almost all the indices of the social development have been increased. The health related an indicator such as life expectancy at birth has been increased from 45 years in 1970s to 58 years in 1996. The sanitary system of excreta disposal was 9 per cent in 1991 it reached up to 36.9 per cent in 1996. The percentage of population those have access to safe water was 56 in 1975 it became 80 per cent in 1991, 95 per cent in 1994, and 96 per cent both in 1995 and 1996. Number of persons per physician were 8,430 in 1970, the situation deteriorated in 1974 when this number rose up to 10,000, however, the number further increased in 1975 when it became 11,350. But latter on, the situation regarding availability of physicians started improving since 1981 when

the persons per physician have been 7810. Since then this numbers have been reeling within the maximum range of 4915 that was recorded in 1996.

Increased rate of literacy and education: In this portion we consider evidence concerning the increased rate of literacy and education which might have a direct relationship with the democratisation process.

Education is the only means to sustaining and enhancing the democratisation process in any society. The level of educational development or socio-economic development has been considered, as an indicator of democratisation. Education plays an important and independent role in capacity building of the people. This qualified people can better contribute for consolidation of the democracy. For successful adaptation of democratic values in the society, education alone can contribute significantly. Informative and skilled people alongwith favourable democratic attitude could be fostered by free flow of information and political participation at every level. Educated people might have better opportunities for such information and participation.

Table-18
Literacy rates and school attendance, 1974-1991

	Year	Both	Male	Female
Percent literature	1974	24.3	32.9	14.8
	1981	23.8	33.0	16.0
	1991	29.8	35.8	23.4
School enrollment ages 5-9 years	1974	18.7	22.0	15.4
	1981	22.5	24.7	20.2
	1991	41.0	42.3	39.6
School enrollment ages 10-14 years	1974	33.8	40.5	25.8
	1981	33.3	37.9	28.1
	1991	54.2	55.9	52.3

Source: BBS 1986, 1991.

The above two tables (Table 17, Table 18) reveal the fact that since 1970s the per cent of adult literate and rate of enrolment in the primary level have increased considerably. In 1974 the rate of adult literacy was only 25.8 percent, of them 37.2 per cent was male and only 13.2 per cent was female. The rate of adult persons who were literate have been 29.2 per cent in 1981, of them 39.7 percent was male and only 18.8 was female. Since then the rate of

literacy in the country have always been on the up turn. For example, it was 33.0 percent in 1985 with 39.7 percent men and 18.0 per cent women. However, during 1996 the rate of literate adult persons was 47.3, among them 55.6 per cent was male and 38.1 per cent was female. It is remarkable that the rate of literacy among the adult females was always lower in Bangladesh. As has been pointed out by Gunnar Myrdal (1970) that in 'almost all the South Asian countries the educational system, even at the primary level, is heavily biased against girls, and throughout the region the literacy rate is lower among women than among men.'¹⁵ However, large disparities remain in the educational attainment of men and women. On the other hand, both the quality and quantity of the education in Bangladesh is not sufficient for bringing the better result for the nascent democracy.

Benudhar Chinara (1997)¹⁶ has inquired a democratic value survey in India regarding dignity of individual, equality of status and opportunity, sympathy with everyone, openness to reasons, tolerance for differences in opinions, responsibility and cooperative decision making. He found the need of democratic values and its related aspects, and stressed the need of democratic value education for awareness, preference and commitment among the people of that country.

Table-19
Literacy Rate of Persons of all ages by sex in census years 1961-1991

Sex	1961	1974	1981	1991
Both	17.0	20.2	19.7	32.2
Male	26.0	27.6	25.8	38.9
Female	8.6	12.2	13.2	25.5

Source: Bangladesh Population Census 1991, Volume 1, and Analytical Report page 123.

Table-20
Adult Literacy Rate

Years	Total	Male	Female	Source
1980-85	32	45.0	19.0	Social Development Indicators 1995, World Bank
1993	37.0	48.3	25.0	Human Development Report, 1996, UNDP
1995	38.1	49.4	26.1	World Education Report 1995

The above two tables (Table 19, Table 20) make it clear that both the literacy of all ages and adult literacy rates are lower in Bangladesh. But it could also be observed that the literacy rate in Bangladesh has been sharply increased in recent years. From 1970-75 to 1995 the

¹⁵ See Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama, An enquiry into the poverty of Nations*, Abridged by Seth S. King of the Twentieth Century Fund Study 1970, and p.364.

¹⁶ Benudhar Chinara, *Education and Democracy*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 1997, pp.-viii.

adult literacy rate of Bangladesh has been enhanced by a difference of 12.1 per cent it is true for both male and female. Nonetheless, it is a matter of fact that the rate of increase in literacy rate for male is higher than the female, which indicates more backwardness of the women in Bangladesh.

Enrolment rate: Compare to the year of 1991, enrolment rate in Primary level has been considerably increased in recent years i.e. the year of 1995 and 1996. While in 1991 the enrolment rate in the primary level was 77 persons among the children of age group 5 to 12 years in 1996 it became 87.5. Both for male and female this rate has been increased. The secondary level enrolment also has been increased. Primary level enrolment and investment have a long term in the over all development of a country.

Those developing countries that invested heavily in primary education have done much better economically than those that concentrated on universal education. In 1960, Pakistanis and South Koreans were about as rich as each other. But whereas just 30 percent of Pakistani children were enrolled in primary schools, 94 per cent of South Koreans were. By the mid 1980s, South Koreans GDP per person was three times Pakistan's. Hard it is to prove a direct connection, the figures are suggestive.¹⁷

Table-21

Enrolment Differences in different levels of education in Bangladesh and other countries and region

Country	Enrolment 1980	Ratio	Enrolment 1990	Ratio	Difference 1980-1990
Bangladesh	30		32		2
India	40		50		10
Nepal	28		41		13
Pakistan	19		24		5
Sri Lanka	58		68		10

Source: ESCAP 1994.

Education and Employment: Education and employment is closely associated. At present most of the educated Bangladeshis are employed than the uneducated. Though this scenario is of transitional period because Bangladesh is passing through a continuous process of social mobilisation. We notice from Table-51 that, since independence Bangladesh has undertaken

¹⁷ See Special report titles, "The Educated Asians", in The Economist, September 21, 1996, p.29.

a series of planned developmental programmes. The theme of the recently ended fourth five-year plan (ended in 1995) was continued poverty alleviation effort through creation of employment and provision of basic needs to the population. It was recognised by the recently ended five-year plan that the problems of poverty, unemployment, population growth, malnutrition, illiteracy and the like are intricately linked and need to be addressed simultaneously.

The information on educational attainment of labour force participation is useful for providing an insight into investment into human resources. Labour force with educational attainment might have the opportunity to earn more on incremental basis and for (even) life long basis than that of uneducated or illiterate labour force. The countries, which have attained economic development educational attainment of labour force of those countries, are also very high.

Table-22

Labour force participation for persons aged 10-64 years by educational level, 1992

Educational level Years of schooling	Male	Female
None	84.2	44.3
1-5 years	53.2	23.0
6-9 years	55.6	12.5
SSC/HSC	75.2	14.7
BA+	85.9	39.7
All Levels	68.3	26.4

Source: Women and Men in Bangladesh, Facts and Figures, 1970-90, BBS-July, 1994, p.60.

Table-22 gives us the picture of labour force participation rates for persons aged 10-64 years by educational level, 1992. It reveals that the educational level of the labour force is not so much higher rather than higher educated people are employed more in number. It may be mentioned that a country which attempts to achieve economic development that must need a large number of skilled workers, and considerable number of engineers, planners, policy makers, managers and so on. However, it is obvious from above picture that Bangladesh is not in a position to attain the required numbers of skilled manpower vis-a-vis labour force.

Table-23
Employment in broad sector in Bangladesh

Sector	1961(Census)			1969(LFS)			1990-91(LFS)			1991(Census)		
	Total 100	M 100	F 100	Total 100	M 100	F 100	Total 100	M 100	F 100	Total 100	M 100	F 100
Agri.	61.3	63.0	26.0	73.8	62.1	90.3	68.5	55.6	68.1	54.6	57.5	18.0
Non-Agri.	38.7	37.0	72.0	26.2	37.9	9.7	31.5	44.2	11.9	45.4	42.5	82.0

Source: Statistical Pocket Book, Bangladesh '95, BBS, and p.143.

Table-24
Sectoral change in incremental labour force, 1961-1981

	1961-74	1974-81
Total increase in labour force(in millions)	4.58	7.57
Sectoral change(percent):		
Agriculture	56.8	-1.7
Manufacturing	4.7	22.0
	Large	5.4
	Small	16.6
Trade	4.8	32.5
Transport	3.2	9.9
Construction	-0.7	7.1
Others	31.1	30.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculated from the BBS data in different years.

Economic activities: One Bangladeshi economists observed that economic hardship or poverty of the majority people had hardly any role to political stability and any democratic movement in Bangladesh.¹⁸ It has been argued that since 1972 a new-rich class has been emerging. The emergence of this new-rich class had been possible through plundering public sector enterprises, various mischievousness of license-permit and corruption by a section of bureaucracy and political clique. This process has been present throughout different regimes, i.e. from 1972-1975, 1975-1990 and also during the era of democratisation from 1990 to 1996. On the other hand the rates of economic growth and poverty situation were frustrating. But the poverty or economic hardship of the masses had hardly any effect on political instability and any democratic movement in the country. "The failure or marginalisation of the economic sector might not be the necessary cause of political instability in Bangladesh".¹⁹

¹⁸ See M M Akash, "Rajnoitik Sthitishilata Kabe Asbe" (When Political Stability will come), in *The Ajker Kagoj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) January 13, 1999, p.5.

¹⁹ Ibid p.5.

However, in view of the hypothesis regarding increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation the direct and indirect impact of economic activities could hardly be avoided. It could be observed from the above table (Table-24) that the proportion of employed persons in agriculture sector to total employment is higher, though it has been consistently declining over a period of time, say from 84.6 per cent in 1961 to 58.8 per cent in 1983-84. It has further declined in 1991 to 54.6 per cent.

By tradition, women in Bangladesh are discouraged or prevented from participation in public life, including most forms of paid employment. On the basis of findings on female labour force participation similar to those by the Agriculture Sector Review, several authors now challenge the widely held view of women's low economic contribution in Bangladesh.²⁰ However, the occupational structure shown in the various census and labour force survey indicates that a major change has taken place in the occupational pattern of rural households. Over the last three decades, employment in agriculture has decreased while trade, transport, and manufacturing has increased substantially. In rural areas the shift from agriculture to nonfarm occupations appears to have occurred in the post-independence period.

In the first intercensal period, 1961 to 1974, the bulk of the increase in labour was absorbed in agriculture (56.8 per cent). In the second intercensal period the agricultural labour force declined by 1.7 per cent. It appears that surplus labour was absorbed in the trade sector, for which the comparable figures are 4.8 per cent and 32.5 per cent for 1961-74 and 1974-81 respectively. Osmani (1990)²¹ interprets these changes as being essentially driven by push factors; they reflect a relocation of surplus labour from farm to nonfarm occupations. Khan and Hossain (1989)²² also ascribe the change in the occupational structure to push factors. They present evidence that the majority of new entrants into the labour market remain in rural areas and engage in relatively low-productivity activities.

It is also a matter of fact that in Bangladesh the per capita income has been remarkably increased over the years. Whereas the per capita income of the country was US\$124 in 1974 it has become almost double, US\$261 in 1996. The gradual increase of the per capita income over the years might have an impact on the capacity of the people. On the other hand the

²⁰ See C. Saffios-Rothchild and S. Mahmood, "Women's Roles in Agriculture-Present Trends and Potential for Growth", *Agriculture Sector Review Monograph*, UNDP and UNIFEM, Dhaka, 1989.

²¹ S.R. Osmani, "Notes on some recent estimates of rural poverty in Bangladesh", *Bangladesh Development Studies* 18, 1990, pp.55-74.

population below poverty level has also come down. The percentage of population who have been below poverty level was 83 in 1974 within two decades it has come down and reached to 47.5 per cent in 1996. However, the number of the people living below poverty line was higher in the urban area than in the rural area. The number of poor people living below poverty line was 47.1 per cent in rural area in 1996; their number was a bit higher 49.7 per cent in the urban area. This might be the effect of rural to urban migration, which have been discussed elsewhere of the thesis. Moreover, differences in economic status of the people lead to unequal basis of democratisation process. That reminds the fact that “democracy is not different rights for different people to be equal. But equal rights for all people to be different (Shimon Peres 2000)²³”.

Media-exposure: The picture of the media-exposure that emerges from the tables (Table 17, Table 25 and Table 26) clearly reveals that both the number of newspaper readers, radio listeners and TV watchers have tremendously increased during the last three decades. In Bangladesh, electronic media-radio and TV are state controlled. Radio reaches the majority population in the countryside and TV is gaining ground everyday, albeit slowly. They are a far more potent influence in a country of high illiteracy. Further, in today's shrinking world, the argument for constructive control of electronic media in the name of national duty is indeed counter productive. Sunanda K. Dutta-Roy, once editor of “The Statesman” writes:

“Our media runs the risk of losing credibility. It is not unknown for viewers in a Third World country to watch the bland anodyne of the national television newscaster claiming that all is best in this best of all possible worlds, and then switching over to CNN to see live telecasts of violence within a few miles of where they are sitting.²⁴”

However, during the days of liberation war the voice of *Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* had provided a mental strength to the people who were engaged in the war against the occupation forces of Pakistan. Besides the foreign independent electronic media like BBC and Voice of America had also helped people to get the real picture of the situation of the war of liberation.

²² See A.R. Khan and M.Hossain, *The Strategy of Development in Bangladesh*, Macmillan, London, 1989.

²³ Former Israeli Prime Minister while meeting with the Chief Minister of the West Bengal State of India. See report in *The Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), 5 July 2000, p.1.

²⁴ Cited in A Z M Obaidullah, “Democracy and Free Press: Inseparable Twins”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 15, 1998, p.4.

In the later period, during 1990s anti-autocratic movement the BBC and Voice of America had provided the correct information. The state-owned electronic media has always been a formidable empire exclusively being run by the government to disseminate 'officially-certified truth'. Even print media was under heavy censor of the Ershad government. Nevertheless, people used to interpret any published or broadcasted item, whatever scant information they got from the media.

The freedom of the press is as sacrosanct as the democratic system.²⁵ Newspaper is the sacred warrant of democratic right. They may be granted as complementary to each other.²⁶ The increased number of circulation (Table-25) of daily newspapers and periodicals might have played a constructive role to create awareness among the people.

While discussing the role of press in politics Colin Seymour-Ure (1968)²⁷ has unequivocally highlighted the effects of press upon the political attitudes and processes however, in an authoritarian state it is not possible. After independence of Bangladesh the freedom of press was repeatedly interrupted under different authoritarian regimes. The authoritarian regimes use to hold 'preconceived views' and then the character of the press would loose its relevance.

²⁵ Prof Khalid Mahmud, "Question of tolerance level", in *International The News* Saturday, February 6, 1999, London Edition, p. 16.

²⁶ Noted Journalist of Bangladesh Manik Mia opined this view cited in Delwar Hossain, Manik Miar Rajnoitik Darshan Swarup O Prekshit Anusandhan, (The Political Philosophy of Manik Miah, Inquiry into introspection and perspectives) in *Weekly Robbar* (Bengali Weekly magazine) June 4, 2000, pp. 19-21.

²⁷ See Colin Seymour-Ure, *The Press, politics and the public*, Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 1968, p. 15.

Table-25
Medialisted[⊕] newspapers and gross circulation

Year	Frequency/ Language	Number of Newspapers and Periodicals	Gross Circulation (000 copies)	Cited in
1977	Bengali	17	2,45,686	Statistical Year
	English	3	51,103	Book 1976,
1978	Bengali	22	3,02,000	p.413
	English	6	86000	
1987	Bengali	54	7,36,000	Statistical
	English	14	112000	Pocketbook
1988	Bengali	54	795000	1991, p.295
	English	14	123000	
1989	Bengali	51	911000	
	English	7	104000	Statistical
1990	Bengali	48	1103000	Pocketbook
	English	7	109000	
1991	Bengali	83	1249000	1992, p.289
	English	14	966000	
1992	Bengali	102	1320000	Statistical
	English	14	185000	
1993	Bengali	122	15,15,000	Pocketbook
	English	15	2,02,000	
1994	Bengali	179	13,20,000	1997, p.347
	English	13	1,85,000	
1995	Bengali	181	1857000	
	English	14	177000	
1996	Bengali	203	1978000	
	English	15	160000	

⊕Medialisted newspapers are those which fulfill the minimum requirement of circulation as fixed by the government.

Source: Directorate of Film and Publication, Ministry of Information.

Ure argued that in such a situation the political significance of the information provided by the press “would be quite irrelevant” However, the two tables (Table-25, Table-26) in this portion provide us the number and gross circulation of medialisted newspapers and periodicals in different years. A continuous increasing trend in the number and circulation of the newspapers and periodicals could be noticed from the tables. Which was present in different regimes. However, though the number and circulation have been increased the reliability of press during the authoritarian regimes before 1990s was irrelevant. After the downfall of authoritarian regime of former President Ershad in 1990, the caretaker government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed annulled all executive orders under printing Presses and Publications Act of 1973 to ensure the freedom of press.

Table-26
Medialisted[⊕] periodicals and gross circulation

Year	Frequency/ Language	Number of Periodicals	Gross Circulation (000 copies)	Cited in
1989	Weekly Bengali	138	771000	Statistical Year Book 1992, p.289
	Weekly English	8	41,000	
	Monthly Bengali	26	1,25,000	
	Monthly English	2	4000	
	Quarterly Bengali	5	10,000	
	Quarterly English	1	3000	
1990	Weekly Bengali	154	816000	
	Weekly English	11	54000	
	Monthly Bengali	33	119000	
	Monthly English	2	4000	
	Quarterly Bengali	6	10000	
	Quarterly English	1	3000	
1991	Weekly Bengali	214	909000	
	Weekly English	17	80000	
	Monthly Bengali	52	167000	
	Monthly English	1	1000	
	Quarterly Bengali	3	3,000	
	Quarterly English	na	NA	
1992	Weekly Bengali	236	894,000	Statistical Pocketbook 1995, p.311
	Weekly English	20	80,000	
	Monthly Bengali	53	153000	
	Monthly English	3	4000	
	Quarterly Bengali	3	3000	
	Quarterly English	1	3000	
1993	Weekly Bengali	227	993000	
	Weekly English	16	65000	
	Monthly Bengali	80	154000	
	Monthly English	3	8000	
	Quarterly Bengali	9	11000	
	Quarterly English	1	1000	
1994	Weekly Bengali	126	1015000	
	Weekly English	16	65000	
	Monthly Bengali	83	158000	
	Monthly English	1	9000	
	Quarterly Bengali	8	9000	
	Quarterly English	1	1000	
1995	Weekly Bengali	202	960000	Statistical Pocketbook 1997, p.347
	Weekly English	16	77000	
	Monthly Bengali	75	301000	
	Monthly English	3	8000	
	Quarterly Bengali	6	7000	
	Quarterly English	1	1000	
1996	Weekly Bengali	171	854000	
	Weekly English	12	62000	
	Monthly Bengali	59	275000	
	Monthly English	2	3000	
	Quarterly Bengali	6	7000	
	Quarterly English	1	1000	

⊕Medialisted newspapers are those which fulfill the minimum requirement of circulation as fixed by the government
Source: Directorate of Film and Publication, Ministry of Information

V.2 Generalised Social Mobilisation, Periodic and other Factors:

Thus far, we have assessed that the specific evidences regarding increased rates of social mobilisation indicators have changed the socio-cultural, political, and economic settings of the country. Accordingly, political participation has also increased. Since political participation could also be evidenced by the polling statistics, it will be analysed in appropriate section of Chapter VIII. For each factor (increased literacy and education, income, and mass-media exposure), there were sound theoretical grounds for asserting a possible impact on democratisation. In this section, we look briefly at other indices that may be relevant. Some of them are not part of any clearly articulated and cohesive theory; yet each may have played a role in increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation. The factors considered are rise of middle class, religion, family and politics of institutionalisation of democracy and periodic. Besides, global factor is also analysed separately.

Apart from the researchers in different disciplines of social sciences, there is no denying the fact that, the novelists and poets¹ of the country are also one of the most conscientious sections of the society. The real picture of the society is reflected in their works. Karl Deutsch has also found that,

“This Notion of social mobilisation was perceived early in intuitive terms, as a historical recollection or a poetic image. It was based on the historical experiences of the French *levee en masse* in 1793 and of the German “total mobilisation” of 1914-18, described dramatically in terms of its social and emotional impact by Germany writers, including notably Ernst Junger.”²

However, the Bangladeshi novelists and poets are also advanced in this respect to depict the real picture regarding the pace of social change. It is no exaggeration to mention that the picture is nothing but the non-specific evidences of the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation.

A noted Bangladeshi critic³ has documented the themes of novels of some important Bangladeshi novelists. A compact scenario of changing pattern of the society could be drawn

¹ Two separate lists of Bangladeshi novelists and poets, whose works may be viewed as being depicted the changing process of social mobilisation, are appended in the Appendix.

² Karl W. Deutsch, op cit September 1961, No.3, pp.493-514(494)

³ See Bhuyan Iqbal, *Bangladesher Upannashe Samajchitra* (Society as depicted in the Novels of Bangladesh), Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1991.

from this comprehensive work. However, the novelists of the country (See Appendix for the list of their works) often depict the trustworthy picture of the society. Syed Waliullah, has successfully depicted the existing ignorance, stupidity, blind faith, professional Mullahism and devotion to *peer*(saint) in the society. He has also presented the fact of rural to urban migration by the people, in search of job. The works of Abul Fazal and Satyan Sen are based, mainly, on the impact of English education on the prevailing process of change. Due to the growing urge for earning livelihood most people are very much unlikely to maintain perfect attachment with the strict religious beliefs. Abu Ishaque has depicted the picture of non-adherence to strict religious beliefs by the people facing severe problem for earning livelihood. One noted politician turned novelist, Abul Mansur Ahmed has maintained the picture of discourse on nationalism and relation between two major religious communities. Hindus and Muslims. Due to partition on the basis of two-nation theory a huge number of population have been displaced. These people belong to both of these two religious, Hindus and Muslims communities. A noted novelist of the country, Abu Jafar Shamsuddin, in his work, has depicted the real picture of forced migration of the people from their motherland. Due to change in education the male youths are increasingly facing embarrassing question whether uneducated woman is suitable for him as bride. Or, an educated woman is necessary in this respect. This crucial and intimate issue has also captured by the novelists (Zahir Raihan). However, all these intimate issues of social mobilization could be found abundantly in the works of many Bangladeshi writers. The problem is the lack of eagerness of the researchers in Political Science to utilise the relevant aspects of these works. It may be mentioned that, among many others, the introduction of English education, Western Political institutions, administrative system of the England, and permanent settlement had brought about the changes in the socio-political, economic and cultural landscape of the country. Bengal has been the best field of experiment.

Mahabuba Siddique⁴ has done her Ph. D. dissertation on “Social Consciousness in modern Bengali poetry”. She has brought into her consideration the works of 23 prominent poets of Bangladesh including Rabindranath Tagore and National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. It could be observed how the themes of the poems written by these poets have intimately

⁴ See Dr. Mahbuba Nasrin, *Adhunik Bangla Kavitaray Samajchetona*, (Social consciousness in modern Bangla poetry), Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1994.

depicted the pictures of the changing scenario of society. At the beginning the concerns of the poets were humanitarianism, welfare to all human being and opposing exploitation. Due to the imperial aggression, political impatience, crisis of civilization, degradation of values and the effects of acquaintance with English poetry all set out for the change to next stage. However, the poets became concerned with the long-term effects of post-World War situation like anarchy, restlessness, social and political crisis. The behaviour of self-seeking people, their immoral attitude and degradation of values have distressed the mentality of Bengali poets. However, finally they found a ray of hope in the socialist revolution in the Soviet Union. It seems that the poets became more politically conscious. It might be, according to our hypothesis, due to the cause of social mobilization and political participation. However, the poet at the time felt the need for people's participation. A need for change in the social structure was severely felt. They were not so much optimistic about the success of communist revolution to be exported from former USSR and China in Bangladesh. However, the society had been in the threshold to underscore the need of changes in values, beliefs and traditions. In fact society have been in transition. And it is this changing course that ultimately led to the independence in 1971 and democratisation in 1990s.

Religion:

The long drawn debate, over the possibility of democracy's cohabitation with or complete separation from religion, is still unresolved. But instances are abundant in support of cohabitation. The established and emerging democracies are founded with in religious purview.

The protagonists of complete separation of religion from democracy consider 'decline in belief in God' 'as a key indicator for the onward march of modernisation'. They argued, 'belief in science, parliamentary democracy, urbanisation, industrialisation and everything else in a supposedly, relentless process had to involve secularisation too.'⁵

But these arguments are hardly considered with positive attitude, as far as religious beliefs are concerned. Because 'belief in God is the most free-floating of all beliefs. It can be combined with any or no particular constellation of social relations, and can infuse any

⁵ See Martin Albrow, *Sociology: The Basics*, ROUTLEDEG London and New York, 1999, p.137.

institutional sphere'. In the 'most modern' and established democracy of the United States, a large majority believe in God and a majority go to church.' To get relieve from the curse of natural and man made disasters, time and again people seek the blessings of God. In fighting against disease, hunger and poverty and to get support of the programme of population control, the support from religion, is considered most valuable.

Religion is an idealization of social values, which have received the divine sanction. It can be utilised as a powerful mechanism of social control.⁶ However, in large part, as a social product, the place and function of religion 'can not be understood in the abstract apart from the total culture with which it is vigorously integrated.' But its implementation is different in different social setting. Though it bears the same 'creedal tag in both localities,' 'religion is not the same in agricultural as in manufacturing communities.' Religion functions differently in farm families than in city families- that it has a different reference, a different use and flavour and significance.⁷

Every society has a sensitive nerve centre of its own. Which can not be detached from its entity. Religion is one of the sensitive nerve-centres of Bangladesh. Even a famous controversial author could not over look the influence of religion. However, what Salman Rushdie has said about India, is no less importantly applicable for Bangladesh. Rushdie said,

"The question of religious faith, both as a subject and an approach to a subject, is clearly important when we speak of a country" that is bursting with devotions⁸.

It is a common view that the philosophical method based on religious values, could be the right method for pursuance of Bangladesh society.⁹ In fact the people of Bangladesh is religious minded but not communal. The society of Bangladesh is traditionally secular oriented. The poet, litterateur and almost all the intelligentsia of the country have been conveying the message of secularism across the era, from generation to generation.¹⁰ Thus religious minded Bengali people, with secular orientation, might be great helpful in

⁶ See Kewal Motwani, *Sociology A Comparative Outline*, New Book Company Ltd., Bombay, India, 1947, p.30

⁷ Arthur L. Swift, "Religious Values", in Ruth Nanda Anshen (ed), *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1949, pp.393-396.

⁸ See Salman Rushdie, "India and World Literature", in *The Daily Star*, 25 August 2000, Dhaka, p.10.

⁹ See Lecture of Nazmul Karim in *A.K. Nazmul Karim Commemorative Volume*, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, 1984, pp.61-83.

¹⁰ It can be mentioned, there are many proverbs and literary works, for example, one of the famous Bengali Proverbs goes on, '*Nana Baran Gavi Re Bhai Eki Baran Dudh, Jagat Bhramia Dhekhi Eki Mayer Puth*' [There are different cows with different colours but the colour of the milk is same; while moving throughout the world the poet has witnessed the children of the same mother, everywhere]

flourishing democracy. 'Some recent discussions insist that the modern state has only become modern by becoming secular that is, by breaking entirely with religious traditions.'¹¹ On the other hand the religious value of its people could be resultant into a serious reaction in the society. In this regard the reactions of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are almost same. Nevertheless, this religiosity some time, out of emotion or other way, may invoke problem. Of course the society has its own built-in mechanism to correct the deviation. The national poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam, had warned against the advent of such problem. The sentiment of Bangladeshi society has been revealed through Nazrul's sentiment. In fact, long ago, the poet had identified communalism as the basic problem of the sub-continent. Accordingly, he warned the political leaders, but then nobody paid much heed to him, that resultant into a grievous implicit and explicit communal problems for even in twenty first century, which often possess the meaning of fundamentalism (Islam 2000).¹² It is often argued that Nazrul might have been influenced by the social revolution especially secularism of Turkey's founder and father of nation, Mostafa Kamal.¹³

Thus the argument of secularism as the gateway of institutionalising democracy does not necessarily ignore the influence of religion. Basically the pattern of culture is moulded by religion, at large. Modern man, with his conscious effort, has been able to separate the religion from worldliness. However, religious tradition seems to be congenial for institutionalisation of democracy, but not all aspects are equally relevant.

Graham Maddox tries to identify the elements of democracy in ancient Israel, early Christianity, and in the works of Thomas Aquinas. Crossing the age of Reformation, Maddox found that 'at the congregational level its contact with a living 'grass roots' democracy was immediate. Maddox found the rise of popular consciousness in the Puritan Democracy of England. America was not also spared of Puritanism.

Religion has been integral part of the life of the Bangalees, with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism playing their two-fold roles of working as a unifying bond and providing the

¹¹ See Graham Maddox, *Religion and the Rise of Democracy*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p.7.

¹² See Rafiqul Islam, "Nazrul Janma Shatabarshiki Deshe Deshe Ebong Ekush Shatake Mulayan", (Nazrul Birth Centenary in different countries and evaluation of Nazrul in Twenty First Century) in *The Daily Ittefaq* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), 26 August 2000, p.17.

¹³ See Ibid.

people with occasions for festivities.¹⁴ Religious functions, some of them daily, some annually brings the adherents together, and even social functions, like the wedding take on a religious character. But until the coming of the British, who were instrumental in the heightening of religious tension, there was a tolerance between the followers of different religious in keeping with the peace-loving nature of the Bengal peasantry. Islam was spread through the missionaries and not by any militant rulers; Hinduism was even not interested in winning converts; Buddhism went further ahead in preaching renunciation. As practiced in Bangladesh these religions are less ritualistic than elsewhere.

The religious festivals also act as the catalyst of social mobilisation. People enjoy these festivals with immense pleasure. These religious gatherings turn into social gatherings in real sense. However, they have a great impact in people's mind. As the people from these religious groups celebrate in different times in every year. So its religious and social values could not be denied. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians come together in their respective religious festivals. Moreover, they also come together to make a peaceful gathering on these occasions. It is argued that these social and religious gatherings help creating the sentiment of brotherhood and national integration.

Analysts argue, religion was never an important factor in the sub-continent during medieval politics.¹⁵ Land relations and class were far more important factors than religion in feudal politics. Religion was made an important factor only in colonial period, as religion was far more emotionally divisive than land relations or class. It was again during colonial period that the concept of religious majority and minority became important. This divisive concept of the religion was fostered by the 'two nation' theory of Jinnah. Which was the founding concept of Pakistan.. Yunas Samad¹⁶ observed with hindsight that,

“Two imagined communities were forced : one distinct, based on Indian Nationalism, and the other more ethereal, formed around Islam.”

However, like Pakistan no new state was created on the basis of religion. With sheer consciousness, probably, Jinnah attempted to make Pakistan a modern and secular state. But it

¹⁴ Serajul Islam Choudhury, “Our moorings”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily newspaper, Dhaka) April 14, 2002, p.5.

¹⁵ See Asghar Ali Engineer, “Minorities be at the mercy of RSS”, in *Weekly Citizen* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) 19-25 April 2002, pp.14-15.

¹⁶ See Yunas Samad, *A nation in Turmoil, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan 1937-1958*, Sage Publications, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London, in association with The Book Review Library Trust, New Delhi, 1995, p.8.

became amassed with his earlier 'two-nation' theory. Observers cast doubt on Jinnah's understanding.

"Jinnah never fully understood the consequences of what he was doing; and when he got his Pakistan he did not reject what he created, but he did not wonder, publicly, whether it would work as he would have wanted it to. Jinnah wanted Pakistan to become a Muslim version of secular India (M.J.Akbar 2002)¹⁷."

However, during Pakistani period the emphasis on religion as a shared identity was actively promoted. The independence of Bangladesh was tied to the untenable economic relations between what were then East and West Pakistan, but it found expression in an emphasis on non-religious and language differences between the two parts, leading also to a negation of religion as a key cultural or national identity.

The independence of Bangladesh brought about a brief period of secularism. The original constitution of Bangladesh, drafted in 1972, described secularism as one of its four basic principles. Article 12 of the Bangladesh Constitution spelled out secularism as follows:

The principle of secularism shall be realized by the elimination of : (a) communalism in all its forms; (b) granting by the state of political status in favour of any religion; (c) abuse of religion for political purposes; and (d) discrimination against, or persecution of persons practicing a particular religion.

However, the interpretation of secularism was not like separation of religion from the state rather "equal treatment of all religions". In fact 'the state accorded privileges to all religions.'¹⁸

The change to military rule in 1975 was accompanied by another wave of Islamization. The secularization of the constitution was found unacceptable to the military rulers of the time. All the proclamation orders under the Martial law since 21 April 1977 were 'validated by the second parliament'. The Constitution was amended to add the Arabic Quranic Verse, "In the Name of Allah, the beneficial, the merciful" to the constitution. This amendment of the constitution paved the way for revival of religious political parties. However, with this amendment of the constitution reciting the Arabic Quranic verse became mandatory at the opening of every state occasion, along with a further recitation from the Holy Quran in Arabic. In 1988, by the 8th amendment to the constitution, Islam was declared

¹⁷ M. J. Akbar, "You are my Sonia", *The Daily Star* (Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 20, 2002, p.4.

the state religion. An increasing Islamic influence was also fuelled by the Middle East. At this point of time, some public bodies were founded with a plea to get equal treatment for all religion and opposing the constitutional amendment regarding state religion. The influence of Islam in Bangladesh, and in particular the official backing of Islamization, has far-reaching effects on non religious institutions. First, Islamic political parties have increasingly dominant role in state and local politics. Even the major political parties like the Bangladesh Awami League(AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party(BNP), and Jatio Party(JP) used religion in their election campaigns to catch votes.

Second, the social influence of Islam manifests itself at the local level through the reorganisation of communities around mosques, because a mosque brings a degree of cohesion to those who pray at the same place and time regularly. Some of these organisations coincide with traditional community units, such as the *shomaj*, but as more mosques are built in communities, they may also constitute another competing level of social organisation. Whatever the structure of mosque societies, weekly or daily congregations of man for prayers becomes an influential forum for the dissemination of ideas and homization of values. Since "Islam is not inimical to modernization"(Sayeed 1968),¹⁹ conscious effort can help strengthening the institutionalisation process of democracy through this forum. Without causing any mutual harm to each other, however, Islam could cohabit together with secularism. No religion including Islam is antagonistic to secularism. However, the ideals of all religion, including Islam could be used in maintaining peace and tranquility in the society and in the state. Durkheim, for instance, explains religious ritual, in part at least, by its functions in promoting the social cohesion on which other aspects of social life depend.²⁰

In several indirect ways, Islam has played a role in shaping education policy. Religious education is mandatory at the secondary level, but most schools have provisions for teaching Islamic doctrine only. In the mid-1980s, religious schools(madrashas)all over the country were upgraded with funding from the government and formally integrated into the school system. Religious education was granted status equivalent number of years of study.

¹⁸ See Anisuzzaman, "Religion and Politics in Bangladesh" in S. R. Chakravarty(ed), *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh*, Har-anand Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p.43.

¹⁹ See Khalid Bin Sayeed, "Islam and National Integration in Pakistan", in Betty B. Burch, Allan B. Cole(eds), *Asian Political Systems, Readings on China, Japan, India, Pakistan*, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. Princeton, New Jersey, London, 1968, p.412.

The use of religion has given an extra flavour to the politics of Bangladesh. According to some analysts²¹, it also marks the absence of ways and means to give culture an active political content. Accordingly, the daring innovations of culture in this regard have remained confined to finer arts, music, drama, and literature.

Rise of Middle Class: Without the middle class the advent of democracy is not possible. Not only democracy, many aspects of the society and culture are the contribution of middle class population. Participation of the middle class in politics and their achievement in the fields of education, literature and culture has been remarkable. And it is the middle class that felt the necessity of social revolution in Bengal. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the need for a social revolution has been felt and talked about by the middle class in Bengal. There is hardly any consensus regarding the meaning of Bengali middle class. At the same time, the meaning of middle class varies. Some time the meaning of middle class is measured through economic yardstick, some time through position in the society. Marxian view of class, that recognizes class as a particular group of people is related with production relation of the society.²² According to this opinion the members of the class have equal role in the organization of labour in the society and also have equal status in society. In view of this meaning of class, Bengali middle class can not be considered even as a class. Nevertheless, whatever may be said in theory, all concerned have an idea about Bengali middle class and for the cause of real life situation there could hardly be any alternative.

Generally middle class means a class which is neither rich nor poor. Nonetheless, this is a complicated class in real sense. A huge discrimination regarding their socio-economic status exists within the middle class itself. Thus the middle class is identified as upper middle class, middle middle class, and lower middle class. The most affluent section of the society, which is economically more powerful, whose standard of living is higher than average middle middle class are known as upper middle class. The high officials of different organisations, affluent businessmen, different service holders in foreign organisations, lawyers with high income and specialized physicians are regarded as the people of upper middle class. Nevertheless, the *nouvea riche* and top bureaucrats seem to be dominant among these class. It

²⁰ See Alan Dawe, "The Two Sociologies", in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. xxi, No 2, June 1970, cited in Tom Campbell, *Seven Theories of Human Society*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, p 16.

²¹ See Anirudha Gupta, "Bangladesh: Culture in Politics" in S R Chakravarty (ed), *op cit* 1994, pp 25-26.

may be mentioned that the major portion of MPs in parliament, those belong to the major political parties belong to the *nouveau riche*. Thus it may be generalised that the upper middle class lead the country. The lower middle class, on the other hand, means low paid employees with limited income, school teacher, small shopkeepers, and medial peasants. They have less earning capacity and their living standard is also lower than that of middle middle class. Even though, in terms of social status and the way of thinking they live nearer to the middle middle class, economically they are, actually, nearer to lower class.

To identify the middle class in terms of income limit it is relevant to consider number of family members, members of the family those who are undergoing different level of education and stratification etc.

In big cities the middle class have income opportunity. But this opportunity hardly exists in the rural areas. Analysts argue, in large the middle class of the country are considered as labourer. The difference is they earn money through mental labour in lieu of physical. Comparatively, the middle class of the rural area earns money through less physical or mental labour. For example, the labourers in exchange of wage do the works of harvest in the land of any landowners in the rural areas. In some cases the landowners use to work with the labourers. Nonetheless, these (landowners) could hardly be considered as labourer or labour class. The middle class of the urban areas, however, considerably liberal and mostly sensitive to preserve the democratic values. There may be some similarities between the middle class of the rural areas with their urban counter part but due to some backwardness in education, information and communication they are somehow different.

The Bengali middle class, on the whole, may be owner of some moveable and immovable properties but they are hardly any owner of production instruments. Actually they earn money mainly through mental labour. Their incomes are limited. Many of them may be solvent but hardly affluent. They may have economic hardship but they do not remain unfed. The intellectuals and professionals of the country are known as *middle middle class*. For this reason the presence of middle class is so urgent in any mass movements and uprisings. The *middle middle class* maintain good relations and linkages with the rich people or upper middle

²² See Syed Modasser Ali, *Gano Abhhyutthan O Bangali Madhyabitta Samaj*, (Massuprising and Bengali Middle Class), Alpakatha, Dhaka, 1993, pp.12-17(13).

class though different social and cultural channels. However, the lower class is lagging these linkages. The sensibility of the middle class is bound to be influenced by this aspect.

In fact, the meaning of middle class or petty bourgeoisie in Bangladesh differs from that in Europe. Some may argue that fundamentally they are similar. In this regard, however, it is pertinent to briefly mention about the notion of middle class in Europe.

In medieval Europe only the priests were meant as middle class till eighteenth century. They were called first state. The Pope of Roman Catholic Church was the chief of this middle class. There was a controversy between the monarchy and church. The king including their subordinate feudal lords remained in second class. They were known as second state. The scene had drastically changed after the French Revolution in 1789. The owners of the industries and industrial workers of third state had brought about the end of first and second state. The position of owners of industries and wealthy people were lower than priests and feudal lords, but they were ahead of the working class. The in-between position was known as middle class in England and bourgeoisie in France. Even now the owners of industries, businessmen, and top officials are known as middle class in Europe. Thus it is obvious that the meaning of middle class in Bangladesh is not same as it is in Europe.

A noted Bangladeshi Scholar pointed out that, "Culturally, the most significant contribution of the British was the creation of middle class. This class introduced certain cultural elements and tendencies which can be conveniently assigned the name of modernism."²³ Barrington Moore pointed out that while popular movement is sustained by mass support it is inevitably led by the urban educated elite (i.e. upper middle class)²⁴. The leaders in the vanguard have to enthuse their minions about not only the prospect of throwing off the yoke of slavery but also of seeing the face of better days, economically and socially. Nonetheless, the colonial rulers not only subjugated a race that was considered culturally and technologically weak and inferior, but compensated them with a model of their own that stood for progress. According to literary colonial theory, the modernising drive of the colonialists boomeranged after a while, when members of the upper crust and higher middle class among the natives started talking about the same principles of rights, liberty and equality learnt from the rulers and, horror of horrors, in their own language.

²³ Serajul Islam Choudhury, "Our moorings", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily newspaper, Dhaka) April 14, 2002, p.5.

²⁴ Cited in Hasanat Abdul Hye, "The past in present", in *The Daily Star*, June 29, 2001, p.4.

“The historical development of class formalities and class relations in Bangladesh suggest one very important theoretical consideration. In post-colonial societies, because of historical circumstances related to colonialism, there has arisen a complexity in class structure—a complexity wherein the new middle class has a dominant position.²⁵”

However, the Bengali middle class felt the need and struggled for, the achievement of, independence. But there arose, in course of this struggle, a conflict between the interests of the Hindu and the Muslim bourgeoisie, leading to communal disturbances and killings; and it was this conflict which ultimately responsible for the partition of Bengal. The year 1947 is marked as a turning point for the Bengali Muslim middle class when they began to emerge as a class-in-itself and continues till the present time.

After the Partition of the Subcontinent, Bangladesh became the part of Pakistan, and the Pakistani rulers, in seeking the perpetuation of their rule, tried to engineer the creation of new culture which they called Islamic and which ran contrary to the spirit of the traditional culture of the country. The attempt was resisted by the collective good sense of Bangladesh of which its youth was the spokesman. During the days of Pakistani internal colonial rule, the Bengali middle class had been deprived of economic, political and cultural privileges. As such there was a clash between the Bengali and non-Bengali middle class. It is argued that the Bengali middle class hardly got any chance to flourish during the Pakistani period. The Bengali middle class then vehemently opposed the oppression of the Pakistani rulers. They took leading part in any movement against Pakistani rulers and finally in the war of liberation, that gave birth to the independent Bangladesh. The communal divide of the Bengali middle class had been wiped out with independence of Bangladesh.

Even though, after independence the Bengali middle classes got a chance to flourish themselves. But immediate after independence, they were not sufficient in number to institutionalise democracy. However, they were growing in large number with the pace of uninterrupted trend of social mobilisation. Analysts argue that the state has changed in name and size but not in character, indicating that relationships within society have remained basically as they were before.²⁶ Nonetheless, a privileged class enjoys varying economic prosperity. Thus the Bengali bourgeoisie has successfully been produced. Probably, the only

²⁵ Mohammad Shahidullah, “Class formation and class relation in Bangladesh”, in Dale L. Johnson (ed), *Middle Classes in Dependent Countries*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi, 1984, pp.137-164.

real development that has taken place in the twenty years from 1971 to 1990, a development that is the direct result of Bangladeshis attaining the freedom to rule themselves, is the explosive growth of the middle class.

Nevertheless, to some extent the urban centric democratic movement of 1990's might have consistencies with the instances of established democracies. As Barrington Moore argued that democratic political institutions have emerged in nations in which the transition has been led by a middle-class revolution rather than chiefly by peasant revolt. "No bourgeois, no democracy."²⁷

Political Institutions:

The political institutions of a country are directly responsible to operate the political system as a whole. The main political institutions are political parties, parliament, bureaucracy, and judiciary. These institutions are supposed to work according to their own rules of business. These rules are abided by the constitution of the country. The concerted and co-ordinated effort of these institutions helps institutionalising democracy in the country. Participation in the political institutions is crucial in this regard. In the third world mass participation is typically limited to quantity and manipulative in quality. But this characterization hides substantial variation between Third World countries and especially with in individual countries overtime.

The asymmetric increasing tendency in rate of cast votes as political participation, mentioned in Table-39 and relevant discussion proves that political participation is also growing considerably. This increasing tendency is significant in terms of contesting political parties; candidates and voter turn out in different parliamentary elections.

Immediate after the independence of 1947 and that of 1971 the participation process was hampered. Lack of mobilisation and participation cost Muslim league's defeat in 1954 election and its insignificant presence in politics of the then East Pakistan and Bangladesh.

²⁶ See Hasnat Abdul Hye, "The past in present", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper), June 29, 2001, p.4.

²⁷ See Barrington Moore, Jr., "Social origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and peasant in the Making of the Modern World," The Beacon Press, Boston, 1966, p 418. Cited in Book review by Joseph Gusfield in *Social Forces A scientific Medium of Social Strudy and Interpretation*, Volume 46, September 1967, Number 1, pp.114-115.

Awami League's success in 1970 election had been due to its success in mobilising people's support that led to the victory in the liberation war.

Lack of voluntary participation and dominance of mobilised participation could be seen as creating gap between the politicians and people. This becomes evident from the political process of Bangladesh, especially immediate after the independence. a) low voter turn out in 1973's election compared to 1970's, b) severe factionalism with in the then ruling political party Awami League, and c) severe rise of political violence and disorder.

In a democracy *Parliament* is to be constituted by the elected representatives of the people. These representatives will be elected through general elections, to be held on the basis of universal adult franchise. Political parties nominate their candidates in the general elections. The majority seats winning political party/ies form(s) the government for five years. The government of a democratic country is to be elected through free and fair elections. Provision of caretaker government for parliamentary general elections by the 13th amendment of the constitution, has confirmed the free and fair elections in Bangladesh. However, the controversy over the election remains.

Parliament is not only the institution of people's representatives of the respective constituencies or their political parties in parliament but also to act collectively as the arbiters of the people's fate and guide the destiny of the nation. Parliament is the highest and most revered institution of the democratic way of life, symbolizing the national sovereignty and integrity. It also embodies the nationalistic spirit and glory, occupying the centre stage of the political activity. The way parliament functions largely determines the way the country is run and governed. So it is crucially important to make parliament an effective instrument accountable to the public at large. The main functions of parliament, may be broadly broken down into:

- (i) Law making i.e. legislating, (ii) Adopting taxation measures and controlling public expenditure and (iii)Overseeing and ensuring accountability of the executive (government).

Each of these functions consists of a series of complex operations, steps and processes stretched over a long period of time which have far reaching consequencing on the nation as a whole and a profound influence on the lives of its citizens.

Bangladesh have been able to lay the foundation of a truly democratic society through fostering a multi-party democracy, based on a parliamentary form of government. It is expected that parliament will rein supreme with a strong, well-represented opposition to exercise checks and balance on the party in power and play a constructive and positive role.

Parliament is supposed to be the centre of all national political activities in a parliamentary form of government. However, even after the democratic transition of 1990s and return to the parliamentary form of government, the country could not have the test of an active parliament. On the other hand, even after making the constitutional provision for caretaker government, the controversy over holding free and fair election is not over.

In most of the lifetime of the 5th Parliament the then main opposition Awami League (AL) alongwith other opposition parties in the parliament boycotted and at last resigned from the parliament. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and some other opposition parties in the 7th parliament have repeated the same. However, the functioning of the parliament without the participation of the opposition, is not the democratic way. The opposition should fight for people's rights inside Parliament also, no matter how difficult it is. However, democratic governance that called for delicate balancing among various values, beliefs, attitude, opinion, seem to be absent here. The political analysts of the country are worried about the confrontational political situation of present day's democratic consolidation process in Bangladesh.²⁸ The analysts are also yearning for politics, which could reconcile competing, and confronting interests and encourage political parties to rise above partisanship in order to secure common national objectives. These national objectives would include maintaining the supremacy of the Constitution, upholding the rule of law, strengthening Parliament and other democratic institutions and maintaining the independence of the judiciary.

However, unlike 5th parliament the opposition members of the 7th parliament have been participating in the meeting(s)of the parliamentary committee(s). This and some other aspects of Bangladesh democracy led many foreign dignitaries alongwith the ex-President of the USA Bill Clinton, who visited Bangladesh on February 2000, to observe that Bangladesh

²⁸ See the article(s)of Dilara Choudhury, "The future of Parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh", Dr. Kamal Hossain, "Need to promote national consensus: lost art of political negotiation", Rehaman Sobhan, "Making Democracy accountable: the South Asian dilemma", Dr. Mizanur Rahaman Shelley, "Consensus and bi-

is moving in the right direction²⁹. However, the struggle for restoration and sustenance of the rule of law and democratic base in the country is yet to be succeeded. The things are not democratic, as it ought to be. The prospects of democracy taking deeper roots in the country looks less than bright.

Rule of law contributes to the institutionalization of democracy by way of i) enhancing the role of the individual inside democratic regimes by ensuring protection of the individuals; ii) limiting the absolute and arbitrary rule of the majority by establishing democratic accountability by guaranteeing fundamental rights through judicial enforcement. For ensuring rule of law and accountability, three organs of State-the executive, the judiciary and the legislature have to work in cohesion. The constitution of Bangladesh has defined the areas of activities of these three organs separately based on the principle of separation of powers. These three organs must work within the constitutional limits. So far the *judiciary* is concerned, its independence from the executive and the legislature is also ensured by the Constitution. The executives cannot seek accountability of the judiciary or the judges. Law and order is not the responsibility of the judiciary. The judiciary is to do justice in accordance with law and evidence.

Elected Legislature has not been separated from the Executive. Not alone the present government, past governments also did not show any interest in separating the judiciary and legislature from the executive.

Even though a variety of political institutions may prevalent in the country, it is but the political parties, which are directly responsible to driving the process of institutionalising democracy in the country. However, the weakness and deficiency of the socio-economic conditions and the frigidity of the principal and influential segments of the society prepare the circumstances for the proper emanation and flowering of autocratic rule. No society bound by the stranglehold of individual or coterie-centric decision making and domination can ever aspire to achieve participatory and meaningful democracy and desired socio-economic development. Apart from the control of the *nouve riche*, the *political parties* of Bangladesh are bereft with democratic practices from within. The party leadership and the nomination

partisanship", Shaikh Nazrul Islam, "Acts fail to ensure law and order", published in *The Daily Star*, 10th Anniversary Issue, 30 January 2001, pp.23-34.

²⁹ See an exclusive interview with ex-US President Bill Clinton, in *Dhaka Courier*, (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka), Vol. 17 Issues 16-17, (10 November 2000), pp.22-25

process in the general elections seem to be under full control of heredity leadership. There is hardly any sign of democracy within the political parties, in this respect.

The officers and employees of the state would do their jobs according to the law of the land. As the employees of the 'Republic' the *bureaucracy* would maintain neutrality. However, in most part the bureaucracy in Bangladesh is flawed with frenzied customs and manners and formality. This bureaucracy is soft, complicated and slothful. The Weberian impersonality towards the relationship between person and community is not present in this bureaucracy. Endowed with overbearing attitude towards the people, the bureaucracy is excessively centralised and suzerainized. Corruption and red-tapism are the essential characteristics of this bureaucracy. Unpunctuality, laxity to work, *urban centred orientation* and cultural and linguistic estrangement are incrementally pushing away the bureaucracy from the people.³⁰ Thus the bureaucracy which had been the close associate of autocracy the same became the partner of pro-democracy movement. It could be apparently seen as to protect their self-interest. Again this urban based bureaucracy is quiet unwilling to get transferred to the *mofussil* (the rural area). Even the much needed decentralisation proposal is not favoured by these bureaucrats and also by some politicians. In fact the politicians and bureaucrats are doing 'whatever they could do' for themselves. Thus 'injustice is institutionalised in the social, political, legal and economic structures of our society (Rehman Sobhan 2000). The process of democratisation, in this way, is bringing the process of alienation of the rural and poor people.

Politics of institutionalizing democracy:

The impact that was generated by the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation has been manifested specifically through different indices and non-specific factors. However, without the touch of politics it could not have been possible to get democratic transition realised in 1990s. Furthermore, politics is most instrumental for the success (or failure) in the subsequent process of democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy in the country. Thus among all the factors influencing

³⁰ See Mustafa Majid (ed), *Bangladesher Amlatantra*, (The Bureaucracy of Bangladesh), Proshasanik Gabeshana Kendra, Dhaka, 1991, p.8.

institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, it is politics which keep the expectation implemented or bellied.

Political Participation: Like the religious gatherings, political gatherings of national stature such as 21st February, 14 December Martyrs Intellectuals Day, 16 December Victory Day, 26 March Independence Day helps enormously to the cause of national integration. The people of the country regardless of their religions, faith, beliefs, values stand for their national identity, Bangladeshi. In most cases people participate in these gatherings voluntarily. Actually, different people view the political system in varied manner. As has been mentioned by Lester W. Milbrath³¹;

“People relate to this political system in a variety of ways. Some persons take the system for granted and are concerned only to adjust their behaviour to its demands; others want to improve or transform it. Some others want to improve or transform it. Some have only passive relationship to the system while others are very actively involved. To some the system is frightening and confusing; to others, it is an object their attention on what the system demands from them, while others focus on the benefits they derive from the system.”

It may be mentioned that Bengalis' absence from any meaningful participation in the decision making process of “decisive consequences”³² during the Pakistan period had given birth to severe grievances among the Bengali. However, apart from the participation in different elections, the political movements, have been succeeded due to massive participation of the people from different section of the society. Nonetheless, these movements have brought about political changes in the country. The 1990s pro-democratic movement was the outcome of participation from the urban centric middle class population. The movement for the caretaker government in 1994 was not same as that of in 1990s. As far as participation is concerned the movement of 1990 had been strengthened by the voluntary participation of the urban centric middle class population. While the political forces that led the 1990s movement were divided in 1994 regarding electoral environment that was existed at time. The majority portion of the forces (i.e. the opposition political parties in the 5th JS) started demanding constitutional amendment for holding general elections under caretaker government. Accordingly, in terms of people's participation, there was every possibility for 1994's

³¹ Lester W. Milbrath, *Political participation, How and why do people get involved in politics*, Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1966, p.2.

³² See Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesher Rajniti: Sangkat O Bislotion* (Politics of Bangladesh : Crisis and Analysis), Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd. Chittagong-Dhaka, 2001, p.5.

movement for caretaker government to become *mobilised* rather than *voluntary*. However, there is no such study regarding *participation* in the movement for caretaker government (in 1994).

Nonetheless, general observation in this regard is that, *participation* in the developing countries is mainly mobilised in nature. This observation is equally applicable for 1994 movement in Bangladesh when the opposition political parties mobilised the people against a democratically elected government. Without participants' real understanding about the situation, participation may not have any expected effect. The majority people of the country are illiterate and poor. There is hardly any scope for them to be out of the purview of the influential persons. To harness their own benefits the influential persons or patrons tend to mobilise their client(s) people to cast vote in their favour or participate in any rally. Here the client people have no independent stand, they move by the hint of the patrons in a flock. This type of mobilised participation even in a higher rate has hardly any positive impact on democratisation. The ever widening rich poor gap that lead to alienation of the poor people from the process is adversely affected by the patterns of mobilised participation. U.A.B.Razia Akhter Banu³³ in her 1983 study on Bangladesh's national identity has also found that of the total 3,461 respondents, 1395 i.e. 40.3 per cent 'do not understand' the question-'what are the things about your country that you are mostly proud of?' The 2002 study by Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD)³⁴ also support these type of findings, to a greater extent. Barring the single exception of International Mother Language Day on 21st February, the residents of Dhaka City are not fully aware about the nationally observed 90 days marking important events of Bangladesh's national history and international events.

Periodic: Time matters because the effects of social mobilisation and political participation are cumulatively accumulated in different ways. It is like the age of an individual person. What is unimaginable for a child, becomes a very much reality for an adult. A continuous process of adaptability in a complicated society makes the person to sustain as a human being. Success of democracy also matters with time. None of the today's established democracies has come into present form without crossing many constraints. In

³³ See U.A.B.Razia Akhter Banu, *Political culture of Japan: Lessons for Bangladesh*, Institute of Developing Economies, Tokyo, 1997, p.30.

³⁴ See report in this regard in *The Daily Ittefaq* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 2, 2002, p.3.

course of time the constraints have faded away making democracy institutionalised with sustainability.

The situation of different period varies accordingly. This variation can observe in society, politics, culture, economy, natural environment and elsewhere. The changing pattern of the political system in Bangladesh could be marked in the way(s) of 'oriental despotism' before 1757, 'British Colonial rule' from 1757 to 1947, 'internal colonial rule of Pakistan' from 1947 to 1971, and independent entity since 1971. The situation before and after the, independence of 14th August 1947, independence of 1971; tragic political change of 1975, killing of Ziaur Rahman in 1981, ascending of General Ershad in state power, anti-autocratic movement during late-1980s and 1990s.

The situation of the country might have been different if two heads of state were not brutally killed by some derailed army men of the country. However, the end of cold war in 1990, and subsequent democratic transition of Bangladesh have a greater significant for future development of the country. This periodic change has put forward new agenda for the researchers of democratisation in Bangladesh.

Bengalis' dream for democracy without any experience could not be materialised due to lack of favourable political environment after independence in 1971. However, the democratic transition in 1990 was embedded with future plan. There were some instruments before hand. The environment was matured enough to pave the way for democracy (Arun Kumar Goswami: 1998).³⁵ The subsequent 12th amendment of the constitution switched over the form of government from Presidential to Parliamentary one. The free and fair nature of February 1991's general election triggered the movement for Caretaker government. It was during this movement that the elections for 6th Parliament took place amid only one party participant, BNP. The most short lived 6th Parliament passed the 13th amendment of the constitution, which provided caretaker government for general elections. However, the transition towards democracy since 1990s provided a better opportunity for the political scientists to study democracy, governance, elections, institutions of democracy, empowerment of the disadvantaged class including women and so on.

³⁵ See Arun Kumar Goswami, "The Grits of Democratisation in Bangladesh", in *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, June 2001, pp.133-150.

The general elections of 1991, movement for caretaker government in 1994 and incorporation of provision for caretaker government in the constitution in 1996, and general elections of June 1996 for the 7th Parliament have different implications for the democratisation process in Bangladesh.

However, the role playing political parties when remain in power behave in a way but while out of power the same party behave differently. By this we want to mean that the basic tenet or rules of business should be followed without fail. It should not be like that while the party goes to power they promise to restrain from calling *hartal*, want to provide own persons in the governmental posts.

Thus the periodic changes of socio-cultural, economic, political and globalization have a tremendous impact on the 1990s democratic transition. Nevertheless, all these could be seen as the fruits of democratisation process.

Family:

The nature of any society, either authoritarian or democratic, correspond the nature of its primary unit-family. The inheritance of authoritarian culture from family life often poses barriers on the way of institutionalisation process of democracy. Established democracies have its relevance in their family system. While writing on American democracy Guy Emerson (1982) has designated family, as the most influential of all groups, and heart of the democratic social order.¹

In their everyday life, people have to maintain relations with various institutions, organisations, associations and formal as well as informal groups. But basic to all types of relations is the relation with the family.² The functions-‘legitimizing sexual relations’, ‘procreation and socialization’, ‘emotional support,’ and ‘social place and social roles’³- that a family provides for its members, are the basics to all other social, political and economic values, beliefs and attitudes of any society. Family is crucial to determining family’s relationship with other institutions of society—government, economic system, education and religion. Nevertheless, ‘the contents of society’s institutions determines in large measure its character’.⁴ This section of the thesis attempts to discuss the influence of family in this regard.

An intimate observation of the organisation, structure, its members and functions of the family would certainly reveal the influence, it pounds on the institutionalisation of democracy. The urge to the members of the *family* to unite themselves in an organisation, the need to regulate their behaviour, criteria to fulfil their wants and way to maintain relations with other people, all these are the basics of all democracies. The functions of the family are the basis to all other social, political and economic values, beliefs and attitudes of any society. Thus, the fundamentals of human relationship with a family are crucial to determining individual person’s behaviour towards the state. The family system of Bangladesh is the dominating factor to maintaining traditional social fabric

¹ See Guy Emerson, “Forward”, in Community Service Society of New York, *The Family in a Democratic Society*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1949, pp.-vi.

² William M. Kephart, *The Family, Society and the Individual*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1966, p.3.

³ See Nijole V. Benokraitis, *Marriages and Families, Changes, Choices and Constraints*, Prentice Hall, Uppersaddle River, Newjersey, pp.4-6.

alive. The above-mentioned elements of the Bangladesh family are by and large congenial for the democratisation process. But dependency of the family members on any single earning person for livelihood and any other decision making, help in large way for enhancing the authoritarian structure of the society. Thus we see that the authoritarian family structure is not congenial to generate democratic political culture in Bangladesh. However, the family system of Bangladesh has a great impact on its democratisation process.

Family studies, in developed countries with established democracies, especially in America, are abundant. There is no such study regarding family's impact in the institutionalisation process of democracy in Bangladesh. However, one renowned Bengali Sociologist⁵ depicted the background, structure including kinship, relations between members of the society, location, religion, rituals and beliefs during marriage, other ritual practices, seclusion and dress, and daily life of a family while analysing the changing pattern of a Muslim family. The author pointed out that though changes begun in the old society. Yet even so around the middle of the nineteenth century the last vestiges of feudal social structure and feudal attitudes had almost disappeared from Bengali Hindu Society, they continued to exist, though in a moribund state, in Bengali Muslim Society. On the other hand the Western ideas and institutions were kept influencing the urban as well as rural society.

W.W.Hunter (1875)⁶ put authoritative accounts of Bengal in the very initial years of British administration. The author described the changing aspects of Bengali life, which he witnessed during that period. Hunter found that even after the introduction of British administration, the people followed the directives of village head.

“The office is hereditary, and ordinary there is no election by the people or appointment by the local landholder.”

Nevertheless, it will not be exaggeration to find the seeds of hereditary leadership in the major political parties of Bangladesh vis-a-vis South Asian sub-continent, with the

⁴ Gerald R. Leslie, *The Family in Society Context*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1982, p.6.

⁵ See A. K. Nazmul Karim, “Changing Pattern of an East Pakistan Family” in *A.K. Nazmul Karim Commemorative Volume*, Department of Sociology, Dhaka University 1984, pp.61-83.

⁶ W.W.Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Volume I, Trubner & Co., London 1875, D K Publishing House, Delhi 1973, pp.124-127.

hereditary family rights to the post of village head, which have been prevailing since long. Though this had no legal basis, it did persist.

However, the present state of hereditary family leadership in different dominant political parties of Bangladesh as well as in other South Asian Countries might have a strong relationship with its historical legacy.

Political Socialisation and Family: Hess and Torney (1973)⁷ argue that political socialization is a life long process. Alongside family, other socializing agents are also important in this regard. However, they have pointed out that the family unit, especially the parents, participates in the socialization of political perceptions and attitudes in three ways. First, Parents transmit attitudes, which they consider valuable for their child to hold this is attitudinal model. Second, Children may imitate the political affiliation of the family; this is called Identification model. The most significant socialization of this kind involves parental affiliation with a political party. With some negligible exception, the family exerts an important influence upon the child's party preference (Hyman 1959)⁸. Remmers and Weltman (1947), in studying preferences of high school youth and their parents reported significant correlation in this regard. The parental preferences are followed frequently in socializing with any party and these are apparently well established before voting age. These results are supported by retrospective studies of parent's party- or at least to report that he has done so (Campbell, Gurrin and Miller 1954; Hyman 1959; Maccoby, Mathews and Morton 1954)⁹. These surveys reaffirm the hypothesis that children follow the party preference of their parents in which both parents are affiliated with the same party (Hess and Torney 1973)¹⁰ Children may become politically active if their parents are active. Children may learn to value modes of political involvement, which they observe in their parents (See Stark 1957)¹¹. Political

⁷Robert D.Hess and Judith V. Torney, " Role of Family in Political Socialisation" in Charles G. Bell (ed), *Growth & Change A Reader in Political Socialisation*, Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc. Encino, California & Belmont, California, 1973, pp.188-200.

⁸ H. Hyman, *Political Socialisation*, The Free Press, Glencoe III, 1959.

⁹ A. Campbell, G. Gurrin and W. Miller, *The Voter Decides*, Row Peterson, Evanston III, 1954; E. Maccoby, R. Mathews and A. Morten, " Youth and Political Change ", *Public Opimon Quarterly* 18(1954): 23-39; H.Hyman, *Political Socialisation*, The Free Press, Glencoe III, 1959.

¹⁰ Robert D.Hess and Judith V. Torney, op cit in Charles G. Bell(eds), op cit 1973, pp.188-200.

¹¹ P. Stark, *Some Determinants of Political Activity Among Liberals*, Unpublished Ph. D, Dissertation, Columbia University, 1957 cited in Hess and Torney op cit p.189.

activity of adults markedly varies. Only the voting act is being performed by majority of them and little interest is displayed otherwise (Woodward and Roper 1950)¹².

Third, the possibility in formation of expectations formed from experiences in family relationships is later generalised to political objects. In a hierarchic social system, the home provides first and most lasting experience for the children, with interaction. The relationships, expectations, and behaviour patterns of the children are developed through this experience. A child becomes attached to the family unit through attachment to its individual members, relates to the hierarchy of authority and learns compliance to its regulations, thus establishing a frame of reference by which to approach systems he will later encounter. The structure of family power not only influences the child's relationship to the system (Bronfenbrenner 1961; Hoffman 1961; Kagan 1958)¹³ but also mediates class differences in personality and attitudes (Kohn 1959, 1963).

A recent survey in America¹⁴ shows the family dinner table as a place to train the college bound kids. The report suggested to give the teen something sophisticated to go with dinner, and try to offer an extra portion of the guardian.

A different survey¹⁵ of 2000 teenagers 'shows a direct relation between teen substance abuse and the lack of close familial connections especially between children and their fathers'. The question of the survey 'what they thought a society could do for them,' was answered by the group of students that their real education should happen at home starting well before they are teenager's. They said it is for parents to try to have on going discussion with them, to listen rather than lecture and to provide a good example. On the other hand, influence of peer group (friends) on one's mind is enormous. It can derail a person it can modify any one. A most recent survey in Bangladesh, revealed that

¹² J.L. Woodward and E. Roper, "Political Activity of American Citizens", in *American Political Science Review* 44(1950): 872-85.

¹³ See U. Bronfenbrenner, "Toward a theoretical Model for the Analysis of Parent-Child Relationship in a Social Context" in J.C. Glidewell (ed.), *Parental Attitudes and Child Behaviour*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield III, 1961. L.W. Hoffman, "The Father's Role in the Family and the Child's peer Group Adjustment", *Merril-Palmer Quarterly* 7(1961): 98-105. J. Kagan, "Socialisation of Aggression and the perception of Parents in Fantasy", *Child Development* 29(1958): 311-20, M.L. Kohn, "Social class and the Exercise of Parental Authority," *American Sociological Review* 24(1959): 352-62.

¹⁴ Any Dickenson, "No School for Sots" in *TIME magazine*, Sept. 13, 1999, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Centre, New York, 1999, p.85.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

86 percent of the drug addicts has been introduced to the habit through friends and 28 percent have become addicted by curiosity and trial.¹⁶

The points which emerge from the above mentioned surveys, are;

1) Family is the best and most expected place of learning; 2) Training of children by the parents during early years/ages could prevent their abuse. 3) Apart from family influence of peer group on one's attitudinal construct, is also important.

By the way of these findings, the argument that could put forward for democratization is that the best place of citizenship training for a democratic polity, is the family.

Family and friendship are vital aspects of society.¹⁷ Four centuries earlier the great Arab judge and 'sociologist before sociology', Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)¹⁸ in his treatise identified 'human spirit' for their tendency of being together. Khaldun posted no doubt about the modify of human society. Rudi Dallos and Eugene Mclaughlin (eds 1993) have proved statistically that 'private' matters in family or family life transmit or moderate the social and cultural factors. Sigmund Freud more specifically put everything into biological urge of human being. Freud points out that the dictates and moral values of the parents and other significant authority figures internalized and introjected into the self.¹⁹ As has also been argued by a famous Bangali Sociologist,²⁰ all human activities, occurrences, conflicts, even economic development and underdevelopment emerge from human mind. But at the same time it is also rooted from the social system, more particularly from the family. People are tied-up with their own social system in his beliefs. However, the incapacity of Bangladesh polity to internalize democratic values by the leaders, activists, members, and supporters of the political parties are one of the major socio-psychological constraints of institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. As has

¹⁶ A speaker in a workshop, held in Dhaka, organised by the Department of Narcotics Control was held at Dhaka Ahsania Mission on 18 September 2000, Report published in The Daily Star, 1 September 2000, p. 11.

¹⁷ Martin Albrow, *Sociology: The Basics*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibn Khaldun, "The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History", Translated by Franz Rosenthal, Routledge, and London, 1958, mentioned in Martin Albrow *Ibid*.

¹⁹ See Barbara Engler, "Personality Theories An Introduction", Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston Dallas Geneva, 1973, p. 155.

²⁰ See A.K. Lutful Karim, "Dr. Nazmul Karim: Bektigata Prasango", (Dr. Nazmul Karim: Personal Context) in *A.K. Nazmul Karim Commemorative Volume*, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, 1984, pp. 254-260.

been mentioned by a renowned Bangladeshi Political Scientist²¹ that one of the major constraints on the way of advancement of Bangladesh democracy is the failure of the country's political class to internalize and implement democratic values. This argument seems to find a critical basis and semblance with its source from traditional authoritarian 'dictates and moral values'. Fromn (1964.1973) points out that the source of authority is not limited to parents or other significant persons from childhood but it may be anonymous or impersonal institutions, such as cultural traditions, the scientific and philosophical ethos of one's time or current public opinion. The desire to destroy emerges only when life forces are frustrated.²²

To a large extent the family, by providing emotional support for healthy development,²³ can control frustration of its individual members. The narcissistic and withdrawn personality of Hitler has emerged from his failure to change reality, falsified, denied it, and engaged in fantasy. Hitler's coldness, apathy, and self-indulgence led to failures early in life and humiliations that resulted in a wish to destroy. The inherent frustration along with sociopolitical and historical situation permitted Hitler to rise to a position of great power.

So, there is a strong argument that, apart from the function of procreation and child bearing, 'the process of child socialization has come to have tremendous significance'. Kephart (1966) pointed out that as the basic primary group the family probably has more to do with the child's ultimate behavioural pattern than does any other single environmental factor.²⁴

Apart from the above mentioned argument 'the family is important for a variety of other reasons, such as those relating to protection, inheritance, property rights, the upholding of moral codes, care of the sick and the aged, and the transmission of cultural values.'

²¹ See Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Introduction" in *GANATANTRA* (a collection of articles on Democracy) Compiled by Muhammad Jahangir, Mowla Brothers, Dhaka, 1995, pp 5-9.

²² See Barbara op cit p. 157.

²³ The importance of family emotional support for healthy development has been well-documented (Goslin 1969; Walters and Srinett 1971) See Nijole V. Benokraitis, *Marriages and Families Changes, Choices and Constraints*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, p.6.

²⁴ See William M. Kephart, "The Family, Society and the individual", Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1966, p.3.

The family places 'the fulcrum of causation within one person.' Rudi Dallos and David Boswell (1993)²⁵ have proved with some statistics on social differences that 'how the "private" problems of individuals may be significantly related to much more general "public" phenomena'. Gender, race and socio-economic circumstances can be cited as examples of these public phenomena. These are also the basics of creating 'class' and 'status', apparently unequal distribution of economic power and hence unequal distribution of opportunity tend to create these social groupings. Contrary to this argument is the idea that this economic determination did not exhaust the conditions of group formation.' In fact Max Weber (1970) formulated the concept in such a way as to encompass the influence of ideas, beliefs and values upon the formulation of groups without losing sight of economic conditions.²⁶ Nevertheless, the ideas, beliefs and values, which are inherited from family, are such invisible phenomena that could not explain statistically, as cause. But it must indicate the direction of reality.

Promoting enabling conditions for human development and thus empower people is the main theme of democracy. The democratic propagation of People's Participation in each and every processes of the polity, which influence their lives, might have to be rooted from the family process of changing milieu. However, the total process is inseparable from the human desire for self-recognition and survival that begin to be nurtured from childhood while living under family care.

The fundamental and recurrent to regulate and guide human life have led to develop social institutions. Both in advanced industrial society and preliterate or primitive one, the institution is very important as a regulator of human behaviour.

In human society two families are recognised- the families of orientation, the one a person is born into, and the family of procreation, the one they establish by marriage. Consequently, people are well aware about the way in which the family operates both in pleasure and in sorrow, and about the ways the human behaviour is constantly shaped and moulded by family.

²⁵See Rudi Dallos and David Boswell, "Mental Health" in Rudi Dallos and Eugene McLaughlin (eds) *Social problems and the Family*, Sage Publications, London, New Delhi, published in Association with The Open University, 1993, pp.83-121.

²⁶See Robert Bocoock, "Consumption and Life Styles" in Robert Bocoock and Kenneth Thompson (eds) *Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity*, Polity Press in Association with the Open University, Cambridge, UK, 1995, p.129.

Among the two types of family-nuclear and extended²⁷-due to its major social functions the first one has got universal importance in human society, while the later one is also widely recognised. The immediate group of father, mother, and children living together is known as nuclear family. The extended family comprises, besides the members of immediate group, also other relatives: the grand parents, the uncles and aunts, the cousins, the in-laws, and so on.

Types, roles and functions of family vary from place to place. In today's world nuclear family is more central to the life of the industrialised country where in the non-industrialised developing countries the families are in transition.

Even though the function of the family are broadly categorised into channeling of sexual behaviour and reproduction, provision for economic support, child rearing (including some educational and religious upbringing), placement in the class system, and constant emotional support. The extended family takes on some welfare provisions for its members. The ways of such welfare activities are not same in all societies- and the definitions of relatives are also varied. In Bangladesh, for example, a government servant's family includes, provided they are residing with him and are wholly depended upon him, his wife (but not more than one wife), his legitimate children and step children, and, his parents, sisters and minor brothers.²⁸ The definitions of relatives or in that sense the definitions of family in Bangladesh context need to analyse further. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) conduct population Census on decadal basis, they use the term 'households'. The composition of household is synonymous with that of family. The concept of household is based on the arrangements made by persons, individually or in-groups, for providing themselves with food or other essentials for living. A household may be either;

- (a) a one-person household, that is a person who makes provision for his own food or other essentials of living without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household; or

²⁷ See Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, *Human Behaviour Shorter Edition*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. New York 1967, pp.36-39.

²⁸ See Establishment Division CMLA's Secretariat, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, '*Bangladesh Service Rules Part I*, 1983, p.8

(b) a multi-person house hold, that is a group of two or more persons who make common provision for food or other essentials for living. The persons in this group may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or less extent, they may be related or unrelated persons or a combination of both (UN 1970). However, sociologists of Bangladesh, in most cases used the data of household provided by the BBS, to explaining family.

In Bangladesh the mean number of persons per household was 5.4 in 1960, 5.89 in 1973 and 5.92 in 1981.

Table- 27

Distribution of Households by Number of persons, 1960-1981.

Persons per H. hold	1961				1973				1981			
	Household Number	%	Population Number	%	Household Number	%	Population Number	%	Household Number	%	Population Number	%
All H. hold	9602852	100	51525807	100	12675448	100	74692792	100	14785048	100	84975593	100
1 person	411317	4.3	411317	0.8	385107	3.0	385107	0.5	479464	3.2	479464	1.7
2 person	868872	9.0	1737744	3.4	870043	7.0	1780086	2.4	1126760	7.6	2253520	2.7
3 person	1272009	13.3	3816027	7.4	1360058	10.7	4080174	5.5	1768764	12.0	5306292	6.3
4 person	1544855	16.1	6179420	12.0	1792449	13.7	6929800	9.3	2119889	14.3	8479556	10.0
5 person	1564569	16.3	7822845	15.2	190309	15.0	9515455	12.7	2211955	15.0	11059775	13.0
6 person	1322643	13.8	7935858	14.4	1811195	14.3	10867170	14.5	2031234	13.7	12187404	14.3
7 person	951490	9.9	6660430	12.9	1512188	11.9	10585316	14.2	1640300	11.1	11482100	13.5
8 person	696582	6.2	4772656	9.3	1101999	8.7	8815992	11.8	1178190	8.0	9425520	11.1
9 person	336148	3.8	3295332	6.4	716255	5.7	6446295	8.6	786493	5.3	7078437	8.3
10 person	704367	7.3	8894178	17.2	1263062	10.0	15287397	20.5	1441999	9.8	16223525	19.1
Mean number of persons per household	5.4	***	***	***	5.89	***	***	***	5.92	***	***	***
Median number of persons per household	5.0	***	***	***	5.49	***	***	***	5.55	***	***	***

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Bangladesh Population Census 1981,

Analytical Findings and National Tables, August, 1984, p.103

The distribution of household by number of persons for 1960, 1970 and 1981 is given in the above Table. The picture that emerges from the Table, clearly indicate that the percentage of households having 5 or less number of member was 59% in 1960, it

reached down to 49% in 1973. However, in 1981 the proportion of households with five members or less has increased upto about 52%. Declining trend in the number of single member household has a considerable impact on the over all increases in the larger sized families. In addition, there is considerable decrease in overall mortality level in general and infant and child mortality in particular have a great bearing in the increase of larger sized households in the country.

The survey by the Government sources revealed the average number of persons per family in today's Bangladesh as 5.4. Though there is a wide range of variation from single member to ten member families. However, from the scriptures like panchali, and biographies of various people, it is seen that joint family was absent before mid-eighteenth century. As has been mentioned by a famous Bengali historian in Oxford University,²⁹ "a striking fact about Bengali's social life before the mid-eighteenth century is the relative absence of the joint family". The typical family in all these cases is nuclear and rather small. The heroes and heroines of the medieval ballads are also portrayed as belonging to small nuclear families. The one major exception is to be found in the legend of the Chand Saodagar (merchant Chand), who had seven grown-up sons living with him. Joint family's norms were necessarily different from those of nuclear family. Family obligations and duties referred to typically to one's immediate blood relations were lacked in the joint family. The reverence due to the janti or the kinship group-especially the latter's right to sit in judgement on one's conduct was recognised. But the total involvement with the larger kinship group-interms of one's associations, affections, and family duties-appears to be a latter development.

Two aspects of the social background, in the nineteenth century Bengal, in which the family lived, worked and survived.³⁰ In the first place, although by the middle of the nineteenth century the last vestiges of feudal social structure and feudal attitudes had almost disappeared from Bengali Hindu society, they continue to exist, though in a moribund state, in Bengal Moslem society. By the term feudal, Karim meant it synonymous with land tenure system in feudal Europe, though it was also meant as the

²⁹ Tapan Raychaudhuri, "Norms of family life and personal morality among the Hindu Elite. 1600-1850", in Rachel Van M. Baumer(ed), *Aspects of Bengali History and Society*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd New Delhi, Bombay Bangalore Calcutte 1975, pp. 13-25.

³⁰ See A.K.Nazmul Karim, "Changing Patterns of an East Pakistan Family" in op cit, 1984, pp.61-83.

pre-capitalist society were very much different from its European counterpart. Secondly, Western ideas and institutions had made some headway both in urban as well as rural areas. The change in traditional feudal ideas and penetration of western ideas could be marked a bit earlier. However, 1757 A.D. is seen as starting point of change in this direction. There are several other factors responsible for this change, as we are presently dealing with. However, apart from the common analysis of influence of family on the institutionalisation process of democracy, there is a crucial dimension of family influence on political process of the country.

The economic condition of a particular family can be assessed by observing the housing conditions, as houses are made of different materials. The materials of the house or in that sense the conditions of the house reflect the economic condition of the owner of the house. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has classified the “dwelling units by materials of wall and roof by residence.”

Table-28

Distribution of Household in dwelling units by materials of wall and roof by residence, 1981

Residence	Roof Materials	Total	Straw/ Bamboo	Wall materials		Cement/ Brick
	Total	100	63.4	20.0	11.6	5.0
Bangladesh	Straw/ Bamboo	59.3	45.5	13.1	0.6	0.1
	Tiles	2.4	0.5	1.5	0.2	0.2
	C.I.Sheet/Wood	35.5	17.4	5.5	10.8	1.8
	Cement/Brick	2.8	---	---	---	2.8
	Total	100	52.6	11.0	12.5	23.9
	Straw/ Bamboo	40.1	33.8	5.3	0.6	0.4
Urban	Tiles	2.7	1.0	0.9	0.3	0.6
	C.I.Sheet/Wood	41.5	17.9	4.8	11.6	7.2
	Cement/Brick	15.7	---	---	---	15.7
	Total	100	65.1	21.4	11.5	2.0
	Straw/ Bamboo	62.4	47.3	14.3	0.7	0.1
Rural	Tiles	2.3	0.4	1.5	0.2	0.2
	C.I.Sheet/Wood	34.6	17.4	5.6	10.6	1.0
	Cement/Brick	0.7	---	---	---	---

Source: BBS, Bangladesh Population Census 1981, Analytical Findings and National Tables, August, 1984, p.106

The following points emerge from the above Table- regarding ‘distribution of household in dwelling units by materials of wall and roof by residence, 1981/1991.

Most of the 'dwelling units' in Bangladesh are made of straw and bamboo; this generalisation is applicable both rural as well as urban areas. Out of the total households of Bangladesh, 59.3% have roof materials with straw, whereas wall of 45.5% dwelling units is made of the same. Near about 62 percent roofs of the houses in the country are made of straw, bamboo and tiles. About 35.5% of roofs are semi-permanent in nature. Similarly, about 83.4% of the total houses had walls made of straw, bamboo and mud or unburnt bricks whereas only 16.6 % walls are made of strong materials like C.I. Sheet and Cement. Only about 11 percent of the total housing structure have both walls and roof housing structure have both walls and roof made of C.I. Sheet. Out of the total dwelling units only 2.8 percent of roofs and walls are permanent type.

About 59 percent roofs of total houses in urban places are built of strong materials such as stone, cement, bricks, corrugated iron sheets or woods, the corresponding proportion in rural areas only about 35 percent. Whereas only 35 percent walls of housing units in urban centres is only 13 percent. It suggests that a large proportion in rural areas is 'temporary' in nature. Their walls and roofs are made of traditional construction materials such as straw, mud bamboo, unburned brick, etc. It is clear that the standard of housing condition of rural population is worse in comparison with that in urban localities. The comparative temporary nature of rural housing makes the dwellers vulnerable to natural disaster. Among others, the vulnerability of housing conditions make them socially distressed resultant into following consequences -

(i) Frequent occurrence of natural disaster makes the rural people economically weak;

(ii) It also makes them dependent on relief either from government sources, or from NGOs or from affluent persons. Distribution of relief or other charitable services are not out of purview of the local influentials, who are also politically and economically dominant. Except, minor cases of non-political humanitarian nature, most of the resources of such type are used to enhance or sustain socio-political influence. This influence also helps winning in the elections of representative body by the rich people. Thus, the causes of more moneyed persons being the representatives of parliament, and local government bodies could be found in the vulnerability of majority people.

(iii) The poor housing also explains the poverty, being aggravated by the natural disaster turn into economic distress, create the push factor and ultimately result into rural to urban migration. Thus more poor people, from rural Bangladesh, are migrating into city centres and enhancing the slums in the metropolitan areas. However, the whole process is fuelling urbanisation, urban poverty, terrorism, corruption and so on. It is worth mentioning that the slum dwellers are very often used as political instruments. They help enlarging the size of rallies conveyed by political parties, led by the nouveau riche class who are also influentials in the rural areas. The juvenile slum dwellers, better called as street children, are too much desperate to carry out the agitation programme by the political parties. This desperate tendency of most of the street children may become disastrous for the normal life of city centres or for himself. Or, as some of the instances show, make them Godfather of the underworld activities. This also keeps fuelling the criminalisation of politics in Bangladesh, which is a dominant part of the present state of democratisation.

The economic factor, cultural and global change, changes in human nature, and political mobilisation, that shaped the nation-state also transformed the family and kinship system. The old form of family ties is transforming into newer one. But the underlying stream of relationship remains as it was. Thus a great deal of influence of family and kinship system is being observed in politics. Family ties might have substantiated the hereditary system of political dominance.

We can put two aspects, one is, as Abu 'L-Fazal Sallami,³¹ one of the nine jewels of Emperor Akbar, at the very outset of his 'Ain I-Akbari' mentioned, he who does not possess the qualifications to shape his inward and outward character accordingly, and shows due respect to himself and to others, ought not to engage in the struggle of the world, but observe a peaceful conduct. Fazal mentioned about special type of people who can recognise a ray of the Divine Power in the smallest things of the world. These types of man are rare and they are always exceptional, there is no question of hereditary possession of such quality. Secondly, the issue of heredity in the politics of developing areas is crucial. The hereditary process of leadership very often lacks the required

³¹ Abul 'L-Fazal Sallami, *The Ain-I Akbar*, Translated From the Original Persian by H. Blochmann M.A. Calcutta Madrasha, Complete Volume, The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939, p.1.

quality. The dominant political parties of Bangladesh are being led by hereditary leadership. The process is well termed as dynastic rule or dynastic family rule.

However, the process of hereditary leadership has its deep root in the history of the country. Before the introduction of British administration, as has been mentioned earlier that the village administration was under the control of village head, either Hindu or Muslim. They possess the post by dint of heredity. Hunter³² has quoted the report of Mr. Verner. The report of Mr. Verner, mentioned that there was no election or appointment by the local people of localised rather the established way of hereditary.

According to the local administrator, (a Deputy Magistrate) though the villagers are not legally bound to obey the village heads, they regard them, as friends, and have confidence in them. Mr. Verner cited one village in which the head was only nine years old, but states that there was no thought of appointing another more fit for the post. Generally the succession goes by primogeniture, the eldest son taking the father's place; but this rule was far from absolute. If a younger son shows higher qualifications than the eldest does, the latter is sometimes set aside. The very little instances of change had found insome few cases due to emergence of new villages. In these cases principally the village heads were found whose fathers or grand fathers had not held the same post before them. The change persisted. However, this culture of kinship maintenance is existed dominantly in present day's politics. It is seen very often in the political parties of the latter period. The Indian National Congress established in 1885, the Indian Muslim League in 1906, the Bangladesh Awami League in 1949, hereditary leadership is leading Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1979 and so on, all. The major political parties in Bangladesh, as in other countries of South Asia, are in the grip of hereditary leadership. Though most of these countries, at the moment, are practising democracy, but incidentally as well as deliberately, the trend of family politics; largely centre on big political parties, which generally enjoy popular support. The issue of hereditary leadership, though generally accepted, has posed several questions, i) why necessarily family members should wear the mantle of popular leaders in their respective political groups? ii) The political parties, which choose hereditary leadership, do they have real democracy within their structure? Despite several questions in public mind, they exist.

³² See W. W. Hunter op cit.

But the whole issue is sensitive in nature and normally party men are shy of speaking on these. However, many of our respondents while attempting our survey questions, replied that lack of internal democracy in the election of party leadership, nomination of party candidate in different elections and by-elections and all other issues are the main constraints of institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the reality is different. Some blindly support the dynastic tendencies, bearing in mind that it is necessary because most partymen are emotionally involved with a particular leader or leaders of a family. They also argue others can come to the front but leadership quality is important which is the main criterion of a person regarding of having a dynastic legacy or not. However, insiders in the party also give vent to their feelings in a muted manner at times disapproving the trend while critics come down heavily on the trend.

Arguably, there is nothing wrong if a political party in any country relies on the charisma of a leader and seeks to derive benefits from that image by bringing in leaders from that family. Or from the family side there is no crime in dreaming that some one's children may become the leaders of the country, that is dream one hopes many fathers in Bangladesh or in elsewhere will continue to have. The problem lies in the modus operandi in accomplishing that dream and the objective is reached. If the set rule of the party is followed, and inner democracy practised in an organisation or the leadership is imposed for all practical purpose. However, in the major cases, political family members are firm in the saddle as far as leadership of their respective organisations is concerned. Given the history and the nature of politics that one can conceive in the coming days, politics in dynastic family line will continue to be there in several South Asian countries, including Bangladesh.

Chapter V. 2

Globalisation factor

This section concentrates on the major external influence i.e. impact of globalisation on institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. The internal factors influencing the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh were dealt in earlier. However, one of the key factors identified and explored here is the increased opening of internal factors to the strong trend of globalisation. Science and technology coupled with its mass dissemination have become the major tools that made the 'wave' of globalisation and democratisation almost universal.

However, there is hardly any universal consensus on globalisation. Theoretically, a kaleidoscope of global system is encircled and viewed by the term globalisation. Jan Aart Scholte (2000)¹ explores the issue of definition in more detail. He distinguished five general conceptions: globalisation as internationalization; globalisation as liberalisation; globalisation as universalisation; globalisation as westernisation; and globalisation as deterritorialisation. It is argued that the first four definitions are largely redundant. Only the last notion gives 'globalisation' a new and distinctive meaning-and at the same time identifies an important contemporary historical development. It is viewed that sheer complexity, magnitude and speed distinguish the contemporary globalisation from the earlier period of Cold War (Keohane and Nye Jr. 2000: 111-12)². Globalisation is not pursued by one single track, free global trade is just one of those tracks. Though often defined in strictly economic terms, globalisation has wide variety of dimensions: technology, information, military, environmental, political, socio-economic and cultural (Carlson 2000³: 1; Keohane and Nye Jr, 2000: 105-107). Each of these dimensions has links with and has ramifications for others, and each goes through various tracks or processes, contributing to the multi-continental network of interdependence.

Thus, the view of globalisation is so widespread that it covers the most diverse outlooks and social interests. It covers the political spectrum from left to right, it is

¹ See Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalisation a critical introduction*, Macmillan Press Ltd. 2000, London; pp.41-61.

² Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Globalisation: What's New? What's Not? (And So What)", in *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2000.

endorsed in different disciplines-economics, sociology, cultural studies and international politics- and it is advanced both by theoretical innovators and traditionalists⁴. Globalisation is being used to justify the economic and policy stance of the government and national political leaders, in particular, are increasingly adopting a global rhetoric. 'Such rhetoric depicts globalisation as an unstoppable, unidirectional force that will inevitably transform economies and societies. Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong lucidly expressed this widespread sentiment in a speech to policy and analysis in Washington DC in May 1998:

Globalisation, fostered by free flow of information and rapid progress in technology, is a driving force that no country can turn back. It does impose market discipline on the participants, which can be harsh, but is the mechanism that drives progress and prosperity (The Straits Times, 8 May 1998:67)

At the same time as politicians, journalists and analysts have joined the global bandwagon; virtually all of the social sciences have concurrently developed their own 'take' on the process of globalisation. There is an abundance of books, journals and articles on the subject. Each has dealt or emphasised a particular aspect of the issue. As a result, it is difficult to comprehend the effect of globalisation on institutionalisation process of democracy. The literature on globalisation is vast and varied. We deliberately choose not to present the summary and criticise this literature, in part because that would be a never-ending enterprise given the scale and rate of publication on the topic.

The shift of international economy's stress from *transitional relations* to *complex interdependence* result into 'the proposition that the growth and deepening of associations amongst nominally independent states would eventually generate a world characterised by: multiple channels of connection amongst societies, or their members; the ending of any clear hierarchy amongst issues of salience to governments, wither, in particular, the decline of security issues as the dominant concern; and, finally, the diminishing use, or utility, of force in those relations amongst states within which complex interdependence prevails.

³ Don Carlson, "The Old Economy in the New Economy", in *Business Week*, No.3707, November 13, 2000.

⁴ See Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question, The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance*, Second Edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999, p.3.

The notion of complex interdependence are echoed in A.G.McGrew's conception of globalisation⁵ in terms of the "multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the states and societies which makeup the modern world system" and the processes through which "events, decisions, and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe".

Globalisation has a deep resonance for institutionalising democracy in the country. Currently, the people live as a part of global community and no country can be immune from any long-standing crisis occurring in another country. The national poet of Bangladesh Nazrul Islam mentioned in one of his poems, "*we will not remain in the closed door, rather see the globe how the people are travelling around the epoch making whirlwind*". Nazrul might have been influenced by his experience with the whirlwind travelling during his lifetime to make an urge to the next generation so that they could feel necessity to see the globe. The changing effect of this period could be observed in politics, society and economies. Nehru writing as early as 1943- captured the mood of his time when he termed international trade as "a whirlpool of economic imperialism."⁶

The impact of globalisation on the political process of Bangladesh could be marked from the earlier period of colonisation. In course of time, with the pace of de-colonisation the nature of impact has changed. However, the end of cold war has initiated a new era of democratisation accompanied by globalisation. However, for convenience of our analysis we divide the section into, (i) the process of de-colonisation and colonial legacy, (ii) end of cold war, (iii) human rights campaign, (iv) integration through economy and communication, (v) democratisation in different regimes of globalisation.

(i) *The process of decolonisation and colonial legacy:* With the pace of decolonisation a host of nations have become independent. Even after independence, these nations could hardly discard the legacy of their colonial past.

⁵ A.G.McGrew, "Conceptualising global politics," pp.1-28 in A.G.McGrew and P.G. Lewis (eds.), *Global Politics: Globalisation and the Nation-State* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p.23 Cited by R.J. Barry Jones, *Globalisation and interdependence in the international political Economy, Rhetoric and Reality*, Pinter Publishers, London & New York, 1995, p.5.

⁶ Cited by Binayak Sen, "Self-reliance: Is there a need for re-thinking?" in *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), May 4, 2001, p.8.

However, the decolonisation process has some specific objectives. According to Yogendra K. Malik⁷, decolonisation process in the South Asian societies have been constantly engaged in achieving two interrelated goals: (a) Political consolidation and nation building and (b) Modernisation of their societies through the diffusion of technology and through economic growth. Mentionably, both of these goals were to be fulfilled within the context of colonial legacy. In 1947, Bangladesh's independence had been mattered within the entity of Pakistan. According to Muslim League this was a separate homeland for Muslims of the Sub-continent. The efforts of the then decolonised and newly independent Pakistan had been under serious scrutiny by its eastern part. There was hardly any option for the Bengalis other than to view the rule of Pakistan as internal colonial rule. However, Bengalis' long drawn struggle for independence has succeeded in 1971. Thus the process of globalisation could be traced from the very initial stage of colonialism. Arguably it is right to say that globalisation has been going on for centuries, since the advent of large scale international trade and rapid communication.

It is often argued that much of the institutional and ideological legacies of the independent Bangladesh are laid with her British colonial background. Researchers have found that the countries with the experiences of British (colonial) rule are better equipped for democratic government than those, which had belonged to France.

Democracy deals with citizen's interest at large, while the process of globalisation deals with the interests of elite economic conglomerates. However, 'contemporary globalisation has been going on hand in hand with democratisation.'

The Bangladesh's independent political entity is severely effected due to her dependence on foreign Aid. The all-pervasive dependence on external aid explains competently the influence of globalisation on internal politics of Bangladesh. Besides, alongwith all other third world countries Bangladesh are dependent on the advanced

⁷ See Yogendra K. Malik, *Politics, Technology and Bureaucracy in South Asia*, Leiden-E J Brill, The Netherlands, 1983, p.83.

industrialised (mostly western) countries for many other things. As has been mentioned by Yogendra K. Malik,

The countries of the Third World are not only dependent on the advanced industrialised societies for the transfer of the latest technology which may come through government agencies or private business, they are also intellectually indebted to those societies for the supply of the latest information in the sciences, management, the social sciences and the humanities (Yogendra K. Malik 46-47)

In fact globalisation has become Westernisation or Americanisation. The Nobel Prize winner Bangali poet Rabindranath Tagore also wrote "*Poshchime aj khuliache dar, shetha hote shobe ane upohar Dibe ar nibe, milabe milibe jabe na phire...*" The west has opened its doors, rare gifts travel from afar, we will give and receive mingle and mix, but never retreat into a shell! The "myriad-minded genius" poet has called long ago to open the gates to give and receive, to allow equal light to enter and create equal music.^{*} Globalisation has opened the gate; however, it failed to ensure equality, which is the focal point of democracy.

(ii) End of cold war and beginning of a new era for democratisation: After the end of cold war and collapse of the erst-while Soviet Union, more and more countries are coming under fold of democracy. In fact, since 1990s, the era of democratisation coincides with the era of globalisation. There is a sense that political change is inevitable. Particularly with globalisation, because that makes transparency almost necessary. The spotlight is on everybody, and it is hard to hide. So political openness is a corollary of the [economic] changes coming about.

However, the last decade of the twentieth century has been witnessing the about to withering away of integrity of nation state. 'One of the most remarkable features of the twentieth century is the globalisation of independent-or sovereign-statehood. '...(T) he meaning and place of democratic politics, and of the contending models of democracy, have to be rethought in relation to a series of overlapping local, regional and global processes and structures.'(David Held 1993:39) Although globalisation made earlier appearances, the trend has unfolded with unprecedented speeds and to unprecedented extents since the 1960s(Jan Aart Scholte 2000:8).⁹ Two decades of nation state, and national politics had passed away. This is the age of global politics. Famous Sociologist

* Milia Ali, "Tagore and "Us"", in *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 10 June 2000, p.6.

⁹ Jan Aart Scholte, op. cit. p.8.

Ulrich Bech (1999) had shadowed doubt on the very existence of nation-state in the tide of globalisation.¹⁰

However, before Ulrich Bech's publication Samuel P. Huntington (1993) while looking towards the shape of the post-cold-war world maintained that nation-states would "remain the most powerful actors" on the global stage.¹¹ The technological revolution, like the movement towards universal free-market democracy, is indeed diminishing the authority of the state in some important ways. However, those two things have not abolished that authority; they have hardly touched one prime part of the state's power...above all, they show no sign of creating any alternative to the state as the basic unit of international affairs. The boundaries between states may be blurrier than they used to be, but they are still there.¹² Globalisation has killed the old politics, writes Ulrich Beck. That creates the demand for new. The winners and losers of globalisation cease to sit at the same table. The idea of "national products and industries is becoming fictitious. Therefore, the impact of globalisation on the institutionalization of democracy has brought both challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh. During the previous years to pass through the different stages of free market economy and trade liberalisation the LDCs and developing countries observed that, the industrialised countries and the USA have gained. On the other hand opposite opinion is also there, where it is said, "...that globalisation was the key to rapid economic growth of the poor countries including Bangladesh. Globalisation is delivering benefits and it augurs tremendously well for all countries as well as Bangladesh."¹³

Nevertheless, implications of globalisation for institutionalization of democracy have been observed for long. In 1940s Reiser and Davies anticipated stark alternatives futures of 'global slavery or global freedom'. They urged coming generations 'to build a

¹⁰ See editorial on Ulrich Bech's "What is Globalisation?" in *The New Statesman* (London), 6 December 1999, pp.25-27.

¹¹ See the analysis on Samuel P. Huntington's, "The Clash of Civilisation?" in "The New Geopolitics survey", pp.10-12 of *The Economist*, July 31st- August 6th 1999, after page 46.

¹² See Ibid

¹³ Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of Harvard International Institute of Development expressed this observation at a public lecture on "Strategies for Economic Growth in the New Global Economy" organised by Bangladesh Economic Association at Dhaka on 14 January 2000. Reports published in *The Daily Star*, 15 January 2000, p.6.

democratic world order on a planetary scale.¹⁴ Democratisation in a predominantly authoritarian society like Bangladesh is now crying out to be freed and breathe in the new climate enshrined with globalisation.

The global transformation after the demise of cold war encompasses by the resurgence of democracy all over the globe. Excluding China, at present, two-thirds of human kind living either in expressly democracy or 'have at least democratic facades. In fact, throughout the globe within the nation states and across national boundaries, thus globalisation is most likely to furnish a fertile ground for full flowering of democratic values and intensely competitive economy where the most capable, the highly trained and the most forward-looking ones have their honoured positions in the comity of nations.

(iii) Human rights campaign: Linkages between the advent of democracy and globalisation in Bangladesh could be seen in several ways. Global human rights campaigns and other transferable civic associations pressed for an end to many authoritarian governments. Globally acknowledged world leader in human rights, Amnesty International collects, and publishes 'records of violation of Human Rights in Bangladesh' as 'Amnesty International Report on Bangladesh', on regular basis since 1971.

The most important consequences of the reports¹⁵ are:

- (1) To inform the people about the work of AI and to show its competence in social and legal analysis;
- (2) To provide a basis of comparison for analysing the human rights situation in Bangladesh over time and especially during different political regimes to see what are the long-term trends;
- (3) To stimulate the readers to be more critical in their own analysis;
- (4) To stimulate many new recruits to become involved in human rights organisation, by responding to AI appeals and by giving support to specific issues of human rights within Bangladesh; and

¹⁴ O.L. Reiser and B. Davies, "Planetary Democracy: an Introduction to Scientific Humanism and Applied Semantics", New York, Creative Age Press, 1944; cited in Jan Aart Scholte, *op. cit.* p.261.

¹⁵ See *Amnesty International Report on Bangladesh 1991*, Preface.

(5) To put pressure on government to conform to the international standards and norms of law and human rights to which they have pledged themselves.

However, since 1990's, different International forum has been appreciating Bangladesh's efforts for establishing human rights. In a latest move an international association of film critics and journalists has awarded the International Critics' Prize to a Bangladeshi film. In its citation of award the international forum maintained some laudable words of appreciation regarding "country's struggle for its democratic rights"¹⁶. As a signatory of international convention on human rights, the democratic government of the country is required to take steps to ensure human rights condition in the country.

With the pace of globalisation the political struggle has been concentrating on the demands for just wage right by the workers. As has been argued by Bill Jordan (1998)¹⁷, "If post-war welfare states appeared to have made workers less dependent on competing in the labour market, globalisation now puts the wage relation back at the heart of the political rights." The political analysts¹⁸ of Bangladesh are also terming human rights as "a sine qua non for establishing a democratic society". Nonetheless, it has been alleged by the Amnesty International that, "The universality of human rights is facing strongest challenge yet. Double standards and selectivity are becoming the norms."¹⁹

(iv) Integration through economy and communication: One of the strongest arguments on influence of globalisation on institutionalization of democracy is that "global economic integration, the growth of international broad casting, telecommunications and travel will make it more difficult in future for respective regimes to go about their business unhindered by outside influence (The Economist, December 5th 1998:16)." However, developing effective institutions is a must for human rights protection (David Beetham 2000).²⁰ On the other hand, the global mass media gave sympathetic publicity to the War of Liberation and genocide of Bangladesh in 1971, political turmoil in the country including tragic killing of the two heads of state in 1975 and 1981, bloodless coup d' etat of general Ershad and his autocratic reign for nine-long

¹⁶ See report in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 29, 2002, p 12, 11.

¹⁷ Bill Jordan, *The New Politics of Welfare*, SAGE Publications, London Thousand Oaks New Delhi, 1998, p. 1.

¹⁸ See M. Maniruzzaman Miah, *Five Years of Awami Rule*, Gatidhara, Dhaka, 2001, p.18

¹⁹ See *The Daily Star*, *op cit*.

years, anti-autocratic mass movement in 1990s and movement for caretaker government in 1994s.

Global business regulations emerge from various 'epidemic' communities- communities of experts that meet regularly all over the world. The "story of globalisation of regulation is a story of domination. After interviewing 500 informational leaders in business and government, Peter Drahos & John Braithwaite (2000) produce the 700-page book, which contains 13 case studies-ranging from property and contract, financial regulation, corporations and securities to the environment, food, telecommunications, drugs, sea, road and air transport.

The global lawmakers today are the men who run the largest corporations, the US and the EC. Women, excluding national minorities and citizens of developing countries, are the law takers," they write. "When the strong have wanted regulation, very often it has been to protect their monopoly; when they have wanted deregulation it has been to save them paying for the burdens they inflict on ordinary citizens."

Braithwaite saw globalisation as offering opportunities to citizens to increase their influence upon global regulations. In effect, the authors suggest that the world is run from a few important cities- in particular New York, Washington, Brussels, Geneva- where the expert communities of MNCs and TNCs are important and congregate.²¹

Free flow of information and culture is also a precondition to free flow of trade liberalisation. During its first term (1991-1996) the BNP government led by Begum Khaleda Zia, allowed the state-run BTV to broadcast CNN and BBC programmes for limited hours. In later period these two free-to-air channels have been open in the country. For the sake of arguments a number of BBC and CNN programmes can be pointed out that do not suit Bangladesh's home grown culture. The bottom line: there is hardly any halfway with regard to political, economic, social and cultural globalisation.

²⁰ David Beetham while spoke in a seminar at Dhaka on 1 March 2000, see report in *The Daily Star*, March 2, 2000, p.2.

²¹ Peter Drahos & John Braithwaite, "Global Business Regulation", Review by Geoff Tansey in *The Financial Express* (Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), 16 March 2000, p.7.

Table-29

Major agencies of global economic governance (with membership figures as the mid-1990s)

BIS	Bank of International Settlements. Established in 1930 with headquarters in Basle. Membership of 40 Central Banks. Monitors monetary policies and financial flows. The Basle committee on Banking supervision, formed through the BIS in 1974, has spearheaded efforts at multilateral regulation of global banking.
G 7	Group of seven. Established in 1975 as the G five (France, Germany, Japan, UK, and USA) and subsequently expanded to include Canada and Italy. The G 7 conducts semiformal collaboration on world economic problems. Government leaders meet in annual G 7 summits, while finance ministers and /or their leading officials periodically hold their consultations.
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Established in 1947 with offices in Geneva. Membership had reached 122 states when it was absorbed into the WTO in 1995. The GATT co-ordinated eight 'rounds' of multilateral negotiations to reduce state restrictions on cross-border merchandise trade.
IMF	International Monetary Fund. Established in 1945 with headquarters in Washington, DC. Membership of 182 states. The IMF oversees short-term cross-border money flows and foreign exchange questions. Since 1979 it has also formulated stabilisation and systemic transformation policies for states suffering chronic difficulties with transborder supervision of securities firms.
IOSCO	International Organisation for Securities Commission. Established in 1984 with headquarters in Montreal. Membership of 115 official securities regulators and (non-voting) trade associations from 69 countries. The IOSCO develops frameworks for transborder supervision of securities firms.
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Founded in 1962 with headquarters in Paris. Membership of 29 states with advanced industrial economies. Drawing on a staff of 600 professional economists, the OECD prepares advisory reports on all manner of macroeconomic questions.
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Established in 1964 with office in Geneva. Membership of 187 states. UNCTAD monitors the effects of cross-border trade on macroeconomic conditions, especially in the South. It provided a key forum in the 1970s for discussions of a New International Economic Order.
WBG	World Bank Group. A collection of five agencies first established in 1945, with head offices in Washington, DC. The Group provides project loans for long-term development in poor countries. Like the IMF, the World Bank has since 1979 become heavily involved in structural adjustment programmes in the South and former East.
WTO	The World Trade Organisation. Established in 1995 with headquarters in Geneva. The WTO is a permanent institution to replace the provisional GATT. It has wider agenda and greater powers of enforcement.

Source: Scholte, J A (1997) 'Global trade and finance' in J. Bayles & Smith (Eds), *The Globalisation of world Politics*, pp. 429-448(Oxford: Oxford University Press).

The internal and external groupings of the factors influencing institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh are not possible to visualise in an isolated fashion. In fact,

as has been mentioned earlier, all factors are inter linked. Until very recent past Bangladesh was stubbornly straight-laced. Since 1990's, even more than before, it has stepped with electrifying suddenness into an era of globalisation. Globalisation's fanfare with a large extent of satellite television and other electronic media like e-mail and the internet have become blessings for the privileged people. This reveals the fact of information divide in the society between connected and disconnected. The polarisation in this way is very much remarkable, hence shows a gloomy shade of globalisation. As has been found by the UNDP (1999) until mid-1998, the Internet users have risen to 140 million and the number is projected to cross 700 million by 2001. However, 93.3 per cent of them are from richest 20 per cent and only 0.2 per cent from the poorest 20 per cent. The unprecedented human advances expanded by the globalisation opportunities have closed the same for many others and thus overall human security has become vulnerable. While the economy, culture and the government are being integrated by globalisation, it also hastens the fragmentation of the society.

'Regional and trans-world agencies have supplied various forms of democracy support (Scholte 2000:264)'. Development of civil society movements in Bangladesh has been supported generously by the European Union (EU), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc. Election monitoring through South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Commonwealth Election Observation Group, EU election monitoring group, United Nations (UN) etc. On the other hand 'good governance' promotion through the Bretton Woods institutions and many other agencies have enormous effect to materialise institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. "Indeed, a number of theorists and politicians have suggested that neoliberal politics of economic liberalisation encourage a democratisation of the state (cf. Beetham, 1997).²²

A paradox of the contemporary condition, however, is that at the very time that the freedom of manoeuvre of democratic politics has become circumscribed, the international pressures for the democratisation of previously authoritarian regimes are considerable and rising. Such pressures reflect contemporary interdependence and globalisation tendencies, which have added their force to primary domestic pressures for democratisation. Interdependence, of various

²² D. Beetham, "Market Economy and Democratic Polity", *Democratisation*, Vol 4, no. 1 (spring), pp.76-93. Cited in Jan Aart Scholte, *op cit*, and p 264.

forms, have left many regimes, particularly within the Third World, vulnerable to pressures for increased democracy from their various patron states in the Advanced Industrial West.²³

(v) Democratisation in different regimes of globalisation:

The change in the global scenario that has been occurred through the end of cold war during 1990s has brought about a new surge in the politics of Bangladesh. “Obviously the wave of global change involving democratic structure and institutions as well as market forces have their intrusive presence in Bangladesh as much as in most other developing countries.²⁴” However, we have already mentioned that ‘globalisation’ is only one of the factors of democratisation and ‘by no means constituted the sole force in this regard’. Jan Aart Scholte delineated the connections between globalisation and democratisation in to four important counts.

- 1) Globalisation has by no means constituted the sole force behind the ‘third wave’ of democratisation. Each transition to multi-party regimes with ‘free and fair elections has drawn vital strength from locally based movements for change. The democratic transition in Bangladesh was the outcome of anti-autocratic movement in 1990s. The downfall of the autocratic Ershad regime was followed by the general elections of February 1991. There were a considerable number of global observers in these elections. The credibility of this election was globally recognised. However, ‘global forces have normally only furthered a democratisation of the state to the extent that these inputs have fallen on fertile ground in the country concerned.
- 2) The process of globalisation, installed through liberal mechanisms has run only skin-deep’. In many cases, multi-party elections have not led to wider democratic consolidation. Some new constitutions have become paper instruments. Numerous ‘independent’ political parties and media outlets have become tools of narrow personal ambition and elite privilege. In many of the new democracies civic education has been limited and civic society frail. Thus the elected political regime has been transformed into ‘illiberal democracy’ (Fareed Zakaria 1997), or ‘semi-authoritarian’ government with

²³ R.J.Barry Jones, *Globalisation and Interdependence in the International Political Economy, Rhetoric and Reality*, Pinter Publishers, London & New York, 1994, p.210.

²⁴ Abul Kalam, *Globalization and Bangladesh in the new century*, Palok Publishers, Dhaka, 2002, p.48.

shaky democratic credentials (Carothers, 1999)', or 'polyarchies (William Robinson, 1996b)', or political autocracy.

- 3) Some critics have argued that liberal constructions of democracy are inherently deficient. Thus globalisation would need to promote different kinds of collective self-determination in order to be truly democratising. According to this view, democracy requires more than multiparty elections to representative state institutions, respect of civil rights, non-partisan civil and military services, and the rule of law through a scrupulous judiciary. At best, these sceptics say, liberal arrangements can achieve a 'low-intensity democracy' that does little to mobilise the majority and to empower marginalised circles (Gills et al, 1993). Chronic low voter turnouts and wide spread cynicism about parties and politicians would seem to reflect these limitations of liberal democracy (IDEA, 1997). It was found in a survey conducted for the European Commission in 1993 that a record 55 percent of voters questioned were unhappy about the workings of democracy in their country (Harvey, 1995:256). For some social commentator, then, supplementary or alternative means are required to move from a democracy of form to a democracy of substance. The presence of liberal democracy can not ensure the real democratic order, automatically. Scholte points out:

On its own, liberal democracy can not generate levels and types of participation, consultation, transparency and public accountability that constitute a veritable democracy.

- 4) In a world where many social relations are substantially supraterritorial, the territoriality grounded state is not sufficient by itself as an agent of democracy. This highlights the qualification of globalisation for democracy.

Even though 'the theoretical discourse on globalisation has emerged from Western contexts, and yet the processes, and the rhetoric, of globalisation have arguably worked with most transformative power'²⁵ in Bangladesh. However, globalisation has not been uncontested and there are apparently contradictory tendencies in popular

²⁵ Philip F. Kelley and Kris Olds, "Questions in a Crisis The contested meanings of globalisation in the Asia-Pacific", in Kris Olds(et al), *Globalisation and the Asia-Pacific Contested Territories*, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p.2

representations of globalisation: “it has been ‘the’ route to economic triumph, but also the root of economic crisis, it has been resisted as an insidious process of undermining internal factors. However the Third World states have long been distinguished by, among other factors, their perception of themselves as vulnerable to external factors beyond control, and in particular to decisions and policies – primarily economic- which they do not own.

Global market mechanism and democracy

The globalisation process has led the situation of ‘rule by the people in principle, also be achieved (either partly or wholly) through non-official channels.’ Markets, private communications networks and /or civil society have evolved as non governmental instruments of democracy.’ However, they have certain limitations of their own. At best, therefore, global market mechanisms have only offered a supplementary input to democratic governance. In addition, markets have historically never operated democratically. Market activities have not involved deliberate collective decisions arrived at with equal opportunities for all to participate in open deliberations. For Bangladesh, even the market has not yet been developed to decide for itself to make the necessary decisions. Nevertheless, in most part the prices are also decided by the multi-national corporations and the government’s hard-fist tax-net. Thus market mechanism in a newly democratising country like Bangladesh has yet to be developed in an independent fashion.

Global communications as the media of democracy

The growth of global communications have significantly contribute to ‘a purported boon for democracy (Rheingold, 1993; Waterman, 1998). According to these arguments, radio and television (especially interactive programmes) and the Internet provide a valuable supplement to public-sector democracy mechanisms. Private electronic networks could partly or even wholly replace official institutions as the means to democratic governance. Even though Bangladesh is far behind to avail the full potentials of information technology, however, the arrangements are near about sufficient to cope with the changing global information super high way.

Regional Regime helps democratisation

In to-days globalising world of problematic democracy 'regional institutions are another layer of governance'. As a South Asian country Bangladesh is also involved with a good number of regional organisational institutions. It is argued that the regional institutions can serve manage global flows more effectively than national government. On the other hand, the regional arrangements are blamed to have 'technocratic' rather than 'democratic'.

Apart from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Bangladesh is also a member of some regional organisations such as BIMSTEC, D-8 etc. Much of these organisations have tried to broker the impasse, which was prevailed during 1994. Besides, much of these organisations sent election observers during the 1991 and 1996 general elections. Nevertheless, the UN and EU are actively assisting to strengthening the Election Commission. On the other hand Bangladesh's endeavour to institutionalising democracy is highly applauded by the international organisations.

Transworld Regimes also helps democracy

Alongside the regional regulation, globalisation involved major transworld regimes, for governance. Non-state actors have indeed begun to participate in global policy making. The G 7 summits, special UN gatherings, the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings and the WTO Ministerial conferences have accompanied the large civil society forums. The projects and programmes are being prepared, executed and evaluated with the interaction between non-governmental stakeholders and the agencies like UNICEF, UNDP. For formation and monitoring of the macroeconomic policy packages sponsored by the IMF, there is a considerable link with business groups, think tanks and (to a lesser degree) trade unions. However, the overall level of involvement (let alone influence) of nonstate actors has remained low. 'The UN charter's slogan of 'we the people of the world' still only thinly disguises a reality of 'we the bureaucrats of the world' (Scholte 2000:270).

On the other hand, eventhough 'many transworld governance agencies have become more transparent to the public in recent years'. In addition, they are yet to be fully transparent. 'Transworld governance agencies have indeed largely escaped public accountability'.

Globalisation has been going on for centuries, since the advent of large-scale international trade and rapid communication. As a force that links people around the world in increased trade, investment, technology, education, information, and communication, globalisation is a positive development. The impact of globalisation on the process of democratisation in the newly independent 'democratic countries' is immense. After the end of cold war and collapse of the erst-while Soviet Union, more and more countries are coming under democracy

In fact, today's era of globalisation is associated with the era of democratisation. The triumph of democracy could also be witnessed by the fact that 'for the first time in all history more people on the planet live under democracy than dictatorship.' According to NewYork Times' estimation about 3.1 billion of world's 6 billion population are now living under democracy.²⁶ The people of Bangladesh are also a partner of this journey towards democracy. The problems of the poverty stricken Bangladesh (and other developing countries) are being discussed in global forum. The information technology, and communication technology has reduced the distance and made the world a global village in real sense. While the industrialised countries are getting benefit from the process of globalisation, the MNCs and TNCs are controlling the whole process. The globalisation process has brought a greater challenge for the survival of the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) and Developing Countries (DCs). The donations from the developed countries towards the LDCs and DCs are being associated with certain guidelines and prescriptions and guidelines, which are not suitable for the culture and environment of the recipient countries.

However, government and the private sector have to take steps to ensure that its benefits are spread as widely as possible among the population. To benefit from the global economy, there is a growing need to invest in people, especially in health, education, and building democracy. Government will need to establish the rule

²⁶ Cited in Brigadier (Retd.) Abdul Hafiz, op cit 1 November 1999, p.8.

of law, eliminate corruption, respect human rights, implement sound economic policies that provide a positive climate for investment, and encourage respect for the environmental issues.

Chapter VI

Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh (1971-1990)

The periodic change of Bangladesh's political scenario during 1971-1990 has had a greater significance for the institutionalization process of democracy in the latter period. Nevertheless, more than ever, the rate of social mobilisation and political participation were higher during the war of liberation in 1971 and the movement for democracy in 1990. The war of liberation gave birth to independent Bangladesh, while the movement for democracy in 1990 triumphed over the downfall of autocratic regime and paved the way for institutionalization process of democracy. However, the years between 1971 and 1990 were also important and remarkable for democratic dispensation, as the relevant things had been germinating during those years.

This chapter deals with the situation of democracy and its process of institutionalization during 1971-1990. There will be three sections of this chapter. First section deals with the post-freedom phase of 1971-1975. The country witnessed the beginning and end of democracy during this period. The second section, dealing with interruption of democratisation process, has been divided into three parts. The first part deals with the period from post-August 1975 to May 1981. This period may be termed as interruption of democratisation process. The subsequent days, from May 1981 to 1982, could be identified as the period of pseudo democracy. The third part of this section spreads over March 1982 to December 1990. This period may be identified as the reign of autocracy. It is worth mentioning that in all the phases alongside each and every authoritarian action, there was an inherent quest for democracy among the people in general and particularly among the middle class population. In fact this quest was specifically manifested during the years of 1987-1990. Thus the last section i.e. third phase of this chapter is concerned with the quest for democracy during 1987-1990. This period has also a special significance in the sense that it witnessed the end of authoritarianism, and beginning of democratic transition.

VI.1 First phase 1971-15 August 1975:

Beginning and end of Democracy:

Bangladesh became an independent State on December 16, 1971¹, after an armed struggle against Pakistani occupation forces. There had been several events that had aborted the course of democracy during 1970s. “But the nascent democracy that began with the birth of Bangladesh was destroyed under military rule”². The country received its mortal wound right at its nativity. The war of liberation was out come of ignoring the results of 1970’s election by the then rulers. To Bengalis the first direct general elections of 1970’s were a serious event for their existence. Bengalis’ awakening on their linguistic identity since the independence of Pakistan had been gaining ground gradually through a series of events. The socio-cultural, economic, and political deprivation resulted into unprecedented social mobilisation and political participation of the Bengali population of the then East Pakistan. The historic events of 1952’s language movement culminated into the 21-point demand of the United Front that led them to win in the 1954 election. Bengalis’ deprivation from the benefits of 1954 election result³ further aggravated the situation. In course of time, lack of defence in the then East Pakistan during 1965 Indo-Pak war, six-point movement of 1966 and students’ eleven-point movement of 1969 came to a climax during the elections of 1970. Bengalis’ hopes and aspirations turned into waves. The trend of mobilisation was so strong that none could restrain them from participating into the general elections. Nevertheless, these events had become symbolic for Bengalis’ unity.

“The large turnout of voters showed (in the elections of December, 1970) that the Bengalis of the then East Pakistan, ‘were anxious to have a say in determining the future constitutional and political set up by which they were to be governed. The people were fully aware of their democratic rights and no force could deter them from exercising these rights in

¹ Independence Day fall on 26 March 1971, but the country became independent on December 16, 1971 when the Pakistani forces finally surrendered to the combined forces of Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh and Indian Army.

² Editorial of *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), July 8, 2001, p 4.

³ Saleem Qureshi, “Critical elections and state destruction: The Election of 1970 and the emergence of Bangladesh”, in Mohammed Mohabbat Khan and John P. Thorp (Eds). *Bangladesh: Society, Politics & Bureaucracy*, Center for Administrative Studies, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1984, pp.1-30.

manner they wished. The dominant impression from the results of the elections was that the people were ready to work for a change as they have shown by voting for particular political parties.”⁴

In fact, for the Bengali's, the elections of the 1970 was a chance to re-affirm their relationship with the centre. The 'structure of the state' was the fundamental factor in the elections. The main contender political party in the elections, Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujib sought to drastically restructure the whole polity of Pakistan. With such profound and fundamental issues at stake, the election of 1970, as seen in retrospect, became what V.O.Key has called a 'critical election' in which the depth and intensity of electoral involvement are high, in which more or less profound readjustments occur in the relation to power within the community, and in which new and durable electoral groupings are formed (Key, 1955:3). Eventhough, "the elections were for a National Assembly which was to draft a constitution for Pakistan"(Kashyap 1971:1). However, the meaningful free and fair elections of 1970 helped "to tear down the structure of public authority"(Huntington1968: 7). Nevertheless, the political party, which won the overwhelming majority, was denied to form the representative government. Thus 'popular hopes were belied (Kashyap op cit: 2)'. All led the West Pakistani armies to fight the people of East Bengal merely to deny the transfer of power to the duly elected representatives of the people.

The Bengali people won the Great War of liberation, and Bangladesh emerged as an independent country. "The break between East and West Pakistan was perhaps historically inevitable (Moudud 1979:260)." After independence, the true reality of Bangladesh, like many other developing countries had been to create "a legitimate public order". Because, man may have order without liberty, but they can not have liberty without order (Huntington 1968: 7-8). A war-ravaged country with high expectation from its people had been suffering with violence, deteriorating law and order situation and severe political unrest. Whether the people of Bangladesh during their liberation war had been imbued with respect for law, that remains a debatable issue. However, the most successful revolutions-that of England in 1668 and that of America in 1776 were carried

⁴ The Chief Election Commissioner of the December 7, 1970's election, Justice Abdus Sattar in an interview broadcast over 'national hook-up' of Radio Pakistan on 18 December, 1970 evening, depicted the post poll situation, See *The Morning News* (English Daily Newspaper, Dacca), December 19, 1970, p.1

out by men who were deeply imbued with a respect for law. Where there is absent, revolution is apt to lead to either anarchy or dictatorship (Bertrand Russell 1996:84)⁵. In fact Bangladesh's independence, in one sense, is a creation of disobedience to law. In many times law has swept away by serious mass upsurge, when the government of a country stands against people, and the law remains with the government, the opposition (majority) people then has to be anti-government and inimical to law i.e. the traitor. Nevertheless, the *democratic struggle of the people* (of the then East Pakistan) *has been aimed against bastions of power*, as narrated by the then second in command and principal strategist of Awami League, Tajuddin Ahamed in a letter to another leader of (west) Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. According to Tajuddin,

The people have voted to establish a real democracy in which power vests with the people, and the legislature is constituted on the basis of "one man one vote" principle. In such a system a party enjoying a comfortable [,] indeed an absolute [,] majority as the Awami League does [,] with a clear electoral mandate [,] is quite competent to frame the constitution and to form the central government. This can be done with or without any party. The people of Pakistan have rejected the past⁶.

⁵ Bernard Russell, *Authority and the Individual*, with an introduction by Kirk Willis, Routledge, London and New York, 1996,p.84.

⁶ See report in this regard in *The Pakistan Observer*, December 22, 1970,p.1.

Thus the then political leaders, who wanted the independence, had hardly found any established law to obey. Even there were no agreed rules of business among the freedom fighters, not to mention about any constitution of the country. Thus in absence of any *consensus formula and rules of game* the freedom fighters were divided into various factions. Accordingly they (the freedom fighters) had to respond to the internal feud or to fight (internally) against the opposition group(s) of their fellow freedom fighters and externally fight against the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators. The (external) struggle ended with the surrendering of Pakistani Army on December 16, 1971, but the internal feud seems unending.

Bangladesh could not find any institutional base to create a viable political order, rather than a spirit of liberation, scattered know-how of parliamentary democracy without any experience at all, a homogenous political people or population, and an expected to be Political community. All other syndrome of underdevelopment like poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, religious-fanaticism, superstition, low-productivity, was absolutely present. Conflicting groups which 'see each other only as archenemies' were present in abundance in the political arena of newly independent Bangladesh. However, in such a situation, the first president of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman announced the provisional constitutional order on January 1972. The year 1972 started with the good news of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman's imminent release. In spite of a nine-month-long solitary confinement in Pakistani prison Mujib showed an immediate grasp of political realities in Bangladesh. This was revealed in his first press conference on January 8, 1972 after getting released and flown to London. On his arrival at Dhaka on January 10, 1972 after a brief stop over in Delhi, Mujib was accorded a heroic welcome, 'and in the same day in a public speech he laid down the major principles of his regime. He declared that collaborators and prisoners of war crime would be tried, and he proclaimed that the policies of his regime would be based on the principles of secularism, democracy and socialism (Rounaq Jahan,⁷ 1987; Nazrul Islam⁸, 1998). However, the very next day of his return President Sheikh Mujib announced the Provisional Constitutional Order on January 11, 1972. With this step the country opted for parliamentary form of government

⁷ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, January 11, 1972.

⁸ M. Nazrul Islam (1998) op cit.

after abandoning the presidential form inherited from Pakistani regime. The political system outlined in the Provisional Constitutional Order was modelled as per Westminster type. Under the terms of the order, a cabinet was formed. Justice A.M. Sayem was sworn in as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; and there upon Sheikh Mujib resigned as President and formed a new government with Justice Abu Sayed Chowdhury, ex-Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, as President of the country; Mujib himself become having absolute majority in the constituent Assembly. The country was ruled by the Awami League regime for about 11 months virtually *without a constitution in the strict sense* (M. Nazrul Islam 1998). During this period 179 Presidential Orders were issued, most of which were incorporated in the 1972 constitution in the Fourth Schedule of Article 150 entitled "Transitional and Temporary Provisions".

After announcing the Provisional Constitutional Order, and just one-year after the Pakistani army laid down their arms, the Constituent Assembly adopt a Constitution on November 4, 1972. The principal features of the constitution included the following⁹:

(a) Bangladesh were a republic and a parliamentary democracy. Authority rested with the parliament and was to be exercised by the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. The President was to act on the advice of the Prime Minister.

(b) The parliament was unicameral and consisted of 300 members who were directly elected from single territorial constituencies for five-year-term. Fifteen seats were reserved for women.

(c) The country's principal ideology was declared to be secularism, which was considered to embody nationalism, secularism, and democracy.

(d) The judiciary was independent but did not have the power of judicial review.

(e) The constitution established the office of an ombudsman to investigate complaints against the administration. Its primary purpose was to expose corruption or general behaviour deemed detrimental to the health of the nation.

Eventhough, for the first few months Mujib ruled by his charisma, but he also began a deliberate process of building a political structure, and he put all his charisma

⁹ Syed Sirajul Islam, "Polity and politics of Mujib era", in Emajuddin Ahmed (ed), *Society and Politics in Bangladesh*, Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1989, pp 47-59.

behind his effort. From the beginning the Awami League regime put priority on the political process.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the *achievements of the Mujib regime* were also noteworthy, for which, it is argued that the regime *won the confidence of the people*¹¹.

The achievements of the Mujib regime were:

1) Immediately after liberation, the regime was confronted with a gigantic task of rehabilitation of ten million shelterless people. With the help on UNROB and generous assistance of many foreign countries the government was able to rehabilitate these shelterless people. Thus, the regime averted the predicted famine in the country.

2) While Pakistan took 9 years to frame its Constitution the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh adopted the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh within 9 months.

3) Bangladesh were recognised by 131 countries of the world and it established diplomatic relations with 40 countries.

4) In pursuance of the government's declared policy of socialism all banks, insurance companies, industries, factories and foreign trade of jute were nationalised.

5) Planning Commission was set up which formulated the First Five Year Plan within one and half years.

6) The regime restored the communication network by repairing 300 railway bridges, 274 culverts and six airports etc.

7) As the opposition demands, the regime gave general elections to the JS within a year.

Despite the above attempts, the Mujib regime became alienated from the people within a very short span of time. This could firstly be observed specifically in the comparatively low voter turnout of 1973 elections, and the anarchic situation that led to a '*Constitutional Coup*'¹². Apart from four amendments to the newly introduced constitution within three years of time, the country witnessed first parliamentary elections in March 1973, in which the ruling Awami League won an overwhelming majority. But a sharp decline in the participation was remarkable in this election. It could be observed

¹⁰ See Rounaq Jahan, 1987, Op. Cit. p 68

¹¹ Syed Sirajul Islam, 1989, op. cit.

in the low rate of voter turn out. The voter turn out in the 1970's general elections was about 60 percent¹³, whereas in the very first general elections of the independent country in 1973, only 55.61percentage¹⁴ of voters seemed to exercise their voting rights. Thus, compared to pre-independent period, approximately (60-55.61) 4.39% i.e. about 13,70,172 voters out of total 3,52,05,642-voter had hardly interested to participate in the political process. Nevertheless, even though there was no record of falsification in the general elections of 1970, the first general elections of independent Bangladesh on March 7,1973, was also criticised for this reason. The example of a Constituency in Comilla was well cited in this regard. In this constituency the opposition (JSD) candidate Abdur Rashid Engineer won against the Awami League candidate and an influential minister of Mujib cabinet Khondaker Mushtaque Ahamed. But the Awami League candidate was shown won. Thus "the political virginity of Bangladesh was plundered by the founder of the state, Sheikh Mujib¹⁵".

However, after independence much of the enthusiasms of the people have been faded away. The (comparatively) low turnout in 1973 elections, and the fact that the people's hope was being wond up, had sparked anomie among the people. Nevertheless, apparently the people's participation in the political process had affected from the very beginning of the country's independence. Instead of having had the participation in the democratic institution(s), the participation happened to be present through violent means. Because there was no opposition political party in the 1st Jatiya Sangsad (JS)[National Assembly] of the country.

"The political system outlined in the provisional constitutional order was modelled on the parliamentary system of Britain (N. Islam 1998). It is often observed in strict sense that Bangladesh were ruled without constitution for about 11 months. On the other hand

¹²Talukder Maniruzzaman in his article "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and Its Aftermath", (*Asian Survey*, February 1976, Volume XVI, Number 2, pp.119-129) termed the drastic change of Bangladesh's constitution through 4th amendment as the *Constitutional Coup*

¹³ The Chief Election Commissioner of the elections of December 7, 1970, Justice Abdus Sattar in an interview broadcast over the 'national hook-up' of Radio Pakistan on 18 December, 1970 evening, said that there was overall turnout of 60 percent. See report in this regard in *The Morning News*, Dacca, December 19, 1970, p.1.

¹⁴ See *The Dhaka Courier* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka), 7th June 1996, p.17.

¹⁵ This was the observation of the World famous daily newspaper The Guardian of London regarding rigging in 1973's Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, quoted in Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesher Rajnoitik Sangkat O Bishleshan*, (The politics of Bangladesh, Crisis and analysis), Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society, Dhaka, 2001.

within this short period Bangladesh received a constitution, which Pakistan could not attain during its 23 years of partnership with Bangladesh. However, during the period without a full-fledged constitution, 179 presidential orders were issued, most of which were incorporated in the 1972 constitution in the Fourth Schedule of article 150 entitled “Transitional and Temporary provisions”(N. Islam 1998).

The institutions which were prevalent immediate after the independence they are the legislature (composed of 298 MLAs and 160 MNAs of 1970 elections), the bureaucracy (some Bengali CSP officers and EPCS officers), Judiciary (composed of Judges of East Pakistan Provincial High Courts and some other Judge Courts), political parties (mainly the Awami League, other parties were National Awami Party (NAP, Muzaffer, NAP, Bhasani). The existence of Muslim League and Jamaat-e-Islami were not so visible as because of their controversial role during the liberation war. Apart from these institutions, after his returning from Pakistani prison on 10 January, 1972, as the head of government and state, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib created some other institutions like Relief Committees, District Governors and Planning Commission by academics, during his forceful tenure upto August 15, 1975.

Historically, political institutions have emerged out of the interaction among and disagreement among social forces, and the gradual development of procedures and organisational devices for resolving those disagreements (Huntington, 1968:11). This proposition of Huntington could hardly be attributed to the case of Bangladesh. In fact Bangalees and Pakistanis were historically separate nations in terms of language, race, culture, ethnicity etc. According to the long time military ruler of Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan¹⁶,

“East Bengalis, who constitute the bulk of the population, probably belong to the very original Indian races. It would be no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan, they had not known any real freedom of sovereignty. They have been in turn ruled by the caste Hindus, Moghuls, Pathans, or the British. In addition, they have been and still are under considerable Hindu culture and linguistic influence. As such they have all the inhibitions of downtrodden race and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements

¹⁶ See Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not masters, A political autobiography*, Oxford University Branch, Pakistan Branch, Lahore, Karachi, Dacca, 1967.

of the new-born freedom. Their popular complexes, exclusiveness probably emerge from this historical background.”

So, there was no “social forces” in true sense among the inhabitants of East and West Pakistan, much less the “interactions”. Eventhough “disagreement” continued since the inception of Pakistan between the Bangalees and the (west) Pakistanis around social, political, economic, religious and cultural matters. Controversy over language, constitution, form of government had been serious, that abstained the Pakistani leaders from holding any general elections with the fear that could lead dislodgement of their power by the Bangalees. And in fact the last general and first general elections on December 1970 not only dislodged the power of (west) Pakistanis but also created an independent Bangladesh in exchange of armed struggle. The true “interactions” that could be sustained to create political institutions got the platform after the independence.

The independence of Bangladesh was actually a victory of Bengali’s dream for democracy along with economic freedom. Consequently, to them the independent country brought with much hope and aspiration. However, with in a very short span of time the government prepared a constitution. Then to overcoming its legitimate crisis a general election was arranged in 1973. The election at that time was inevitable because the elected representatives were elected for the (then) East Pakistan Legislative Assembly, and Pakistan National Assembly. Thus for an independent country to be conducted a separate elected body was a must. The election of 1973 brought back the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) in to power. The country started with independent and democratic governance. The form of government was parliamentary. The constitutional means was about to start properly. But the war-ravaged country was actually in horns of dilemma.

Bangladesh’s independent existence after winning over the challenges of liberation war was not the end of her prolonged struggle for survival. The successful finishing of one challenge was followed by another. After victory in the liberation war, the country was thrown into other bigger challenges. The independent Bangladesh faced ‘two macro-level challenges, domestically to ensure politico-economic consolidation, and to gain international recognition for its sovereign existence. The problems of domestic

consolidation and development were daunting'.¹⁷ Specifically, the political questions of governmental form, constitution making, and political participation emerged in a war-ravaged economy to challenge the ingenuity of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League supporters.¹⁸ Nevertheless, political institutions, which could effectively face challenges, were in disarray.¹⁹ The out put institutions like civil bureaucracy and the military were ill organised and factionalised, while the in put institutions i.e. political parties were weak.

However, the new government of Bangladesh, apart from building political institutions had to find personnel for all branches of public services. To compound the problem there were segments of pro-Pakistani elements in Bangladesh including supporters of Pakistan with the capacity to generate internal violence and disturbance.²⁰ However, the most effective means of ruling the country was the charisma of Sheikh Mujib. The traditionally neglected economy of Bangladesh was in shambles aggravated by military repression and the liberation war. The West Pakistan authorities had taken away most of the capital and foreign exchange resources of the country, both governmental and private. The tiny industrial activity also 'had come to a complete stand still.' Most of the non-Bengali 'owners had fled to West Pakistan or elsewhere and the labour force had joined' the liberation war. All the aircrafts and ships which serviced Bangladesh had also taken away by the Pakistani authorities. The Pakistani occupation forces had systematically destroyed the ports, bridges, roads, railway lines, telecommunication facilities and all other infrastructure. Even school, college, and university buildings were not escaped from their rage of destruction.

Bangladesh did not get any institutional base to create a viable political order, rather than a democratic spirit of liberation. However, implanting democratic order without experience may be proved failure. As Daniel Wit (1953)²¹ has found in the survey of major lands and their peoples', that to impose democracy in an environment of

¹⁷ J N Dixit, "Liberation and Beyond", serialising extracts in *The Daily Star* (English Daily newspaper, Dhaka), July 7, 1999, p. 5.

¹⁸ Robert Laporte, JR., "Pakistan and Bangladesh", in Robert N. Kearney (ed), *Politics and Modernization in South and Southeast Asia*, Schenkman publishing company, Inc. Cambridge, New York, 1975, pp. 109-151 (141).

¹⁹ See Rounaq Jahan (1987) op cit p.66.

²⁰ J N Dixit, op cit p.5.

unfamiliarity is foolishly to assume that particular institutions can flourish regardless to the soil in which they are planted.' In this regard the author cited the example of Central Europe after World War I and democracy's disintegration in republican Germany and failure to take root in Russia. However, "man may frequently dominate his natural and cultural environment, but he can not ignore it."²²

However, after the independence, the government in exile could not return to Dhaka, instantly on December 16, 1971 when Pakistani soldiers surrendered. They reached Dhaka on December 22, 1971 approximately after a week. Some argued that their delay to arrive in time was caused by fear and indecision.²³ During this time, a section of political leaders were demanding formation of national or coalition government. It may be mentioned here that a good numbers of freedom fighters and other armed persons did not surrender their arms. Nevertheless, most of the freedom fighters, who came from civilian and peasant family surrendered their arms and went back to their works. However, the people who did not surrender the arms had created severe constraints for institutionalising democracy in the country. Of course, most of them even did not believe democratic rule. This section of dissenters formed a separate political party, *Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal JSD* (The national Socialist Party) to implement the programme of scientific socialism. A good numbers of armed persons who fought against the freedom fighters during the liberation war also inclined themselves with this party. Some professional criminals also joined them. On the other hand, there were other leftist parties. The most prominent of these parties were *Purbo Banglar Sarbahara Party* (The Proletariat Party of East Bengal) led by Siraj Sikder. However, the armed groups were heavily engaged in looting, hijacking, dacoity, and other anti-social activities, by which they created an anarchic situation. These groups, throughout the country were known as 16th forces. Thus the law and order situation became frustrated.

The real freedom fighters were enraged for the way of enlisting the name of freedom fighters. Instead of relying on the sector commanders, the local Awami League leaders were entrusted to finalise the listing process. However, this created two

²¹ Daniel Wit, op cit p.20.

²² Ibid

²³ See Muntassir Mamoon and Jayanta Ray, *Bangladesher Civil Samaj Prothistar Sangram* (Struggle for Civil Society in Bangladesh), Aboshar Prokashana Sangstha, Dhaka, 1995, p.59.

consequences, firstly the numbers of freedom fighters were abnormally increased, on the other side the society became divisive. The people from all walks of life were involved with the liberation war. Without the active participation from the society as a whole it might not be possible to conduct the liberation war. But surprisingly the same people after the liberation war discovered that they were no more a part of that sanguinary war. Undoubtedly the majority people were out of this so-called '*listed freedom fighters*'. Thus the post-independent Bangladesh witnessed the situation of gradual alienation of majority people from the political process. The situation was further aggravated by the deteriorating law and order situation coupled with the egoism of the ruling party Awami League.²⁴ All these causes had posed a serious threat to the process of institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh during 1972 to 1975.

During liberation war alongside the Pakistani occupation forces Razakar, Al-Badrs, Al-Shams and some other anti-liberation forces not only did collaborate with the Pakistani Army; they also conducted genocide, rape, loot, and many other anti-social activities. But none of the war criminals and the collaborators was brought to book. Of course the government promptly wanted to take steps. In January 24, 1972 the government declared Bangladesh Collaborator (Special Tribunal) Ordinance, 1972. The duration of punishment under this Ordinance was from two years imprisonment to death sentence. On March 28, 1972, seventy-three tribunals were constituted in the country for trial of the war criminals and the collaborators. But there was a gap within this ordinance. According to Article 7 of this Ordinance, if the Officer-in Charge of the Police Station did not identify any offence as offence that would not be treated as a case for trial under this ordinance. There would be no trial under this tribunal on any allegation from any other person. No case would be entertained in any other court in this regard.

Until October 31, 1973, the number of accused under this ordinance was 37,471. Among them case of 2,848 persons were finalised. And only 762 persons were punished. Sheikh Mujib declared the general Clemency on November 30, 1973. But this clemency

²⁴ Ibid

created a sharp controversy over the issue. The relatives of the victims (martyrs) took the matter seriously. They maintained a sharp reaction:²⁵

None of the front rank Awami League leaders did loss his /her dear ones. As a result they had no pain of losing own people. They could have easily forgiven the killers.

However, the declaration of general clemency had frustrated the people in large. It is argued that this ordinance was very important for the past, present, and future of the country and also for the identity of the nationality. Nevertheless, the declaration had a greater impact upon the latter political development of the country. It seems that the *Clemency* declaration of November 30, 1973 stands against the Bangladesh Collaborator (Special Tribunal) Ordinance, 1972. This also facilitated the *schism between so called "collaborators" and the "patriots"*²⁶. On the other side it fuelled *the contradictions which were inherited from the liberation war itself*.²⁷ Nevertheless, this contradiction affected the 'reconciliation and consolidation process' which the country was badly needed during the post-liberation period. This also helps, among others, to create the controversy over national identity. 'The identity crisis which the independence of Bangladesh exacerbated...' ²⁸, now psychologically questioned to emerge. Because, as Rousseau has noted in his social contract, the very basis of the state is psychological. It exists only when individuals living in close association develop a sense of oneness, a sense of belonging to a common group with similar political hopes and objectives. Without this psychological foundation there can be no strength to any political association, and, like Hobbes' Leviathan, it will disintegrate as soon as its ruling force is defeated by another.²⁹ For Pakistan this lack of oneness led to disintegration and emergence of Bangladesh. But for independent Bangladesh it created politics of hatred, lack of consensus on basic national issues and unnecessary debate over nationality, i.e. Bangladeshi vs. Bengali etc. in the latter period.

On March 17, 1973 in his 54 birthday Mujib told that the month of March made him nostalgic and depressed. Simultaneously the opposition newspaper Daily Ganakantha

²⁵ Panna Kaiser widow of martyr-intellectual Shahidullah Kaiser expressed this symbolic sentiment regarding the matter. Cited in Muntassir Mamoon and Jayanta Kumar Ray, 1995, *Ibid*, p.62.

²⁶ See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics Problems and Issues*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1987, p.66.

²⁷ J N Dixit, July 16, 1999, *op cit*.

²⁸ Robert Laporte, JR., *op cit* p.141.

²⁹ See Daniel Wit, *op cit* p.5.

in its editorial wrote that during March 1971 Mujib was undisputed leader of 7.50 crore Bengali. But in his 54-birth day his previous position was no more present. However, all four amendments had more or less similar criticised impact on the future political development of the country. But the second and the fourth amendments were widely discussed. The second amendment, which was passed on September 22, 1973 also known as the Number 24 law of 1973. This amendment provided a separate article regarding declaration of emergency in the country. However, Article 141 B of this amendment reads as, "while a proclamation of Emergency is in operation, nothing in the article 36(freedom of movement), 37(freedom of assembly), 38(freedom of association), 39(freedom of thought and conscience, and of speech), 40(freedom of profession or occupation), and 42 (right to property), will be suspended. Moreover, Article 141c suspends the enforcement of fundamental rights during emergencies.

The 4th amendment to the constitution was also known as the 2nd Law of 1975, which was passed by the *Jatiya Sangsad JS* (National Assembly) on January 25, 1975. It is argued that when 'polarisation between the centrist Awami League and the radical revolutionaries became more serious by the end of 1974'³⁰, the government of Sheikh Mujib 'gave up the facade of parliamentary government and resorted to the device of one-party dictatorship and totalitarian control'. It may be recalled that the AL during the passing of the 4th amendment played a very opposite and unexpected role, which was contrary to its original pledge. Nevertheless, in November 28, 1970 the then AL leader Sheikh Mujib³¹ while declaring the 1970's election programmes broadcast through Radio and Television said, 'The Awami League was founded under the leadership of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardhy to resist the ruling party's hateful deed to turn the country into a one-party-state.' However, the lights of democracy were thus put out by the 4th amendment and very few resisted the darkness. On 15 August 1975 the darkness was deepened further by the military take-over. During 1975 to 1977, in India the democracy was in question. Nevertheless, the hurdle was wiped out by loosing of ruling party Congress in the elections. Even in the then Soviet Union the rule by the Communist party was gradually ended up with the introduction of glasnost and perestroika by

³⁰ See Talukder Maniruzzaman, 1976, pp.119-129

³¹ Cited by Syed Tosarf Ali, "Grihabandi Rajniti" (Politics Confined in the House), in *The Weekly ROBBAR* (Weekly magazine, Dhaka), Year 7, Number 1, November 10, 1985, pp.8-10 (9)

Gorbachev. This more or less peace transition and reintroduction of democracy could not be witnessed in Bangladesh. Bangladesh won both independence and democracy through violent movement. The legacy of Pakistani military rule alongwith many other causes gave birth to repeat force full military take over in the country. But the fourth amendment of the constitution, according to many made the polity “as absolutely totalitarian because after introducing one party authoritarian system the government neither structurally nor functionally remained democratic when Judiciary was also subordinated to the Executive.”³² The amendment also invoked much criticism for Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. During 1975’s Indira Gandhi of India and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan had also imposed restrictions on the opposition political parties. The famous newsmagazine, *The Economist*³³ in its report, observed that “it was actually the late Sheikh Mujib of Bangladesh who led the way for other South Asian leaders in banning opposition parties”. It may be noted that Mr. Bhutto of Pakistan and Mrs. Indira Gandhi of India had imprisoned their main political opponents at that time. Ironically following the enactment of fourth amendment to the Bangladesh constitution.

However, the 4th amendment provided the presidential form of government. The President was authorised to form one “National Party” and to suspend the activities of all political groups that refused to join the “new” party. The amendment also imposed a ban on the ownership of printing-media by the private persons and allowed only state owned newspapers. Two-widely-circulated Bengali-daily-newspaper, *The Daily Ittefaq* and *The Daily Sangbad*, was nationalised against the opinion of their owners. It may be mentioned that the whole process of passing the 4th amendment needed only 30 minutes. There was no reading and discussion in the JS, apparently due to suspension of the rules of procedure of the House. A Bangladeshi political analyst observed,

“When Awami League came to power in 1971, it rode on the shoulders of democracy and practised autocracy. The enemy of Awami League was considered the enemy of the people. And when dissent reached a high level and state management became very difficult, it imposed one-party rule-BKSAL, the most significant reference of political intolerance³⁴.”

³² Md. Nasrul Hye Nizami, “Transparency in the Civil Society”, *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, July 3, 2001, p.4.

³³ *The Economist*, November 29, 1975, p.63.

³⁴ See Afsan Chowdhury, “Is “Islam is in danger” slogan back in circulation?”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 21, 2002, p.4.

It was during this period that most people were heard to praise AL and its leader. Whether they liked having one-party rule or not that was not clear but except two AL MPs—Barrister Moinul Hussain and General MAG Osmany, the army chief during the liberation war—no one protested. The pro-Soviets supported this most. All army chiefs joined including General Zia. “Everyone joined in the processions. The mind belongs to the puppet master³⁵.”

In spite of above mentioned situation and analysis it was a fact that due to absence of any effective major opposition party in the 1st JS and no leader to counter the stature and charisma of Sheikh Mujib during 1971-1975 the Awami League government was clearly seen as a legitimate regime representing the hopes and aspirations of the Bengali people after the overthrow of the West Pakistani dominance. In fact, there was no alternative to Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujib. Moreover, its secular policy brought support from many non-Muslims, a support the Awami League still enjoys; but the secular policy was disliked by a cross-section of people from various other interest groups. The Awami League enjoyed very substantial support from urban and rural middle class people and from students and intellectuals. However, a disillusioned radical faction of the Student League (Awami League) broke away and formed the Jatio Samaytantrik Dal (JSD)(National Socialist Party), which still is a rather powerful political force in Bangladesh.

The Awami League’s relationship with the bureaucracy was somewhat strained because it interfered in administration more than the bureaucrats liked. But the administrative system was expanded during the Awami League (AL) regime and many middle class supporters of the Awami League joined the ranks of the bureaucracy. Support faded from the Awami League in 1974 because of the patronage it built up in the rural areas and the amount of corruption, black marketing and smuggling, in which it allowed its own ranks to indulge in (as part of the patronage system). The strained relationship it developed with the army eventually became the cause of its downfall.

³⁵ Ibid

VI.2 Second Phase 1975-1990.

Interruption of Democratisation Process

VI.2.a. *Abrupt constitutional change and army coup d'état, 1975 and 1982:*

Bangladesh's independence against the non-constitutional process was also adhered with violence and disobedience to law. This was not good for rehabilitation and reconstruction of a war ravaged country through adherence of law. The long cherished goal of democratisation was interrupted by, among others, abrupt constitutional change. The already unexpected situation that led to abrupt change in constitution had been further aggravated with this unconstitutional way to capture power by the Army officials. And within a decade about two dozens-of-mutiny and coup attempts were made, which were dearly priced by the lives of two heads of state and four cabinet ministers along with several civil and military persons.

The constitutional government, it was a normal expectation; would exercise power with duly constituted organs of government, and these were exercised within the limits fixed by the Constitution. But social life is so complicated that at times some elements tend to surpass normal functioning of formal institutions. Accordingly, to assume overwhelming powers they seem to shade the legitimate powers of the duly constituted organs. Such incidents are not new although they had greatly increased (Gauga 1984:74)³⁶ in post-independent Bangladesh. Certain forces outside the constitutional framework of a country at times come to play a decisive role in the politics of that country. The proper course of these forces would be to use their influence through the channels provided by the constitutional framework itself, for example, through normal interest group, political parties, political platforms and other means of communications, so that constitutional organs fail to respond adequately to social needs. Thus certain extra-constitutional elements come to play an overwhelming role in public affairs. This tendency is likely to obstruct the working of legitimate institutions and to destroy the very apparatus of conflict-resolution in society.

³⁶ O.P.Gauga, *Constitutionalism in a Changing Society*, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.

The factors, which thus unduly interfere with the functioning of constitutional machinery and legitimate political process, may be described as the sources of strain in the constitutional practice. These forces have become too numerous and too powerful in the modern times. However, in a war ravaged country that also with an inexperienced government in Bangladesh during the initial years after independence, these forces were excessively active. Nevertheless, disunity among the people, instability of government and an atmosphere of fear of each other are most conducive to emergence of such situation. The presence of charismatic leader like Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, tend to use the constitutional position and majority of the ruling party AL in legislature and other decision making body for carrying out programmes according to the personal will of the leader. Thus, the 4th amendment of the constitution was passed with in 30 minutes. The 4th amendment changed the course of the constitution abruptly. The press, the judiciary and the academic and other professional classes were subdued. All forms of public protest were banned.

Besides, the constitutional regime failed to overcome economic problems. Nevertheless, there was hardly any harmony among different ethnic or cultural groups of the country. Moreover, the government failed to manage public affairs. In such a situation armed forces of the country over threw the constitutional set-up and established their dictatorship.

It was significant that military intervention in politics or military take-over of government itself is an outcome of strenuous condition of constitutional government. Bertsch, Clark, and Wood have enumerated eleven causes of which any one or a combination of some of them has led to intervention of nation's armed forces into politics.³⁷ But their view, in large, represent the Western point of view. "They have particularly ignored one major cause-the neo-colonial strategy of the developed world for continued exploitation of the developing countries. It is argued that the military coup in Bangladesh in 1975 was "handiwork of intelligence agencies of foreign states, which had their vested interests in these areas (O.P.Gauda 1984:80)." The decade of 1980s was a period of transitory experiments in governments by outside leaders who were not

³⁷ The eleven causes of military intervention delineated by Bertsch, Clark and Wood has been mentioned in the Appendix.

politicians. One of the phenomena of this period was the crisis of the political conviction.

This has been inexorably spread and pervaded in the post-1975 politics of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, this era witnessed the beginning of the politics of shifting loyalties on a mass scale. A huge chunk of Awami Leaguers was lured away by subsequent military and quasi-military regimes to cooperate with them in exchange of handsome largesse. The non-Awami Leaguers accomplices of those regimes that included the political opportunists and obscuranists as well as elements from extreme left and far right were indeed intoxicated with General Zia's brand of 'nationalism', because it, after all, rehabilitated them in national politics. But many of them did not have any compunction in quitting Zia's BNP and paying fealty to Ershad who staged a coup in 1982 to become the country's next ruler.³⁸

Thereby the growth of the political culture was thwarted, pushing the politicians out from the foreground and also from the background. Latter, political patronisation was introduced, creating distortions, which became the low watermarks in the latter period. Amendments to the constitution produced synthetic, cosmetic parliamentary proceedings. The experiments carried out during 1980s have had cumulative and side effects for the democratisation process in the 1990s. After the autumn coups in 1975, General Ziaur Rahman gradually emerged as the strong man in Bangladesh politics. Since 1975, there was an uneasy political stability in Bangladesh. He initiated parlour politics on August 1, 1976. Not only that he also issued Political Party Regulation (PPR). He devised a process to permit the political parties, which was never seen before. A party had to submit its manifestos, constitution for obtaining government's permission. Latter on Zia drove out the existing old political parties. Apart from the previously banned political parties some new political parties were floated under the PPR. The immediate past ruling Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL) leaders applied for registration. But they were not allowed to maintain with the name of BKSAL. Later on they submitted a revised application in the name of Bangladesh Awami League (AL). On 4th November 1976³⁹, the AL was permitted to function as a political party (see Appendix).

³⁸ See Brig (Retd) M Abdul Hafiz, "The Politics of convenience or convictions?", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), September 3, 2001, p.4.

³⁹ See Ghulam Akbar Chowdhury, *Bangladesher Rajniti O Awami Leagueer Bhumika*, (The Politics of Bangladesh and the role of Awami League), Muktadhara, Dhaka, 1998.

By utilising the prevailing internal feud of the political parties Zia had extended his influence in to politics. Critics argued that Zia actually 'followed the path of Ayub Khan'.⁴⁰ However, without having any political background, Zia had successfully reintroduced multi-party system for democracy,⁴¹ which was annulled by a politician who struggled throughout his life for democracy. He had held extensive consultations with all political parties, different agents of public opinion, representatives of civil institutions and others, to elicit opinion to establish his own political platform. Analysts view that Ziaur Rahman "seemed to be completing a successful political experiment of transforming himself from a populist military ruler into a charismatic civilian leader (Khan 1982)⁴². Zia staged-managed a referendum to have himself hoisted into the presidential office. His system attracted considerable odium at home and abroad as they replicated in different ways what the traditional 'life-long' presidents in the third world states did. Given the political mood in the country, one can be too sure of the results, while General Zia had the authority to use whatever system of contesting election he desired-direct, indirect or referendum. However, he had gained some popular acceptance and became less dependent on the Army by changing his Martial Law Regime to a civilian one, controlled by his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Great expectations were also attached to the first years of Ziaur Rahman's regime. There were notable accommodations, but he did not bring about the radical reforms expected by the soldiers who participated in the mutiny and so was constantly under threat from opposing army factions. His populist policies i.e. voluntary labour in the construction of canals and embankments, Swanirvar and the Gram Sarker reform were accepted by the bureaucracy, which gained a more central role in Policy making and implementation, in part as a result of increasing dependence on aid.

Aid dependency and the commencement of denationalisation of industry brought about an alliance with the emerging urban business and entrepreneur community. The BNP little by little built up support base in rural areas but this support evolved increasingly into a patronage of corruption. Corruption, nepotism and patronage aroused

⁴⁰ See Syed Tosarf Ali, op cit

⁴¹ Dr. Nazrul Islam, *Bangladesh : Samaj O Rajnaitik Bhabna*, Mouli Prokashani, Dhaka, 2000, pp.53-56.

⁴² Zillur R. Khan, "Bangladesh in 1981: Change, Stability, and Leadership", in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, February 1982, pp 163-170.

opposition to the regime. The civilianisation process of Zia had been ‘successful in instituting a strong authoritarian presidential system- a development that was comparable with Ayub Khan of Pakistan and President Suharto of Indonesia (Zaman 1984).⁴³ Zia had been successful to bring a ‘stable government’ with the ‘measure of political certainty.’ But ‘by mid-1981, things did not seem to be as promising as they had been at the start.’ And suddenly the political situation changed drastically’ (Zillur R. Khan 1982).⁴⁴ The military did not like the ‘determined policies’ of Ziaur Rahman. On May 30, 1981 he was assassinated. The responsibility of the murder was taken by his one-time close confidant Major General Mohammed Abul Manzoor. Who was also murdered by some sipoy during that time. However, neither the subsequent government of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by Justice Abdus Sattar nor the then Bangladesh Army led by Lieutenant General H. M. Ershad had ‘come up with an explanation for the coup.’ Moreover, the mysterious versions of “the deaths of Zia and Manzoor can be attributed to a much larger conspiracy. This view suggests that opponents of critical change are determined to maintain the status quo, that is, the domination of political life by the combined military bureaucratic and entrepreneurial elite.

VI.2.b. Pseudo Democracy, May 1981-1982:

The inherent weakness of Bangladesh politics for flourishing democracy was furthered during the clever civilianisation process of 1980’s. The 1980’s regime(s) witnessed among others the pseudo-democratic rule. This was particularly manifested after the assassination of General Zia during May 1981-1982. Nevertheless, the then Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar was informed about the assassination of the President Ziaur Rahman after three hours of the occurrence, and he took over the charge of Presidency.⁴⁵ Being failed to gain the support of other parts of the army, General Manzoor surrendered to the civil authority. But he was latter

⁴³ See M.Q. Zaman, “Ziaur Rahman: Leadership Styles and Mobilization Policies”, in Mohammed Mohabbat Khan and John P. Thorp (eds). op cit pp 103-116 (114).

⁴⁴ See Zillur R. Khan, op cit pp 163-170

⁴⁵ This was the assessment of Abul Mal Abdul Muhith cited in *Bangladesh Punargathan O Jatiya Oikya Matya* (Reconstruction of Bangladesh and National Consensus). The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1991, p.21.

killed by the army. Mystery shrouded over the killing of Manzoor that is yet to be resolved.

However, after the assassination of Zia, the then Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar became the acting President. On the other side, during this period, behind the curtain the then army chief had been handling the defacto power. The 80 years old acting President was hardly capable to run the country. All these made it a regime of pseudo-democracy.

Justice Sattar was not ready to take over such an important responsibility and perhaps he was not capable. He started his political carrier in 1955 and it ended immediately. He was elected to the second Legislature in the indirect election as a candidate of Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq. With the nomination from Sher-e-Bangla he also performed the responsibility of minister in the central cabinet.

In 1957 Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq appointed him the Justice of Dhaka High Court. He was yet to seriously engage in the lawyer's profession. But he showed his ability in the criminal law and retired as the Justice of Pakistan Supreme Court in 1969. He got the appointment as Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan with the support of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. However, Sattar conducted the 1970's general elections of the then Pakistan. He also accomplished even the mockery election of 1971. Justice Sayem rehabilitated this retired person into politics and appointed him as his adviser. Later on, he became the Vice-President of Zia regime in June 3, 1977. However, during his tenure as acting president he took two decisions. Firstly, holding presidential election as per constitution, where he himself would not be the candidate. Secondly, he would try to redistribute power equally between president and parliament and thus help reducing pressure on president. But he failed to uphold both the commitments or he was bound to do so. President Zia assembled diverse categories of people in a single platform. People from different sections, creed and groups had taken shelter under the banner of BNP. After the ending of arduous rule of President Zia, the party became afflicted with wrangle. Thus it paved the way for Sattar's appearance as unanimous leader of the party.

The chief of army staff H.M.Ershad also inspired and motivated Sattar to become the President candidate. Ershad also campaigned in favour of Sattar among the MPs

of BNP. But Sattar was lacking the qualities of being a President candidate. Article 50(a) and 66(a) of Bangladesh constitution had barred the vice-president from participating in the election for the post of President. But the sixth amendment to the Bangladesh Constitution on July 10, 1981 made Sattar capable to contest in the presidential election. General Ershad had also a role for passing this amendment; he mounted considerable pressure on the MPs, in this regard.

However, the sixth amendment confirmed the election of Justice Abdus Sattar to the post of country's Presidency. The BNP nominated him and all powers and influences of the acting president were engaged in favour of Justice Sattar. Nevertheless, Sattar was elected in November 15, 1981 presidential election. In this election 55.5% voters cast their votes. Justice Sattar received 65.8% of total casting votes. The nearest rival AL Presidential Candidate Dr. Kamal Hossain received 26.3% of casting votes. The Army Chief Ershad played an important role in this election. Fearing the electoral strength of the AL once he advised to suspend the election. During this time he claimed constitutional right of the military and wanted a due share to rule the country. In a discussion with the editors of national dailies and news-agencies in his official residence on November 28, 1981 the then chief of staff of Bangladesh Army Ershad claimed that the army should have had a role, like others, for construction of the country and the economy. He said that Bangladesh army was a part and parcel of the people of Bangladesh, thus like the people they were also habituated to think about many occurrences that held around them. He urged everybody to find out a constitutional way in this regard.⁴⁶ There were sharp reactions against the sentiment of Lt. Gen. Ershad. The then AL General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury said on 3 December 1981 that the army should be kept above all controversies and nepotism. A group of Supreme Court Lawyers on December 2 1981 asked not to use the patriotic army for self-interest of any person. However, the basis of this peculiar demand was participation of the army in the liberation war of the country. Justice Sattar immediately responded in an intractable manner by arguing that, "the Army has a role to protect the sovereignty of the country and I do not think

⁴⁶Sec Weekly *ROBBAR* (Bengali Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) 6 December 1981, p.61.

any other role is possible.”⁴⁷ After the election he re-constituted the cabinet. To assuage the feelings of the military, Sattar formed a National Security Council (NSC), as the highest policy making body on January 3, 1982. The members of the NSC were the President, Vice-President, and the ministers for finance, foreign affairs, industry, home affairs and three chiefs of military services. The President described the NSC as the highest policy making body in the country and with it he anticipated sapping the thunder of General Ershad.

But the army Chief was unimpressed by the manoeuvre and immediately declared his opposition. Ershad argued that there was no need to clutter the Council with unnecessary personalities, in particular, civilian ministers from the President’s cabinet. General Ershad insisted the NSC should be limited to the President and the services’ Chiefs. General Ershad distanced himself from this NSC. The BNP was on record opposing Ershad’s notion of a ‘super cabinet’; it also wished to confine the NSC to advisory functions and emphasised the superior role of the civilian President and a duly accountable parliament (Lawrence Ziring 1992:152-153)⁴⁸. President Sattar remained in power only for ten months, including three months after the presidential election. The political environment under the presidency of Justice Abdus Sattar was hardly congenial for manifestation of democratic forces in the country.⁴⁹ Actually, soon after the assassination of General Zia, the real power of the country was laid with the then army chief General Ershad. However, during his shortest stay in the office Justice Sattar constituted the cabinet for two times and formed the Security Council. President Sattar constituted a jumbo cabinet with 42 members. The immediate past cabinet had 43 members. Ten members of the old cabinet were excluded from the new one. On the other side, nine new members were included. Whereas, before election Sattar said that the size of the cabinet would be short. It may be mentioned that the first cabinet of independent Bangladesh was constituted with 21 members, led by Sheikh Mujib. Analysts viewed the steps of

⁴⁷ D. Sen, “Bangla Army Chief Insists on Role in Government”, *Hindustan Times*, November 22, 1981, cited by Md. Ataur Rahaman, “Bangladesh in 1982 Beginnings of the Second Decade” in *Asian Survey*, Volume XXIII, No. 2, February, 1983, pp.149-157 (150).

⁴⁸ Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad An Interpretative Study*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1992, p152.

⁴⁹ See Weekly *ROBBAR* op. cit. p 7.

Sattar, as compromising so that the opposition group could not take any chance generated from the internal feud of the BNP. The internal feud of the BNP was termed as a struggle over distribution of powers and privileges⁵⁰. However, it was also observed that most of the die-hard followers of Zia were not included in the cabinet.⁵¹ This situation also inspired a considerable portion of the BNP persons to bring the widow of General Zia, Begum Khaleda Zia into politics. Some even took this initiative immediate after the killing of Zia. But at that time Begum Zia was not agreed to become a symbol of emotional politics. A close quarter of the BNP informed that Begum Zia did not want to make her husband controversial by involving herself with in the brawling, and factionalism of the BNP.⁵² However, in a latter period Begum Zia got involved with active politics. But that is a separate episode to deal in appropriate section.

Justice Sattar made many reverse comments against many ministers of Zia and his own cabinet. Some corruption cases were also filed against some ministers. During his tenure as acting president Justice Sattar had shown special courageous role to keep law and order situation under control. But after being elected as full-fledged president this role was not visible. Rather during the latter period his main duty was to face the party wrangle and fluttering the army chief. He had to engage himself with different demands of General Ershad. He kept himself busy with different works of Ershad like driving away the competitors or opponents of Ershad from the army or even from the country, change the cabinet or top level officers, take steps against the ministers etc. Many politicians and bureaucrats, on the other hand, poured in to the chamber of Ershad to hatch conspiracy for creating political and administrative unrest in the country. It was observed that the then home minister (latter on Deputy Prime Minister of Ershad) filled corruption cases against the ministers amid signal from Ershad.

⁵⁰ The Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Daily Ittefaq (Bangla Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), Barrister Moynul Hossain made this forecast before two days of formation of the cabinet by Sattar, cited by Sheikh Mohiuddin, "Ghatanar Bibarane Prokash" (Disclosure of the events as described) in the *Robbar* (Bengali weekly, Dhaka), 6 December 1981. pp. 9-11.

⁵¹ See Sheikh Mohiuddin, *Ibid*.

⁵² *Ibid*

The inner brawling of BNP puzzled president Sattar. The whimsical acts of deceased President Zia had sown the seeds of economic and administrative crisis. The weak leadership of Justice Sattar failed to solve the problems.⁵³ In fact he had no scope to underscore the downward economic trend. There was serious deterioration of law and order situation in the country. Patronisation of wrong elements into politics got serious turn during this time. A heinous killer was arrested from the government residence of a minister. The government of Justice Sattar miserably failed to control food problem, economic downsliding and political unrest. General Ershad was also identified as a partner of this failure. In fact this was also one of the reasons of General Ershad that led him to take up the direct responsibility instead of becoming the partner of discredit. Sattar tried to resist Ershad's encroachments on the President's authority but he lacked the leverage to effectively deal with the problem.⁵⁴

Being vexed by different unreasonable demands and displeased with the behaviour and acts of General Ershad, President Justice Sattar decided to appoint a new army chief. But it was too late. Too much indulgence of Justice Sattar helped Ershad to strengthen his position. At that time Ershad's leadership in the army was consolidated and unchallenged, his opponents were either driven away or become powerless. The army had been enjoying different privileges and the role of Ershad to realise these privileges was highly admired in the army. 'The more Sattar resisted the General, the more his authority came under challenge. President Sattar could not hope to win this tug of war' (Lawrence Ziring 1992:152). President Justice Sattar had to resign under the pressure from the existing army chief, before any notification from the president to undo General Ershad. Owing the failure and inadequacy, President Justice Sattar gave up the power on March 24, 1982. This act of the President paved the way for declaring martial law by General Ershad amid totally unconstitutional way. The first martial law was declared on August 20, 1975, though the power was captured on August 15, 1975. The second one was in November 8, 1975 after seizure of state power by General Zia on November 7, 1975. The third martial law was announced on November 29, 1976 when General Zia took over the martial law

⁵³ See Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, *op cit*

⁵⁴ Lawrence Ziring, *op cit*.

administration from crested Sayem. And General H. M. Ershad declared the fourth martial law on March 24, 1982.

VI.2.c. Reign of Autocracy, March 1982-December 1990:

In the early hours of March 24, 1982, armed forces led by Ershad took over the government and placed the country under Martial law. The Martial Law regime under General Hussain Mohammed Ershad was not very different from the previous military regime. But unlike Zia, Ershad regime was termed as autocratic regime. After twenty-one years of this bloodless coup and after 1990's democratic movement, in 29 January, 2001 the 7th elected parliament of the country in the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Defence attempted to probe the activities of General Ershad before his takeover of state power in 1982. The sub-committee was constituted to look into the pre-takeover activities of Ershad between May 30, 1981 and March 23, 1982, when he was the Chief of Army.⁵⁵

The event of declaration of his martial law, steps to ban all the democratic institutions, including suspension of constitution made him a real autocrat. One of the leading artists of the country had termed Ershad as *Bishaw Behaya*⁵⁶ (The great shameless) in latter period. Ershad himself assumed the responsibilities of the Chief Martial Administrator and appointed Navy Chief Rear Admiral Mahbub Ali Khan and Air force Chief Air Vice-Martial as Deputy Martial Law Administrators. Ershad had divided the whole Bangladesh into five Martial Zones. At the same time he had appointed five zonal martial law administrators. Later on he appointed 18 sub-zonal and 14 District Martial Law Administrators on April 1, 1982. Mentionably, before assuming power on March 24, 1982 Ershad had sacked the then elected President Sattar with his Council of Ministers. He had dissolved the Parliament and suspended the Constitution. Ershad had banned processions, strikes, public meetings and all other political activities. However, the ban was not effective on religious gatherings. The outgoing President Justice Sattar in a-three-minute address in the television had admitted his failure as

⁵⁵ See report in this regard in *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, January 31, 2001, p.1.

⁵⁶ Artist Qamrul Hasan had portrayed a picture of Ershad captioned as *Viswa Behaya*.

elected President. Sattar also justified the proclamation of Martial Law. On the other hand, Lt. Gen. Ershad said in a 35-minute address to the nation that the people had lost confidence in the outgoing government for failing to live up to the expectations of the masses and its own electoral promises.⁵⁷ General Ershad had said that the Army had taken over the government to save the country from an 'economic disaster' and ruination'-as a result of 'wrong policies' pursued by the former regime. Immediately after the declaration of Martial Law, curfew had been imposed in the metropolitan city of Dhaka from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Ershad had also declared that the Martial Law proclamations, Martial Law regulations, Orders and instructions made by the Chief Martial Law Administrator had been declared as unchallengeable in the Supreme Law of the country during their continuance. Any other law inconsistent with them had been declared as void to the extent of their inconsistency. He had also said that the army had no option but to step into power of their country. He, however, promised to hold election in the country the sooner the atmosphere was congenial for this.

It may be mentioned in one count or the other that the martial law of Ershad in 1982 was harsher than the martial law of Ayub Khan in 1958. Under the Martial Law of 1958 there was scope to govern the country as nearly as may be in accordance with the 'late constitution'. Thus the Martial Law of 1958 had abrogated the then constitution whereas under the Martial Law of 1982 the constitution had merely been suspended.⁵⁸ Ershad upheld the existence of political parties amidst the process of martial law and a ban on the political activities. Within a very short period of his assuming power.

Ershad felt the need of dialogue with the political parties. Like Ziaur Rahman he did not formulate any regulations for the political parties. But he opined to reduce the number of political parties. With a view to facilitate the political parties to respond on his proposed dialogue Ershad allowed 'parlour politics' for them on April 1, 1983. The 'parlour politics' has no meaning in the dictionary of political science.

⁵⁷ See *The New Nation* (English Daily newspaper, Dhaka), March 25, 1982, p. 1, 8.

⁵⁸ It is pertinent to recall that on October 10, 1958, two days after the Martial Law was promulgated in the then Pakistan, President made the Law (continuance in Force) Order, 1958, which under Article 2(1) said: "Notwithstanding the abrogation of the constitution of the 23rd March 1956 hereinafter referred to as the late constitution, by the Proclamation and subject to any Order of the President or Regulation made by the Chief Administrator of Martial Law, the Republic, to be known henceforward as Pakistan, shall be governed as nearly as may be in accordance with the late constitution." See *The New Nation*, Dacca, April 1, 1982, p.3.

President Yahya Khan, during Pakistani period, at first, allowed the political parties to practice politics in a limited way. After the political change of 1975 this path was seen to be followed. Zia followed it to consolidate his power after November 7, 1975. However, Ershad also followed the path of his predecessor Martial Law Administrator General Zia. Ershad understood, "Politics is unavoidable to run the state". Thus, to test people's confidence upon him, like many other army rulers, Ershad arranged *referendum* on March 21, 1985. Referendum was considered necessary to acquire people's approval for ensuring that the stability and reforms that the regime had introduced would continue. But in fact this referendum was fictitious and rigged.

"Military dictators have a strange fixation for legitimacy. They arrange fictitious election or hold rigged referendum to don the clothes of a democrat. It is popular support they seek and it is the lack of that support which makes them go for over the make-believe exercises of acceptability."⁵⁹

However Ershad had also declared the programme of election for four times.⁶⁰ As usual, the political parties had rejected his purposeful declaration. Being failed to attract the opposition political parties and fronts to the election, Ershad once again imposed martial law restrictions on the political parties in March 1, 1985.⁶¹ Both the referendum and Upazilla elections were held amidst hard-fast rules of martial law. Ershad involved himself with politics and established a political party and political front. Notwithstanding, this process had been progressing amidst confined parlour politics. After crossing much upward and downward movement Ershad again had set in motion the parlour politics to consolidate his position. This time, 'he allowed' the "parlour politics" on 1 October 1985.⁶² It was also argued that the government of Ershad and the political parties were benefited with this step. But the people had hardly any interest in this regard. For pro-people politics, distribution of privileges and opportunities among the political parties were not so important. The tendency of politics being managed without people had been going on since Pakistani period.

⁵⁹ Kuldip Nayar, "Hollow rhetoric", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), June 2, 2002, p.4.

⁶⁰ See *Weekly Bichitra*, (Bengali Weekly magazine, Dhaka), Year 13, No. 40, March 15, 1985, p.5, 8.

⁶¹ See *The Weekly ROBBAR*, (Bengali Weekly magazine, Dhaka) Year 7, NO 6, November 10, 1985, pp 8-10.

Neither the country nor the nation was benefited with the process. The power was repeatedly removed from the people with the peculiar efficacy of such arranged game. On the other hand, eventhough the political leaders were advocating for open politics but they hardly had any headache to ensure people's rights.⁶³

During Ershad regime, the privatisation process had been carried further, a new rich class of businessmen and entrepreneurs had been firmly established in urban and rural areas. The salaried middle class had suffered under inflation and the political opposition had carried out quite successful strikes and hartals (general work stoppages) in protest against the Martial Law regime. The administrative decentralisation had removed formal politics further from the villages and brought about a more paternalistic system with a strong Upazilla chairman, a system that was also quite conducive to patronage.

The Army, the bureaucracy and the rich people from the urban areas seemed to support Ershad regime. However, *either the students or intellectuals, or the urban and rural middle class and the poor* had hardly any support for Ershad. Opposition politics had been proceeding, but seemed to lack of direction-the main unifying factor was the demand for complete abolishment of the Martial Law regime. At the time Parliamentary elections were held, apparently with a great deal of fraudulent polling practice. The Awami League performed well in the elections, but President Ershad's party won the majority of the seats in Parliament. The BNP and other political parties boycotted the parliamentary general elections of May 7, 1986. In this fraudulent election about 60.28% voters *showed* as exercised their voting rights. In which Ershad's Jatiya Party (JP) *shown* received 42.34% of casting votes, AL got 26.16%, and the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (JIB) got 4.6 percentage of votes. Given the foul nature of 1986 elections, no other party participated in the parliamentary general election of March 8, 1988. To save his *prestige*, Ershad floated some people to form combined opposition (COP) so that they participate in the election. Thus in this election 54.93% voter turn out was shown. Ershad's JP got 68.44% and COP got 12.63% of casting votes. But he failed to gain any reliability, in home and abroad, with these fraudulent elections

⁶² See *Ibid*

⁶³ *Ibid*

Ershad had followed Ziaur Rahman's model of building his own party but had been less successful. This was partly explained by the fact that the forces he could rally were those already organised by Ziaur Rahman in BNP, latter on under the leadership of Zia's widow Begum Khaleda Zia. BNP declined to participate in the parliamentary elections in 1986 and 1988.

In a society like Bangladesh with an unstable political system, with relatively weak links between the national and the rural areas and with aid-dependency as dominating factors, patronage becomes all-pervasive. A patron must be able to provide certain benefits to his clients, if the clients were to support him. In the rural areas members of the Union and Upazilla Parishads were expected to deliver benefits to their electorates in order to be reelected, but as they were not paid much for their services it was accepted that they were allowed to obtain for themselves and the benefits they must bring to their communities was a delicate one. Thus a vicious patron based hence person centric societal system was encouraged by the Ershad regime. This also hindered the development of any institutional base that could help flourishing democracy in the post-autocratic period.

On the other hand, as the bureaucrats by and large remain under changing regimes, they had become very powerful partners in the patronage system. The bureaucrats needed the support of the rural elite in order to carry out their duties and the elites needed the bureaucrats in order to obtain benefits for their communities. The bureaucrats as the major mediating agents between the central administration and funds and the local communities, had to take care to distribute favours among different local leaders in order to obtain their collaboration and support. At the same time competition between local leaders of different areas was often very fierce since they had to build up and preserve their power base. It was generally acknowledged that government officers were corrupted; those that resist this were not respected and were regarded as rather ridiculous. Unfortunately corruption in Bangladesh seemed more to be a way of dividing the spoils than of achieving targets and getting work properly done. Very often patronage and corruption made it expensive, inefficient and time delaying to carry out the development projects and programmes directed by government servants as change agents.

Complaints about the lack of industrial entrepreneurs in Bangladesh were frequently heard. The main reason was to be found in the patronage system and aid-dependency. Key entrepreneurs in Bangladesh could make money from obtaining import licenses, indenting imported goods for the donors or getting tenders for construction work, than from other economic activities with their attendant risks.

However, the patronage system was characteristic of a regime which had weak political support and legitimacy. During Ershad regime there were extensive use of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of opposition politicians. The police had been invested with wide powers through the Special Powers Act of 1974. In 1985, several hundred politicians, students, and party and trade union activists were arrested for protesting against martial law. Pursuant to the Act, detainees may be held indefinitely without trial. However, political prisoners were not alone in being held for long periods without trial. Lack of resources in the judicial system as well as certain confusion as to demarcations between the military courts had resulted in some 1000,000 persons being held in custody⁶⁴.

The violations of the rights of the indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts had appeared to be persistently gross, extensive and systematic. The authorities tried to prevent information about this inaccessible area from reaching the outside world. Nevertheless, mutually independent reports described abuses committed by numerous government forces and by the Bengali immigrants. In some instances the indigenous people had been subjected to veritable massacres. Extremist sections of the indigenous people had organised guerrilla forces and had attacked soldiers, representatives of local authorities and settlers.

Students played an important role in politics, as the majority of them were the sons of the better-off peasantry and rural rich. They form a major interface between national politics and villages. All political parties were keenly aware of this fact, and they all attached importance to the student organisations.

Politics were also frequently brought out in the open at the universities, and so much so, that in time of real crisis they were frequently closed. This, however, was a

⁶⁴ See *BANGLADESH Country Study* and Norwegian Aid Review 1986, The Chr. Michelsen Institute, Department of Social Science and Development DERP-Development Research and Action Programme, Bergen-Norway, pp.73-76

double-edged weapon, it dispersed the student organisations and fronts, but it brought the political issues out in the rural areas and gave the students the opportunity to devote themselves to full-time politics. Thus the situation since 1987 had become more volatile than before.

VI.3 Third Phase

Quest for Democracy, 1987-1990:

Soon after Ershad's ascendancy to power in 1982 the opposition political parties started anti-autocratic movement. But the movement did not get the momentum. 'The opposition understood that it would require ceaseless efforts over an extended period to bring him down. Therefore, although there was little to show for their daily assaults on Ershad's authority, the opposition was convinced, that their cumulative effort would one day prove effective.'⁶⁵In course of time, through the passage of movement two inexperienced women, Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia emerged as the leaders of the country. Initially there were fifteen-party alliance led by Awami League, Seven-Party alliance led by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and alliance of five left parties. On the other hand, Ershad also tried to form his own political party named JANADAL (People's Party). And the opposition alliances were agreed to check further enlargement of JANADAL's appearance. But the 22-party failed to design the movement on the basis of consensus.⁶⁶This failure of the opposition benefitted the JANADAL. In June 1985 JANADAL along with the factions of Muslim League, Ganatantrik Dal, United People's Party (UPP) and Labour Party formed a front, Jatiya Front (National Front). In January 1, 1986 this Jatiya Front turned into Jatiya Party (National Party). In a press conference on the date this new party was born in the ovum of power. But immediately after its birth internal party cleavages erupted around the organising structure and the portfolio of the party. However, Ershad had been successful to suppress the anti-autocratic movement during its initial stage. To sustain in power Ershad successfully used the principle of

⁶⁵ Lawrence Ziring, op cit

⁶⁶ See *Weekly Bichitra* (Bengali Weekly Magazine, Dhaka), Year13, Issue8, July13, 1984, p.6

Kautilaya and Machiavelli along with practicing divide and rule, cheating, hypocrisy and death.⁶⁷ During October 1987 when the anti-autocratic movement had reached to an important stage, these alliances declared a joint programme for 'Dhaka Abarodh' (Lay Siege of Dhaka). Ershad could have fallen with this programme. But the government faced this volatile situation; thus the opposition programme went into vein. This was also caused by Ershad's dexterous exercise and weakness of the opposition front. Since then the opposition parties vowed to strengthen their effort to depose the dictatorial rule of Ershad. But before the end of 1990 it did not get any success. It may be mentioned that in the mean time to legitimise his regime Ershad held elections for Union Parishad in 1983-84, Upazilla election in 1985, Parliamentary and presidential elections in 1986. Thus ultimately 'Ershad had reluctantly removed his uniform for civilian dress in 1986.'⁶⁸

During the first half of 1987 the opposition jostled against the autocratic government of Ershad. But the struggle intensified during the second half of the year 1987. The opposition movement was centred on the urban areas. The capital city of Dhaka was the main place, besides many other cities and towns 'were caught up in the violent orgy'. Eventhough the Ershad-government did not re-impose martial law, however the police was assisted by the army persons 'to repel the dissidents and break the backbone' of opposition movement. The street-conflicts became a regular scenario.

The movement for democracy drew the two-rival-leader Hasina and Khaleda nearer to 'another would be alliance'. Awami League's participation in the 1986 election was avoided by the BNP for criticism. The need for a concerted and combined effort was acknowledged by the two-leader. The use of hartal (general strike) became rampant. The opposition alliances called for a 'siege of Dhaka'. They mobilized their followers for a determined and protracted campaign. It is argued that the opposition programme of shutting down the country was aimed at mobilizing the people in the movement to oust Ershad.

⁶⁷ A.K.M. Shahidullah, "Bangladesh Sangsadiya Nirbachan-1991", (The Parliamentary election in Bangladesh 1991) in Professor Ermajuddin Ahmed (Ed), *Bangladeshe Sangsadiya Ganatantra Prasangeek Chinta-Bhabna* A collection of Articles, Karim Book Corporation, 1992, pp 13-43.

⁶⁸ Lawrence Ziring (1992) op cit p.201.

The opposition alliances had fixed November 10, 1987 as the ultimate date to drive out Ershad from power. To foil the opposition programme the government had imposed restrictions on gatherings by more than five persons. But the opposition alliances of political parties had seriously violated the government order. Thus violence erupted in the capital city of Dhaka and in some other major cities — Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, Mymensingh, and Rajshahi. The protestors disrupted road and rail communication, and set fire to government buildings. It was observed that eventhough the two-leader was maintaining distance between them, however, the workers of the two-party, BNP and AL were coming closer. On November 7, 1987 many supporters and workers of AL participated in the BNP rally, with their party banner. In the capital city, it was a rare scene. In November 9, 1987 the two-leader met in the Banani residence of Khaleda Zia's elder sister, Begum Khurshid Jahan Haque. Before the meeting they had inertia and cold mindedness but after one-hour meeting both of them were seen in a jubilant mood and in shrieks of laughter. In a joint statement Khaleda and Hasina declared 'we make a success unitedly' of the seizure programme. They expressed determination to make a success of the seizure programme of November 10, 1987 at any cost and called upon the people to carry out the struggle until the fall of the government. The objectives of the struggle were to compel Ershad to relinquish and restoration of democracy in line with the ideals of liberation war.

They termed government's actions –imposition of section 144, hinder the transport system, arrest, harassment and oppressive steps on the opposition activists as totally illegal. The opposition alliances, during this time, had broken 144. To break the section 144 Sheikh Hasina led a procession from the New Market area of Dhaka, in the morning of November 9, 1987. In the afternoon of the same day Begum Khaleda Zia started a procession from central Shaheed Minar. But police stopped the procession in front of Karzon Hall. Some leaders and workers of the BNP were injured in the hand of the police. A shell of tear-gas hited the ankle of Begum Zia. Police also arrested 38 leaders and workers of AL from its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, Dhaka.

On November 8, 1987, some leading intellectuals in a joint statement had favoured the opposition programme. They urged for holding of general elections under a NPCTG, which might be acceptable to the opposition alliances engaged in

the movement. They also called upon the people from all walks of life to build up a broad-based unity and integrity. The statement said,

“The movement, jointly initiated by top two-leader of two alliances— Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia to bring down the illegal government and restore people’s lost sovereignty, is an important event in the country. The people aspired that the three alliances including all progressive and democratic forces of the country would be more consolidated, far lasting and turn into a meaningful unity. The statement also feels that the expected *democratic process* of the country has been emanated from the sense of *independence*. Thus it strongly condemn government’s repressive measures at the time of people’s united movement against the direct military rule or autocracy in guise of civilian rule. The signatories call upon the government to honour people’s mandate, shunning the path of terrorism and bloodshed.”⁶⁹

Nonetheless, the movement which was initiated on November 1987, halted at the last moment. As a result the unity and strength, of the parties of movement, was hampered. The popular demand of the parties in movement was to resign from the parliament. Before the movement many parties and leaders were resigned. But AL for the last moment hugged the parliament. Before the movement even the elderly AL leader Abdul Mannan was bound to agree that his party would come out from parliament, but before that it would be discussed with the party chairperson. Then Sk. Hasina was under house arrest. Khaleda Zia was also under house arrest. But Hasina did not give consent for resignation. AL also did not resign from the parliament. Increasing discontent, movement and on the face of resignation from the parliament by all political parties except the AL, the government dissolved the parliament on 27 November 1987. To continue the constitutional process government also declared to hold general elections in due course. AL designated the declaration of dissolving the parliament as ‘conspiracy’. AL was elected as the main opposition political party in the elected parliament of 1986. In that election the BNP, five party alliance, and BKSAL did not participate. Sk. Hasina as the leader of the opposition parties in that parliament, got the government facilities and

⁶⁹ The signatories of the statement were the notable intellectuals of the country. They were Poet Begum Sufia Kamal, Justice Kamaluddin Hossain, Justice Debesh Bhattacharjee, Professor A.R Mallick, Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid, Professor Neelima Ibrahim, Barrister Moinul Hossain, Artist Qamrul Hasan, Professor Zillur Rahaman Siddique, Poet Shamsur Rahaman, Fayez Ahamed, Professor Anisuzzaman, Professor Mozaffar Ahamed, Dr. Fasiuddin Mahatab, Professor Zahurul Haque, ABMG Kibria, Khondaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Barrister Rafiqul Haque, Dr. Abdul Kashem, Professor

privileges. At one stage of the movement on November 1987, when the call to get out from the parliament was coming, AL started to keep itself aloof from the movement. On the face of boycotting by the main opposition parties the government, for the sake of keep continuation of the constitutional process held the general elections, on 3 March 1988. The opposition parties threatened to resist the elections at any cost. But that could not be done. The elected members of the 3rd March election seated in the parliament.

The movement of 1987 was held on one point. Later on AL presented the conditions with the 7 points. These 7 points were basically the programmes of AL. Thus the statement of the AL was to accept its programme by the opposition parties for the sake of the movement.

Not only all of the opposition parties, but also within the eight party alliances there was resentment on the attitude and statements of the AL. On May 1988 there was an extended meeting of the central committee. In that meeting there was a strong wrathful speech against one of the allies of the eight-party-alliance, CPB. The AL leaders said that these communists were confusing them. The CPB could not fully accept the 7 points of AL for attack on it by the Awami Leaguer's. CPB's sentiment was to reinstate unity for the sake of movement. So for the sake of unity the need was minimum acceptable programme for all.

The devastating flood of August-September 1988 brought an issue of movement for the opposition parties. But the opposition parties could not utilise the chance to go to the people unitedly.

Since March 1988 the political terrace had been in stalemate, however the national politics has been overcoming this hurdle during August 1988. Despite presence of brawl, conflict, and distrust-suspicion-crisis, the politics has got a momentum. The terrace of politics became activated; the party offices became resonant.

The influence of seasonal cycle in the life of Bangladeshi people is evident. The political activities are an important part of social life; the influence of season is apparent in this field also. During the autumn the political temperament started increasing, during winter it reaches to the apex, during the hot of summer it became declining and during

the rainy season it again becomes motionless. But this general theory is not always applicable. The natural theory is not a determining factor in politics. Rather the humanitarian factors are the determining.

The ruling party wanted to remove the distance with the opposition parties. The role of opposition parties, to initiate a sound dynamic constitutional political process, cannot be overemphasized.

During this time, the ninth Amendment to the Constitution was passed in the parliament on July 1989 and it got the consent of the president in due course. According to the amendment any president can only get elected for two times. It means that any president could not be in power for more than ten years. Some observers suggested that the on going mobility in the opposition parties had a positive relation with this amendment. It also helped removing the fear of concentrating power in the hand of one person. Besides, instead of selected by the president, the vice-president would be elected directly. This change has made one thing clear that government wanted to remove the stalemate in the opposition political camp. It means the government did not want deadlock in the opposition politics.

The efficient government and active opposition political party are a must for stable statecraft. Moreover mutual respect, responsibility and communication with each other was also needed. It was presumed that the ninth amendment and administrative change was done to remove mistrust of the opposition parties on the government. However, this step did not come to any favourable understanding between the Ershad government and the opposition political parties. The Opposition parties were firmly resolved on one point— 'end of authoritarian rule and beginning of democracy'.

VII.3.a. End of authoritarianism,

Beginning of democratic transition:

The government was the determining factor in politics. The whole politics was being controlled around the programme and decision of the government. This matter has become more clearly from the government's remark to hold interim election. Undoubtedly, it was true that if the declaration of interim election were made, there would be a huge uproar among the opposition camp.

The possibility of holding interim election was being heard since 1989. Of course, the sentiment of the opposition parties has changed substantially from that of the previous one-year. The observers suggested the main opposition parties wanted election, at least they were ready to go for election. In the mean time some small opposition parties had raised the demand for election. The government had been trying to make consensus on some fundamental issues. The prime minister Kazi Jafar said that in future there would be no election like the elections of 1986 and 1988, with out the participation of major parties. It could be understood from this statement that government wanted to reach in an understanding with the opposition parties. The Prime Minister also mentioned for holding dialogue to reach an understanding.

The government's intention to get surety of opposition parties' participation in the general elections had been apparent from the speech of President Ershad. The neutrality in the election was not ascertained, on basis of this objection of the opposition parties President Ershad had declared some specific steps to be taken for ascertaining surety of neutrality in the elections. President Ershad declared that the Election Commission would be reconstructed. If necessary the opposition parties may be included in the commission. He further stated that to observe the election, if necessary twenty thousand foreign observers could be brought.

During this time the *issue of caretaker government* had been stemming up within the demands of the opposition parties. On August 1989, separately all opposition political parties had recognised their inability to fix either any target of the movement or draw any picture of the caretaker government. Thus compared to earlier times the opposition parties had seldom mentioning caretaker issue while raising their demand to ousting the autocratic government of Ershad. In fact during this time the demand became rare.

However, the initiative to carry on front-based movement was taken. The existence of the BNP led seven- party alliance, the AL led eight-party alliance, and the left oriented five-party alliance was already there. Besides, there was an initiative to form sixteen-party alliance under the Muslim League, six-party alliance under the leadership of Jatio Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA). Moreover, the 22-student-organisation had been organised or polarised to initiate the movement.

Compared to 1989 the movement became matured enough in the later part of 1990. In the wake of anti-autocratic movement, the three opposition alliances made a joint declaration on November 19, 1990. With this declaration the demand of the opposition parties became clear. The movement became more determined. The forces of the movement seemed to be united on their common goal. It seemed that the call of the political parties and civil society had ultimately combined in a joint declaration. However, the declaration was as follows;

- I. Ershad and his regime must resign immediately. To uphold the continuity of constitution according to the rules of Article 51(a) 3 and 55 (a) 1 of the constitution, Ershad would hand over power to a non-party neutral President acceptable to the parties of the alliances.
- II. An interim government led by the President will arrange free, fair and neutral elections for the sovereign Parliament within three months after annulment of the existing parliament. The interim government will transfer power to the elected parliament.
- III. To ensure holding free, fair and neutral elections for the sovereign parliament this interim caretaker government will take following steps:
 - (a) Necessary legal measure and appropriate institutional and practical steps,
 - (b) Reorganise the election commission with neutral persons acceptable to all,
 - (c) Election Commission would enjoy absolute authority to ensure the holding of election,
 - (d) Keep election out of any intimidation,
 - (e) Maintain peaceful environment in the polling centre. For ensuring the exercise of voting rights of the voters all sorts of obstructions must be controlled with hard fist.,
 - (f) The polling agents of the candidates must be provided with the information regarding number and distribution of ballot papers. The counting of the ballot papers would be written within the centre. However, the agents of the candidates must be provided with the attested copies of the result sheets.
 - (g) Necessary stern actions would be taken to ensure the neutral use of mass media. Check the vote rigging and ensure effective prevention in this regard.

(h) Neutral observers would be allowed to observe the neutrality of the elections.

IV. Establish the accountable democratic-system in the country, permanently. Establish the trend of elected representative government through periodic, free, fair and neutral elections according to constitution.

Despite their sheer disagreement, to ascertain the advancement of democratic process, government and opposition political parties must be strictly committed to the people in some common matters: -

- (a) the stream of constitutional rule would be absolute and continued on the basis of recognition to the people's sovereignty;
- (b) Independent and neutrality of judiciary and rule of law would be ensured;
- (c) The parliament constituted with the people's representatives, who are elected on the basis of free and fair elections, would be constitutionally sovereign. The decision-making and functions would be conducted on the basis of majority, and at the same time the enhancement of democratic norms would be accomplished with due respect to minority's opinion and position. The authority of people's sovereignty would be exercised on the government through people's vote.
- (d) Non-party neutrality of the mass media would be ascertained.
- (e) With a view to establish common norms and culture of democracy, political behaviour would be firmly rooted in the light of deep tolerance and patience.

The people's long drawn struggle for democracy had at last triumphed with President Ershad offering to relinquish. An interim government taking over impending elections to be conducted by a newly appointed Election Commissioner. However, the opposition unity and singleness of purpose reinforced by student solidarity made the victory so quickly achievable. The mainstream Eight-party, Seven-party and Five-party Alliances on December 5, 1990 nominated Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as their consensus Vice-President to lead the caretaker government. They also asked President Ershad to resign and hand over power to Justice Shahabuddin immediately. The three alliances also asked President Ershad to dissolve his cabinet and his "illegal" Parliament as well. On December 6, 1990 tens of thousands of enthusiastic people continued to pour in the streets of Dhaka marking the people's victory against autocracy. Besides, various socio-cultural organisations and groups brought out processions to mark the occasion of

democracy's victory against autocracy. Meanwhile, President Ershad has revoked the proclamation of the state of emergency with immediate effect at the demand of the Opposition parties and Alliances. It may be mentioned that President Ershad imposed the state of emergency on November 27, 1990.

The country witnessed a historic moment on December 6, 1990, when the two top opposition leaders, Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia sat on the same sofa, side by side, exchanged greetings and listening to the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, whom they nominated to head the caretaker government.

It was the cherished moment to see the two leading opposition leaders who spearheaded the mass upsurge to cause the down fall of Ershad witnessed the transition to democracy by holding parliament elections within three months. While the journalists wanted to know their reaction on the victory of the people's movement Sheikh Hasina said, "the nation got freedom from suffocation under the autocratic rule of President Ershad" and Begum Khaleda Zia said, "it is the victory of the people at the end of an autocratic rule".⁷⁰

After a nine-year long rule by dint of *carrot and stick theory*, at last the authoritarian President Ershad had to step down. But the important thing here is to notice that the country had witnessed Ershad's rule for the longest period of time since its independence in 1971.

⁷⁰ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 7, 1990, p.1.

Table-30
Bangladesh's experiences of governance since 1972 until June 1996.

Period	Days	Forms of Government	Duration in Percentage
16 th December 1971 to 21 st December 1971	5 Days	Presidential form of Government (Civilian) Government in exile did not arrive in Dhaka	0.06%
From 22 December 1971 to 11 January 1972	22 Days	Presidential form of government inherited from the Pakistani period.	0.25%
January 12, 1972 (The Day Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stepped down from Presidency and sworn in as the Prime Minister of independent Bangladesh) to 25 January, 1975	3 Years 14 Days (1109 Days)	Parliamentary form of Government (Civilian)	12.40%
25 January, 1975 to 14 August 1975 to 14 August 1975	6 months 22 Days(203 days)	Presidential form (civilian)	2.27%
From 15 August 1975 to 30 May 1977	1 year 9 months 16 Days (653 Days)	Martial Law Administration(Presidential)	7.30%
31 May 1977 to March 1979	1 year 10 months (669 days)	Martial Law (Presidential)	7.48%
April 1979 to 23 March 1982	2 years 2 months 23 days	Presidential (Military rule in civilian form)	12.58%
24 March 1982 to December 5, 1990	8 years 8 months 17 days (3177 days)	Martial law and personal rule of Ershad (Presidential form)	35.53%
6 December 1990 to March 15, 1991	3 months 9 days(98 days)	Caretaker government on the basis of consensus for holding 27 February 1991 elections (Presidential and civilian)	1.10%
20 March 1991 to 6 August 1991	4 months 17 days (139 days)	Presidential form (elected) under the Acting President of the Caretaker government under Article 58(1) of the constitution. This was a transitional period. Attempts were undertaken to change the form of government.	1.55%
6 August 1991 to 15 February 1996	4 years 10 months 20 days(1683 days)	Parliamentary form of government of BNP.	
15 February 1996 to 23 June 1996	97 days	Parliamentary form of government of BNP	
The June 1996 Parliamentary general elections in Bangladesh			

Source: Compiled by the researcher from different newspaper reports.

Out of total 7142 days of independent Bangladesh from January 1972 to 6 December 1990 Ershad alone had governed the country for 3177(44.48%) days (24 March 1982-6 December 1990). Interestingly Ershad's regime had also witnessed more number of hartals since 1947. A recent study⁷¹ found that out of total 493 hartals since 1947 to 6 December 1990, 328 (66.53%) hartals (Table-31) were called by the opposition and other aggrieved groups against Ershad regime.

Table-31
Hartals (General Strikes) in different regimes

Regimes' Period	Number of Hartals			Total
	National	Dhaka and Regional	Local	
1947-1971	47	13	24	84
1972-1975(14 August)	5	5	12	22
1975, 15 August-1982,23 March	6	9	44	59
1982, 24 March-1990, 6 December		56	200	328(66.53%)
Sub-total until 1990	130	83	280	493
1990, 7 December-1996, 30 March	81	69	266	416
1996, 31 March-1999, 31 December	37	41	166	244
Total	248	193	712	1153

Source: Adapted from Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), cited in *Weekly Chaltipatra* (Bengali Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) 31 January 2000, p.10.

The end of President Ershad's authoritarian rule has paved the way for democratisation in the country. Thus the stage was ready to begin the process of democratic transition through general elections. The next chapter will focus on the rest of the step of democratic transition, February 1991 general elections. It may be mentioned that only the complete process of democratic transition could lead the way for democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy in the country.

⁷¹ *Weekly Chaltipatra* (Bengali Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka), Vol.4, No.7, 31 January 2000, Pp.9-11.

Chapter VII

Institutionalization of Democracy in Bangladesh during 1990-1996

In the preceding chapter we observed that soon after independence, Bengalees' long cherished goal for institutionalizing democracy was sacrificed on the altar of inexperienced political exercise demonstrated by the politicians of Bangladesh. The anti-autocratic movement of 1990, against former President H M Ershad once again paved the way for democratisation in the country. The process was important for lining 'nexus' between state and society with democracy. With the downfall of autocratic regime in December 1990 the country had successfully regained one of the two crucial stages of democratisation- democratic transition. The historical Joint Declaration of the three Alliances of political parties was instrumental to this effect. As a result former President General H M Ershad handed over power to a non-party caretaker government (NPCTG), headed by the then Chief Justice of the High Court Shahabuddin Ahmed. Since then the country has been on the way to the second stage of democratisation- democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy. But only the end of autocracy must not be a guarantee for institutionalisation of democracy. As has been rightly pointed out by Samuel Huntington that 'the death of dictatorship did not ensure the birth of democracy. It did, however, unleash a huge array of popular, social and political forces that had been effectively suppressed during the dictatorship.'¹

✓ In a rapidly changing socio-cultural, economic, political and global perspectives, the rates of social mobilisation and political participation in Bangladesh were higher during 1990-1996. The end of authoritarian regime provided an opportunity to modify prevailing political institutions and even to create new institutions, so that higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation can be accommodated with democracy. Having had a long-bitter experience of military rule, the pledge of the political forces to permanently stop the possibilities of military takeover had significant connotation with social mobilisation. Nevertheless, in Bangladesh democracy has been smothered almost from the time of the birth of the nation through one means or another. Accordingly the emerged 'forces' in 1990's democratic transition were more experienced and conscious than before in this regard. Thus

on the basis of consensus, institutionalization process of democracy had started with the holding of general election under a temporary arrangement of NPCTG. The efforts of institutionalization process of democracy were centered, among others, around this election and to constitute a 'sovereign parliament'. The arrangement of NPCTG had been made to hold a free, fair, neutral and peaceful general election. With the successful holding of February 1991 parliamentary general election the country had primarily proved its adherence to the process of institutionalization of democracy.

In this context the present chapter examines the political process regarding institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, during 1990-1996. Accordingly, there will be six sections in this chapter. The section VII.1 deals with the social mobilization, political participation and the general elections for the 5th parliament in 27 February 1991, the 12th amendment of the constitution that helped returning the country to parliamentary democracy will be discussed in section VII.2. Section VII.3 focuses on the governance of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, its challenges along with the workings of 5th parliament, formation of parliamentary standing committees and its workings. The general elections for the 6th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) is discussed alongwith unilateral placement and approval of 13th amendment bill of the constitution in section VII.4. Section VII.5 analyses the general election for the 7th Jatiya Sangsad.

VII.1 Social mobilisation and democratisation :

The increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation appeared to be present throughout different era. The inability of the nine-year old authoritarian regime to adopt itself with the pace of change caused by these increased rates during 1990s led to a crisis situation. Moreover, the rates of change were higher during 1990s than previous years (Table-). However, the crisis had continued for a long time. It had been manifested in the form of pro-democratic movement against its common enemy, the authoritarian regime of former president H. M. Ershad. This crisis was not merely a crisis, it was an opportunity too. As the research director of World Bank Institute, Vinod Thomas² argues, "a crisis is a great

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, op cit, p4.

² Vinod Thomas expressed this view in the World Bank conference on "Democracy" in March 1999 at Bangkok, Thailand, see *ASIAWEEK* (International Newsmagazine, Bangkok), April 9, 1999, Pp.54-56(54).

opportunity for positive change. But good changes are not automatic.” In fact the ‘sense that political change is inevitable’, had been sprung up from the existing political disorder and political instability during 1990s. General H M Ershad had taken over power from an *elected* President in 24 March 1982. During this takeover the whole Army was behind him. The age old President Justice Abdus Sattar and/or even his political party BNP were not strong enough to resist the illegal takeover of power by the Army Chief. But after nine years, at the fag end of 1990 when the mighty *General* sent a SOS to his comrades and beneficiaries they turned away from him. The senior army officers led by Lieutenant General Noor Uddin Khan decided in a meeting on December 4, 1990, that the army could not support Ershad as president any more.³ The decision was communicated to Ershad on that very day. A very ‘disappointed’ Ershad had no other choice but to announce his resignation from the country’s Presidency. Thus Finer’s comment about social mobilisation seems likely to be come into reality. S E Finer (1976)⁴ has pointed out that the possibilities of military intervention is likely to decrease with increased social mobilisation.

The 1990s pro-democratic movement brought about a huge opportunity for democratisation in Bangladesh. Mentionably, the initial measures were directed to democratic transition followed by democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy. But the changes caused by social mobilisation must be accompanied by careful attempts if expected consolidation of democracy is to be attained. A series of deliberate attempts could be noticed in Bangladesh during 1990’s in this regard. They were, among others, successes in the anti-autocratic movement, the formation of caretaker government for holding of February 1991 parliamentary general election and return to parliamentary form of government by the 12th Amendment to the Constitution. Due to ‘deep-seated historic and societal factors’ possibility of holding parliamentary general elections under any party government was far away from reality. In fact the ‘forces’ of the democratic transition wanted to get rid of massive rigging in the elections by the party in power which had become a regular feature in the country, during authoritarian regimes. On the other hand, instead of creating a congenial environment for mutual co-existence Bangladesh has been suffering

³ Referring a reliable source Talukder Maniruzzaman has mentioned it in his *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1994, p.143.

⁴ S E Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of Military in Politics*, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1976, pp 86-87.

from severe lack of consensus. 'Politicians, both right and left in Bangladesh are far away from the mass of men in their orientation, out look and approach to issues confronting the nation. Due to modern institutional orientation and urban residential experience the elites are exposed to modernity. On the contrary, the masses are still lagging behind in terms of feudal social setting with the value, associated with such setting.'⁵

However, the 1990's democratic transition provided an opportunity to change the 'operative ideals' of Bangladesh. The emerged 'forces' of the democratic transition had 'deliberately' and successfully utilised this opportunity. The causes of this opportunity can be found, according to A.D. Lindsay (1962)⁶, partly in the 'natural development of social characteristics', and partly in the influences of other social factors. Compared to the rates of social mobilisation during the period of Ershad's takeover in 1983 the rates of social mobilisation in 1990s were higher. Robert D. Putnam⁷ and Karl W. Deutsch⁸ have used some indicators of social mobilization in their studies. With the help of data provided by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the following table (Table-32) has been constructed to get a comparative picture of Bangladesh's social mobilisation in different years. The picture of social mobilisation that emerges from Table-32 is that all the indicators have considerably increased since 1960's. During 1951 the urban population of the country was 4.39%, in 1974 it was 9.13%, in 1981 the rate of urban population was 15.18% and finally in 1991 it has reached upto 19.63%. Similarly, the rate of adult literacy was 7.63% in 1951, the rate increased to 16.30% in 1961, again it had further increased to 20.20% in 1974, during 1981 the rate of adult literacy was 23.80%, and in 1991 the rate of adult literacy reached up to 35.32%. The number of university students per 1000 population has also increased gradually. In 1951 the number of university students per 1000 students was 0.06 person, the number increased to 0.11 in 1961, the figure expanded further in 1974. However, the figure

⁵ Mokhdum-e-Mulk Mushrafi, "Problem of consensus on National Identity in Bangladesh: Religion and Language", S.R.Chakravarty and Virendra Narain(eds), *Bangladesh, Volume one, History and Culture South Asia Study Series 12*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1986, pp 212-220

⁶ A.D.Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State*, A Galaxy Book, New York, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.3.

⁷ Robert D. Putnam, op cit

⁸ Karl W. Deutsch, in his *Nationalism and Social Communication, An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, The Technology Press and John Wiley & Sons Hall, Ltd., London, 1953, p.100, mentioned fourteen indicators with agreed overlapping, these indicators can be summarily explained into five categories e.g. rate of urban population, rate of adult literacy, per capita income, rate of radio listeners, and rate of newspaper readers.

was same both in the year of 1974 and in 1981, 0.44. But the figure moved upward in 1991 and stood as 0.48. Besides the per capita income has also changed overtime. In 1991-1992 the per capita income was Tk.8441/-, in 1992-1993 it was Tk.8718/-, in 1993-1994 it became Taka 9334/-, in 1994-1995 it increased to Taka 10416/-and in 1995-1996 it increased to Taka 11284/-.⁹ Thus an increasing tendency is also remarkable in the amount of per capita income. However, this increased rate of social mobilisation might have an impact on the democratisation process. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the increased rate of social mobilization facilitated the democratisation process. It has brought consciousness among the political forces of the country. Thus they organised the anti-Ershad movement and compelled him to resign and transferred power to a neutral person. The strength and flow of social mobilisation were so strong that the authoritarian ruler failed to resist it.

“Social and economic change, social and civic mobilisation, institutional practice, historical experience, and international diffusion can all modify or gradually transform the predominant values, beliefs, and attitudes of a country”(Larry Diamond 1994: 21)¹⁰.

The ‘forces’ of 1990s compelled movement in Bangladesh could be identified into socio-economic and political categories. Politically these forces were the believers of leftist, rightist, nationalist, and religion based parties. They were affiliated with the three Alliances of eight, seven and five political parties along with religion based Jamaat-e-Islami. Besides, different professional groups like students, teachers, physicians, journalists, entertainers, writers, businessmen and lawyers were also involved with the movement. At the last stage even the officials from the administrative service of the government with the movement. However, the eight-party alliance led by the Awami League, the seven-party alliance led by the BNP, and Alliance of Five left parties along with their student fronts constituted the main political forces of the movement. The presence of Jamaat was also significant.

A group of left party activists had also made a futile attempt to involve the peasants but they could not be succeeded. On January 24, 1987 sixteen organisations those were existed merely in name led by an insignificant number of left oriented political activists

⁹ In a question-answer session of the seventh Jatiya Sangsad, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria disclosed this figures on August 4, 1996, see *The Daily Ajker Kagaj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 5, 1996, p.2.

had formed *Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote* (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance) and called for an anti-autocratic movement.¹¹ But their participation was not significant. However, apart from this futile attempt to involve the peasants, there have been lately deliberate attempt to change the operative ideals of the political community in order to make a democratic Bangladesh.

The combination of these diverse political forces worked out a balanced formula for democratic transition in Bangladesh. Unlike the Liberation War in 1971 the political forces of 1990's were very much specific to select their goals. The main goals of the movement as has been envisaged in the Joint Declaration of the Three Alliances were (1) transfer of power to a neutral person, (2) formation of neutral caretaker government for holding free, fair and peaceful parliamentary general elections, (3) resignation of Ershad, (4) stop the possibilities of illegal power takeover by the Army Coup d' etat and killing, (5) Constitute a Sovereign Parliament.¹²

Analysts observed that initially the participant three Alliances of Political Parties were not so serious to organise an anti-autocratic movement. The Alliance of twenty two students' organisations 'spontaneously formed the All Party Students' Unity (APSU) and forced or "shamed" the political parties to cooperate¹³ in the anti-autocratic movement. Moreover 'the political parties in the district towns had formed all-party committees and were organising processions and strikes'. Ershad did not keep any stone untouched first to legitimize his regime and lastly to protect his power. Following the style of his 'predecessor', Ershad had also brought some civil and military bureaucrats, politicians and peoples of other categories from different ideological background under the fold of his political front, Jatiya Party. Besides he tried to legitimize his regime by holding rigged elections. In all the elections he successfully rigged and won but legitimacy remained a

¹⁰Larry Diamond, "Introduction: Political Culture and Democracy", in Larry Diamond (ed.), *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder London, 1994, pp 1-27(21).

¹¹ The sixteen organisations were *Bangladesh Trade Union Federation*, *Jatiya Sramik Andolan* (National Labour Movement), *Bangladesh Krishak Federation* (Bangladesh Peasants Federation), *Bangladesh Chatra Federation* (Bangladesh Student's Federation), *Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir* (Bangladesh Writers Camp), *Sat Chalachitra Front* (Honest Film Society), and *Gana Sangskriti Parishad* (People's Cultural Council). See Syed Abul Moksud (ed) *Gano Andolan 1982-1990*, (Mass Movement 1982-1990), Mukta dhara, Dhaka, 1991, p. 17.

¹² See Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, *Bangladesh Punargathan O Jatiya Oikyamati* (Reconstruction of Bangladesh And National Consensus), University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1991, p. 260.

¹³ See Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1994, p. 147.

golden deer for him. The power hungry autocrat had tried to protect himself along with his power from the wrath of pro-democratic movement. Thus many people had been killed¹⁴ and many more were wounded by the police and ruffians of Ershad.

Compared to earlier regimes Bangladesh suffered from more number of *hartals* (general strikes) during the authoritarian regime of former President Ershad. He had also stayed longest period (nine years) in power. On the other hand, all *hartals* since 1947 until Ershad's assumption to power in 1982 were called mainly on political issue and no *hartal* was called for economic issue. However, it was during Ershad regime again that the country witnessed *hartals*, which were called for economic issue (Table-31). Out of 51 *hartals* on economic issue until 1999, 26 were called against Ershad regime. This may be termed as people's repeated endeavors to adapt the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation.

Being failed to adapt his regime with the pace of social change, Ershad started applying force against the people to remain in power. At one stage Ershad became desperate and started foul playing in a heinous way with the help of his ruffians and police forces. He tried to unleash communal riots and a reign of terror to divert people's attention in October 30, 1990 in Chittagong and October 31, 1990 in Dhaka¹⁵. This had perplexed the opposition for a while. However, soon afterward the anti-autocratic movement got a fresh momentum. Sufferings of the victims had fuelled the agitation. *Hartal* (general strikes) had become routine affairs during this period. Meanwhile, the Ershad government declared emergency and imposed curfew in Dhaka, which was violated by the 'forces' of the movement.

The reactions of the donor countries, UK and Japan had also encouraged the opposition movement. During Ershad regime due to lack of press freedom, the foreign print and electronic media had published and disseminated the episode of Ershad's corruption and nepotism. Thus donor countries became aware of Ershad's misdeeds. The foreign newspapers had also published news of Ershad, his relatives and accomplices. From business to politics everywhere Ershad established an autocratic system. Besides the main opposition also licked out the fact that most of the foreign assistance had been utilised for Ershad's self interest and against the interest of the

¹⁴ A list of slain persons who were killed either by police or by ruffians of Ershad during the pro-democratic movement has been added in Appendix.

¹⁵ See Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, *op cit*

people. ¹⁶During the last part of December 1990 UK and Japan 'made it clear to Ershad that they would stop all aid if the emergency was continued.'¹⁷

The role of Bangladesh Army was also laudable as they turned away from Ershad. As has been mentioned earlier, that the then Army Chief Lieutenant General Noor Uddin Khan clearly denied Ershad's last proposal to re-impose martial law. Thus the collective efforts of the students, journalists, teachers, entertainers, writers, businessmen, government officials, military and politicians along with the encouraging steps of donor countries had succeeded to compel Ershad to handover power to a agreed candidate of all opposition political parties, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on December 6, 1990.

Table-32

Increased rates of social mobilization in Bangladesh as evidenced from some selected indicators in different years

Indicators of social mobilization	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	
Percent of Urban Population	4.39%	na	9.13%	15.18%	19.63%	
Adult Literacy rate of population	7.63%	16.3%	20.20%	23.80%	35.32%	
University Students per 1000 population	0.06	0.11	0.44	0.44	0.48	
Percent of Households having Radio and Television, 1981-82	Radio	na	47,855 sets	2,96,642sets	na	28.54%
	Television	na	na	na	na	6.65%
Percent of House hold Reported News paper, 1981-82	1954 12 (Number of newspapers, published in the then E. Pakistan)	13 (Number of newspapers, published in the then E. Pakistan)	33(Number of newspapers, published in the then E. Pakistan)	1212 (Number of newspapers, published in the then E. Pakistan)	22.19%	

Source: Calculated from *Statistical Abstract for East Pakistan, 1952-1953, 1956-57, vol., 1st Impression* The Provincial Statistical Board and Bureau of Commercial and Industrial Intelligence, Government of East Pakistan, Dacca, 1958, p.4. *Monthly Statistical Bulletin of Bangladesh*, August 1980, p.2, 6,7,8,39,43,48,540,545,546. *Statistical Digest of East Pakistan, 1955*, p.315. *Statistical Digest of Bangladesh 1970-71*, p.312, p.316. *Statistical Digest of East Pakistan, 1966*, p.347

¹⁶See Jawadul Karim, *Ganatantril Sangrame Netritta*, (Leadership in the democratic struggle), Agamee Prokashanee, Dhaka, 1992, p.7, 60.

¹⁷ See Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1994, p.143.

The anti-autocratic movement from 1987 to 1990 was based in urban centres. There was hardly any agitation programme in the rural areas. The 'array of social forces' those were emerged during the movement had been the people from various occupations. In order to enable the 'forces' to create enabling conditions for election, innovative institution like caretaker government was posited. Nevertheless, the ultimate leadership of the movement went into the hand of politicians of different categories in terms of their ideological affiliations. On the other hand the channels those have been opened during the movement facilitated a *nouvea riche* dominant class of people to be elected through the electioneering of February 1991. Moreover, among other occupational groups that have emerged as the 'forces' of democratic transition, very few or none represented the occupation which was directly related with agriculture. There was hardly any direct participation of rural population in the pro-democratic movement. It may be mentioned that according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in Bangladesh 73.80% of the total man power were employed in agriculture sector during 1990's and only 26.2% were in non-agriculture sector. On the other hand, more than 80 percent of the population those were living in the rural areas seldom they had any day to day information about this movement. Thus both the people of major professional group i.e. peasants and population of major areas i.e. rural areas had hardly any participation in the 1990's movement.

The mobilised forces those asserted the cause of anti-autocratic movement were mostly educated *middle-class* and they were supposed to 'imbibe some democratic ideals (participation, accountability, popular mobilization) and created urban-based groups through which they could be expressed (Naomi Chazan 1994).¹⁸ Nevertheless, to some extent the urban centric democratic movement of 1990's might have consistencies with the instances of established democracies. As Barrington Moore argued that democratic political institutions have emerged in nations in which the transition has been led by a middle-class revolution rather than chiefly by peasant revolt. "No bourgeois, no democracy."¹⁹ In Section V.2,

¹⁸ See Naomi Chazan, "Between Liberalism and Statism: African Political Cultures and Democracy," in Larry Diamond(ed), *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder London, 1994, pp.55-98(65)

¹⁹ See Barrington Moore, Jr., "Social origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and peasant in the Making of the Modern World", The Beacon Press, Boston, 1966, p.418, cited in Joseph Gusfield, in *Social*

generalised social mobilisation of Chapter V, we presented more detail discussion on the rise of middle class.

According to the simple meaning, a person is included in the middle class who has received some education or has the economic capacity to have his/her children educated. By that definition, India is reported to have a middle class numbering well over 50 million. 'In Bangladesh the number probably does not exceed two to three million even when the estimate includes every one from the very pettiest of the 'petit bourgeoisie' to the richest and most cosmopolitan among the emerging jet-set.'²⁰ Analysts argue that during last twenty years (1971-1991) through the process of *social mobilisation* 'the explosive growth of the middle class' has come into being. The movement of 1990, which ousted an autocrat and paved the way for institutionalisation of democracy, was mostly a middle class phenomenon. Democracy itself is a middle class philosophy and can not succeed or sustain itself without the existence of a strong and numerous middle class. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bangladesh had to wait for twenty years until a swelling middle class could make its presence felt and make the nation ready for democratic transition. This success in the democratic movement has proved that, in a cultural and political sense, the number of middle class persons in Bangladesh has reached 'critical mass'.

The class has become large enough to start and sustain a politico-cultural chain reaction. This is a role which has become vital because of the degradation of moral values which has been infused with the clutches of 'colonial', 'internal colonial' and 'authoritarian' legacies. Even though Bangladesh's aspiration for independence entity had been inspired by her democratic disappointment during the Pakistani rule, there were severe lack of consensus among the political forces regarding the political ideals of future independent Bangladesh. There were a lot of political ideals, which were thought to be effective for independent Bangladesh. There was 'socialism' as well as 'scientific socialism'. There were 'Mujibism' as well as 'Muslim Bangla'. It was January 1972 when Mujib returned to the country and declared the Provisional Constitutional Order and Bangladesh had a specific document for its governance. Later on the constitution of Bangladesh was drafted and ideals

Forces A scientific Medium of Social Study and Interpretation, Volume 46, September 1967, Number 1, pp.114-115.

²⁰ Editorial titled "Middle Class Phenomenon", in *The Weekly Holiday* (Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 1, 1991, p.2.

of Westminster type democracy became a specific way for country's governance. Again this constitution was lasted only for two years until the 4th amendment was passed in January 1975. Nevertheless, the abrogation of this constitution was not confirmed by any plebiscite.

Unlike the movement for autonomy in 1969 and liberation war in 1971, the 1990's pro-democratic movement was more integrated. It is in this sense that the forces of the 1990s pro-democratic movement had been able to reach a consensus on the basic national issue, fall of autocratic regime. Besides, apart from the existing constitution, the actors of the movement had prepared an agreed document i.e. Joint Declaration by the three Alliances of Political parties, for future course of action. Nevertheless, the rate of social mobilisation has been proved to be higher to thwart any further military takeover. Most of the 'forces' of the movement were from urban centric middle-class that was also congenial for democratisation. Because the middle class seems to be more sensitive to the basic problem. On the other hand, without searching the origin of the civil society of the country it can be said that it was nothing but a major component of the emerged 'forces' in pro-democratic movement, i.e. middle class population. Nevertheless, these social units have sufficient credibility to work as intermediaries on whom the state and the society as a whole must rely to achieve a reasonable degree of democratic consonance between their own values, objectives and tactical preferences.

Even though the activists of the movement were mainly urban based their origin lie with the rural areas. Thus during February 1991 Parliamentary elections these social and political forces have had a voice in spreading the ideals of democracy i.e. free and fair election, peaceful transfer of power through election and constitutional means, stop the role of money and muscle in politics, sovereign parliament, tolerance towards opposition, and so on, in rural as well as urban areas.

VII.2 General election for the 5th Jatiya Sangsad in 27 February 1991:

Election is the basis of democratic governance. Periodical election is a must for institutionalising democracy. It is the foundation of any democratic system. Principle of free and fair elections is an essential postulate of democracy. According to Norman D. Palmer (1975)²¹ elections are considered particularly conspicuous and revealing aspects of most

²¹ Norman D. Palmer, *Elections and Political Development, The South Asian Experience*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1975, p.1.

contemporary political systems. The complex events of election involve individual and are affected by, the total political and social issues. It has been possible in theory to holding any national level free elections only after the withdrawal of the British Colonials in 1947. During Pakistan period the process of election was disregarded by the repeated military intervention into politics. However, apart from a number of provincial level election only one national level-general elections on the basis of universal adult franchise was held in 1970. Even then the mandate given by this general election was deliberately and atrociously ignored-resulting in a bloody war of liberation and the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.²² Analysts viewed that all the general elections held during the authoritarian regimes of independent Bangladesh were more or less characterized with large-scale manipulation, rigging, massive exercise of coercion and muscle power, bribery, expenditure of unusually high amount of money-both by the governments, political parties, groups and individuals. In democratic systems around the world the state bureaucracy and/or the election commission conduct the general election, which operates under political party in power. The party continues to conduct all normal state business. However, if it fails to earn voter's favour a new party is sworn in as the new government. But it did not so happen in Bangladesh. Here the political party in power used the bureaucracy to rig the election results in their favour. The system to conduct election by the party in power miserably failed to achieve trust of the opposition parties.

Samuel P. Huntington (1991)²³ had mentioned fourteen instances from Asian, African and Latin American countries where elections under authoritarian regimes have worked to 'weakening and ending authoritarian regimes'. Thus 'rulers were almost always disappointed'. He termed the holding of elections under authoritarian regimes as 'stunning'. Bangladesh even as a Third World Asian country has had different experiences. Here the authoritarian rulers had always been 'happy' with their victory in the massively rigged elections and never been 'disappointed' with the holding of parliamentary general elections under their regimes. In short, a political culture of money, manipulation and muscles developed over the years centering round the general elections in Bangladesh. It also largely

²² See Professor M. Mufazzalul Huq, *Reflections on Ensuring free and fair elections in Bangladesh*, paper presented at a National Seminar organised by Manabik Shahajya Sangstha (MSS) and Study and Research Group (SRG) held at Dhaka, July 31, 1994, p.4.

²³ Samuel P. Huntington, *Third Wave...* op cit. pp.174-191.

pervaded local-level elections too.²⁴ In view of these experiences on electioneering, Bangladesh have evolved a different way of holding general election under non-party caretaker government. The February 27, 1991 parliamentary general elections were held under this form of government. Nonetheless, there was a lot of spontaneity to participate in this election. Apart from the organisers and participants of the pro-democratic movement, all related sections of the society were enthusiastic and interested to hold a meaningful election that was absent in the country for a long period. The MP aspirants started moving to get nomination from the main political parties. The political parties were also trying to nominate the prospective candidates and making electoral alliance.

Nomination of candidates:

With a view to making electoral alliances, different front and parties were in hectic parleys. The eight-party alliance had a series of parleys to share the seats and AL's electoral symbol 'boat'. In these negotiations the AL revealed its rigid mindedness in seat sharing with other partners of the alliance. Primarily there was a consensus among the partners regarding seat sharing, giving 62 seats to seven other political parties. The partners held responsible the big brotherly and egoistic attitude of some of the top level AL leaders and hurriedly and unilaterally declaring name of the AL candidates in 297 seats on January 7, 1991. Earlier the alliance leaders decided that none of the partners would declare their own parties' candidates prior to final selection of the list of nominees. Following the footsteps of AL other partners –Ganatantri Party, CPB, BKSAL and NAP (Mozaffer) also declared their respective party's list of nominees. As a result the existence of the eight-party alliance had to face a bleak future. But after elapsing the date of withdrawal the AL chief Sheikh Hasina unilaterally declared 36 seats for seven partners. This declaration created problems and mental sheath inside her own party and among the allies. Because some AL MP hopefuls denied to step aside from electoral competition and one of the alliance leaders NAP-leader Professor Mozaffer Ahmed declined to compete with AL election symbol 'boat'. However, it is difficult to guess whether the formation of eight-party electoral alliance in time could

²⁴ See Hussain Zillur Rahaman, "The Landscape of Violence: Elections and Political Culture in Bangladesh," in *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 49, pp 83-91.

bring a different result but it is certain that it would help removing complexity and mistrust. When the eight-party alliance was broken then the seven of its allies tried to form another alliance with seven left leaning parties. But due to mutually opposite views and beliefs on internal, economic and foreign affairs the effort to form this electoral alliance failed.

Compared to AL, the seven-party alliance led-by the BNP found it easy in fielding candidates. Because other partners were not significantly important in the context of Bangladesh politics. On the other hand BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia declared that the door of discussion was opened to form electoral alliance with the nationalist forces.

The BNP had parleys with both the left and rightist parties. The party had some discussions with the five-party alliance. This five-party alliance in most part extended their support to the BNP. They were ready to form an electoral alliance with BNP having had 50 seats. But this effort to form electoral alliance with five-party alliance was failed. Because some of the members of 5-party alliance were interested to form alliance with the AL. Another series of discussions to constitute an electoral alliance had been carried out by Muslim League, Zaker Party, Islami Andolan, National Democratic Party, Khelafat Andolan, Progressive Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh. On the other hand BNP and Jamaat arrived at an understanding that 60 seats would be left for Jamaat. But BNP's insistence to keep the understanding secret turned away Jamaat with annoyance; hence the understanding was failed. Thus both Jamaat and BNP contested separately in this election. Analysts viewed that the electoral alliance of Jamaat and BNP could enable them to get at least 180 to 190 seats. Nonetheless, having failed to form an alliance both BNP and Jamaat got the chance to test the popularity and strength of their respective parties and thus decide future course of action.

On the other hand, being failed to form any alliance with in 10 January the parties were in horns of dilemma. Thus the representatives from 8-party, 7-party and 5-party alliances had agreed in principle and decided to approach the EC shortly for shifting the date. In this situation, the last date for submission of nomination papers was extended upto 13 January 1991. The decision to deferring the last date of filing nomination papers was taken because major political parties and alliances could not finalise their candidatures for the parliamentary elections. Again the negotiating parties failed to arrive at any understanding

even within this extended time.²⁵ Thus all the parties set out to compete in the election individually and separately.

The EC had found valid 2787 nomination papers. These aspirants were from 75 political parties along with 424 independent contenders. The EC cancelled 56 nomination papers. Latter on it had allowed some 31 aspirants to contest in the election. As many as 350 candidates withdrew their candidatures due to affiliation with political alliance and understanding etc. Besides some 689 candidates refrained from electoral race on verbal declaration, although their names were remained in the ballot papers. However, at last a total of 2350 candidates were in the ballot paper, although 1661 were in the actual electoral race. These candidates contested for 298 seats. The election in two constituencies-Khulna-2 and Munshiganj-3 were earlier shifted following death of two candidates. Of the two Marafat Hossain, a JSD (Rob) leader was shot dead. It was incidentally the only case of murder of contesting candidate while the other had natural death. Unlike all previous elections, none from the Government fought 1991's elections in independent Bangladesh. The election was held under a Non-Party Caretaker Government (NPCTG) for the first time since independence.²⁶

In this general election only Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had fielded nomination paper for all the 300 seats. The Bangladesh Awami League (AL) had fielded for 264 constituencies while it had left remaining 36 seats for its allies to compete with AL's 'electoral symbol 'boat'. But the National Awami Party (NAP) leader Professor Mozaffar Ahamed declined to contest with this symbol. Only 12 political parties had nominated 50 or more candidates. On the other hand sixteen political parties had contested in the election with one candidate each. A large number of pad-based political parties also contested in the election. However, they had hardly any strength to survive in the electoral competition with the major parties' nominees. Nevertheless, in some areas independent candidates had contested with much strength. Thus mushrooming growth of pad-based political parties, in no way, helps creating congenial atmosphere for democracy in the country. However, analysts viewed that regular holding of periodic elections in a free, fair and neutral fervor would help eliminating these pad-based parties. Nevertheless, the 8-party and 5-party

²⁵ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), January 6, 1991, p.1, 10.

²⁶ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, (Daily Newspaper in English, Dhaka), March 1, 1991, p.1.

alliance on January 6, 1991 agreed in principle to form a greater election coalition aiming to restore parliamentary form of government.²⁷

A survey conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) revealed some curious aspects of February 1991 Parliamentary general elections in Bangladesh. As many as 2925 respondents and 605 candidates in 105 constituencies were interviewed in the survey. The survey found that about 69 per cent of the candidates for the February 1991 elections belonged to the higher-income group, and 72 per cent were urban residents. About 88 percent of the candidates in the electoral battle were at least college graduates. This indicated an over all high educational status among the candidates. The survey further revealed that large and small traders and professionals constituted 82 percent of the candidates. The usual practice of the election campaign was that the candidates went to the electorate not with their respective party manifestoes but only to seek votes. Association with criminal elements was most widespread in the ranks of the Jatiya Party with about 54 per cent of its candidates patronising musclemen.²⁸

Election manifestos of the contending Parties:

Most of the political parties issued manifestos before the election. Election manifesto is a statement of the issues, which the party considers, of the greatest importance and an indication, in more or less precise terms, of the party's policies to meet them (Leonard 1964: 122)²⁹. During the electioneering of 1991 though almost all the political parties had declared their respective party manifestos. But the observers viewed that almost all the political parties had not so much careful in making their manifestos. They had just unloaded the burden to prepare the manifesto like some sorts of rituals. However, the documents were loaded with all well-meaning intentions designed to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party declared its manifesto in 28 January 1991. The manifesto had been drafted by a party think-tank, which was headed by Professor

²⁷ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (Daily Newspaper in English, Dhaka), January 7, 1991, p.1, 10.

²⁸ See *The Weekly Holiday* (English Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 21, 1991, p.1, 8 and *The Bangladesh Observer* (Daily Newspaper in English, Dhaka), February 18, 1991, p.1, 10.

Badrudozza Chowdhury, was a modified version of the BNP's 19-point programme, which was launched by its assassinated founder chairman Ziaur Rahman during the 1978 presidential election.

The eight-page manifesto envisaged an honest government, rule of law, independence of judiciary, a free press and guaranteed fundamental rights by repealing all 'black laws'. The party committed to resolve all sorts of governmental issues in parliament. It also pledged to ensure the five basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, education and medi-care to build the country into a self-sufficient nation. In a marked departure from its previous policy, the 1991 version of the 19-point programme stresses the role of the market economy and of the private sector as well as that of foreign investments to bolster the economy. The party wanted to implement free-market economy, make a profitable public sector, encouraging foreign investment for rapid industrialisation of the country, self sufficiency in food through canal digging programme of Ziaur Rahman.

However, it made it clear that heavy industries would remain in the public sector and promised to revamp the economy with appropriate industrialisation and by making the public enterprise profitable. Laying further on the improvement of agriculture, the BNP manifesto also pledged to exempt the farmers of land tax upto 8.1 acres of land and farm loans and interests up to Taka 5.000. It promised to harness domestic resources for the task. In its manifesto the party had termed the period of its previous six years rule from 1975 to 1981 as 'golden era'. They did not forget to designate the Awami League period from 1972 to 1975 as 'nightmare'. The BNP also claimed the regime of deposed President Ershad from 1981 to 1990 as the 'period of conspiracy'. The party pledged to strengthen relation with the Muslim countries alongside maintaining friendship to all and malice to none in its foreign policy. It also expressed commitment to play constructive role in OIC, NAM, and SAARC. It also pledged for strong and capable armed forces. The BNP committed to reintroduce the programme of village government, which was introduced by Zia and cancelled by subsequent government.

The Awami League declared its manifesto on February 6, 1991. It pledged, among others, to establish an accountable government, revival of 1972 constitution barring 4th

²⁹ R.L.Leonard, *Guide to the General Election*, Forward by David Butler, Pan Books Ltd., London, 1964, p.7.

amendment, scrapping all black laws. In economic sector the party emphasized on mixed economy giving equal treatment to public and private sectors. The party pledged for a continued role in Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and developing better relations with the neighbours. It had pledged for upholding the interest of working class, exemption of revenue for a ceiling of 25-bigha land and Tk.5000 loan exemption for the farmers.

The Jamaat-e-Islami declared its party manifesto on 29 January 1991. The party pledged among others, for declaring Bangladesh an Islamic Country, scrapping all black laws and amending the Islamic part of the constitution, protecting independence of Judiciary. It also pledged to make an honest and adequate bureaucracy and administration. In its manifesto the Jamaat also wanted to build up the children with moral education. It pledged for an accountable administration. The party wanted to introduce Islamic economy, maintaining independent foreign policy along with better relations with the Muslim country.

The five-party alliance had declared its election manifesto on 31 January 1991. The alliance pledged to fulfil the demands of workers, farmers and employees, scrapping all black laws including Press and Publications Act, Special Power Act and cancell all the constitutional amendments except the 2nd and 3rd amendments. The alliance supported the parliamentary form of government. It also committed to punish the unscrupulous employees, officers, and businessmen who helped Ershad during his long 9 years' autocratic rule. The alliance pledged to take steps so that dependency on foreign countries is reduced, discouraging the trend towards capitalist economy, stop the denationalisation process, imposing hard conditions on the multi national corporations and stop importing luxurious items. In agriculture sector the five-party alliance pledged to introduce right of the farmers, distribution of *khas* land among the land less people and continuing the subsidy in the agriculture sector. It also pledged for neutral foreign policy.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in its manifesto pledged to scrap all black laws, establishing the cabinet form of government and maintaining a balance between public and private sector. The CPB also committed to fulfil the demands of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP/ Workers Employees Unity Council) and enhancing the budget on education and health sector.

Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL) in its manifesto pledged to stop the politics of bullet. It also pledged to reintroduce 1972's constitution and saving the northern districts from the bad effect of Farakka.

National Awami Party (NAP/Mozaffer) in its electoral manifesto wanted socialism with religion, establishing real democracy in the country, exemption of revenue on the ceiling of 25-bigha land. The party also committed to scrap the Special Power Act and Press and Publications Act. It also pledged to solve with cordiality the problems of Farakka barrage, Tin Bigha, Talpatty, Berubari along with all problems with India.

ZAKER party and Khelafat Andolan pledged to introduce the political system which was prevailed during the Kholafaya Rashedeen era.

The election manifesto of the Freedom Party emphasized among others-a parliament with two chambers, proportional representation in the upper house, independence of Judiciary, introducing new education system in the light of constitution, reducing the dependency on foreign countries and institutions and solving the unemployment problems.

The general election on 27 February 1991 were held for the first time under neutral caretaker government following the fall of Ershad government of Jatiya Party through mass movement. Great enthusiasm had been witnessed both home and abroad because the general elections were held under the new concept of neutral caretaker government. 'Donor countries watched the fifth Jatiya Sangsad election by sending observers. As many as two hundred foreign observers came to Bangladesh to monitor elections of 1991 which had created a positive impact on the political dimension of the country.'³⁰

The Election Campaign:

With the February 1991 parliamentary general elections had been approaching fast the candidates were found to be doing every thing possible to woo the voters. However, the outcome of the electoral exercise both in terms of campaign and eventual formation of an elected government-had been depended almost entirely on the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Sheikh Hasina of

³⁰ See Mohammed Amjad Hossain, "Election monitoring observers add credence to the procession", *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), July 10, 2001, p.5.

Bangladesh Awami League (AL). Both of them have earned popularity as opposition leaders. With their common enemy former President Ershad, out of the way, they were opposing each other with a vengeance. Their exchange of accusations sometimes became uncivil, reminding their reluctance or incapacity to give up their image of opposition leaders.

Analysts pointed out that the failure of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia to sufficiently project themselves as the future rulers might have sensational factor-choosing the future leader of the government.³¹ However, in absence of “negative factor” like anti-Ershad unity of the political parties and alliances, the creation of even a facade of electoral unity among the parties and alliances remained uncertain.

Due to lack of adequate preparation, there were lots of clumsiness in creating election platforms and launching election campaigns. Both the Awami League and the BNP have fumbling to decide their election strategies.

Amidst such types of confusion, however, Begum Khaleda Zia called for the unity and victory of the “nationalist forces”. This was a grand elixir for a grand alliance of all who were opposed to the polity which was based on the four principles of nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy and the legacies of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. But all attempts at electoral alliance and even seat-sharing arrangements between the BNP and its like-minded parties had failed.

The Awami League, which likewise called for the unity and victory of the ‘pro-independence’ forces, which broadly meant the original 15-party alliance, made a mess. All negotiating for electoral alliance or understanding failed. The Awami League finally bought a respite from accusations by its allies of big-party chauvinism by unilaterally offering 36 seats to some parties.

In the absence of any grand electoral strategy the campaign of the two parties was based mainly on the past. (i) Performance of the past Awami League and the BNP government, (ii) Leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and General Ziaur Rahaman, (iii) Leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in the anti-Ershad movement.

³¹ N.M.Harun, “Polls Campaign: misdirection”, in *The Holiday* (Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 1, 1991, p.1, 8.

Observers viewed that the practice of controversial discussion on matter of the past might interest the partisan people. However, the electorate in general was more interested to argue and vote on the basis of issues with present and future.

The Awami League and the BNP were conjuring upon an ideological struggle on the issue of “Bengalee nationalism” versus “Bangladeshi Nationalism”. During the 1991 election campaign the BNP had extended the roots of “Bangladeshi nationalism”, in its manifesto, to “Bangladeshi Bhasha”(language). Anyway, the February 1991 Parliamentary elections were not meant to settle ideological issues. This rather distracted the attention of the electorate from the urgent issue of eventually electing a political party government.

During her election campaign BNP chairperson had demanded the trial of the deposed President General Ershad before February 27 election. She said that since Ershad had been chargesheeted he could be tried and sentenced by a Special Tribunal before the elections. Echoing the demands of the students Begum Khaleda Zia Said, “Prison is the best place for Ershad”.³² On the other hand Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina dismissed the demand for shifting deposed President Ershad to the Dhaka Central Jail from the comfortable Gulshan villa.³³

On economic issues, however, the two major political parties had presented a few specific solutions-short, medium and long-term-to lift the economy out of a morass. There were, however, some common elements regarding economy in the manifestos of the two parties. These include farm loan exemption and interest relief; Jamuna and Meghna bridge projects; and greater efficiency of the existing public sector enterprises and units.

It has been followed that the electoral pledges by the major parties, as were being made through public speeches and also manifestos would require billions of taka for implementations. No time frame for implementation of the same had, however, been announced by either party.³⁴ Huge quanta of election funds were being spent by the major contestants to win the voters support. The election commission had set three lakh as the

³² See *The Holiday* (Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 1, 1991, p 1.

³³ *The Holiday* (Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 8, 1991, p 1.

³⁴ See report titled “Wobbly economic agenda: Worse days ahead”, *The Holiday* (Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka) February 8, 1991, p.1.

limit for election expenses by an individual candidate. This was done to make the elections free and fair and to ensure that money power did not exercise any undue influence on the voters' choice. The candidates were required to declare their assets so that their financial bonafides were not suspect. This was perhaps a logical step to provide some safety-valve for transparency in electoral expenses and fair competition.

While laws existed, the applicability or enforcement of the same had been the most daunting task. What had made the February 1991 electoral scene murky was the ostensible display of money power. Candidates from almost every party had publicly been complaining about massive flow of funds. It was a sort of mutual recrimination, and it seemed that almost every one was on the dock but trying to pass the buck onto others. Hardly a few contenders out of a total of about 2700 candidates had reportedly declared their assets.

Meanwhile, the ostentatious campaign-biz had raised serious questions in public mind about its funding source. No political party in the country has formal ways of raising funds for their organisational affairs or electoral expenses. The operations were mostly informal and it was widely assumed that the sympathizers made voluntary contributions.

In the 1991 electoral contest, mainly 'unearned money' was finding lot of favours. Analysts found that those who amassed black money over the past years were funding the election expenses for candidates. The massive growth of black-money allegedly under a system of patron-client relationship under the fallen regime, had been one of the major causes for its downfall. While the patron was out of power, the clients were active as generous donors the allegation said.³⁵ When such allegations were so wide spread, the so-called election funds in many cases were not voluntary contributions. These were either a sort of extortion or a premium for political protection for the pedlars of black money. In the process, however, many genuine and honest monied men had fallen prey to under hand games. 'High expenditure involved in effective election campaigning discouraged many formidable aspirants of low financial ability to contest the parliamentary elections.

³⁵ See *The Holiday* (English Weekly Newspaper, Dhaka), February 15, 1991, p.1.

Consequently, economically affluent people got an upperhand in the nomination process of the major parties.³⁶

The electoral cost overrun in most cases had not reflected in financial accounts of the individual candidates, political parties or the public ex-chequer. Thus the black money game remained with its serious implications for the future of politics and economy of the country.

During Bangladesh's electioneering in 1991, the US led coalition force had been evacuating Kuwait from the occupation of Iraqi Army. This issue had hardly any role for pulling voters' support in favour of any party or candidate. However, even this electorally unimportant issue like far-off Gulf war had got an edge over the election campaign in Bangladesh as a subject of public interest. Analysts interpreted the use of extraneous factor in the election campaign as a convenient excuse for justifying the marked absence of popular enthusiasm for the elections.

The 1991 election campaign also witnessed the Indian phobia. The BNP and Jamaat had termed AL as the agent of India. The post-liberation AL government's mismanagement did make room for such xenophobia. The post-1975 government utilised this weapon successfully. Khaleda Zia and her colleagues tried to feed an anti-Indian elixir during the 1991 general elections. In Bangladesh, particularly in election year, a number of politicians wrangle and grizzle about India. They never debate over political economy and strategy for the country's development, or comparative and competitive commercial advantage over India. They always have debated over India's 'hidden' intentions that makes 'Big India' always pivotal to Bangladesh politics. The result is that a picture has been sketched on people's minds that India is the only hurdle and threat to the development of Bangladesh.

Caretaker Government for February 1991 Parliamentary general elections;

The government of interim period for conducting parliamentary general elections in the country is known as caretaker government (CTG). The sole purpose of the 1991's

³⁶ Muhammad A. Hakim, *Bangladesh Politics The Shahabuddin Interregnum*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1993, p.48.

CTG was to conduct a free, fair and peaceful parliamentary general election through the Election Commission(EC). The common practice of all democracies is to elect a government for a particular period. At the end of their term or before their term when the parliament is dissolved the country is being ready for another election. A gap emerges during the interim period of dissolution of former parliament and taking over charges by the newly elected parliament. To bridge the gap the former government is asked by the head of the state to continue in the office till the newly elected government is sworn in. This is the common practice of Westminster type parliamentary democracy. Due to massive rigging in the elections during his authoritarian regime former President H M Ershad had been compelled to hand over power to head of a caretaker government. This CTG was designed in a Joint declaration of three alliances of political parties on November 19, 1990. Ershad declared his resignation on December 4, 1990, hence the process of constituting CTG started. However, after a long discussion among the partners of three alliances the then chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was nominated as the head of the first CTG. On December 6, 1990 the CTG was sworn in with 17 advisers. The CTG of 1991 had to discharge a great deal of responsibilities to hold a reliably free, fair and peaceful Parliamentary general election. This was a vital step to democratisation. The responsibility to restore the long exiled democracy was also bestowed upon the CTG.

At the very outset this CTG's task was to neutralise the prevailing disorder that was created by the immediate past autocratic regime. According to the demand of the three alliances of political parties and All Party Students' Unity(APSU)the CTG had arrested 18 people including Ershad and his wife, within a week of its take over. They were arrested under Special Power Act(SPA). The next step of the CTG was to ensure press freedom. By abolishing a decade-old rule envisaged with the SPA of 1974 Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had been succeeded to restore the freedom of press in the country. Another task of the CTG was to free the administration from Ershad's influence. They had also perfectly completed the task by transferring obedient officials of Ershad. The CTG of 1991 had also been succeeded beyond expectation to create a congenial atmosphere for free and fair elections in the country. Some of the important steps of the CTG to create favourable environment for a free, fair and peaceful elections were;

- (a) Reorganised the EC appointing three Judges of the Supreme Court and strengthened the Commission to make it independent and effective.
- (b) Annulled all executive orders under printing Presses and Publications Act of 1973 to ensure the freedom of press.
- (c) Served the instructions to surrender illegal arms, though this initiative was not succeeded.
- (d) Brought about necessary amendments to People's Representation Ordinance, 1972 in order to award stringent punishment for election related offences.
- (e) Withdraw all government Jeeps and cars from Upazilla Parishad so that these could not be used for election campaign by any party.
- (f) Announced decree for Union Councils and Municipalities to the effect that they would be cancelled if they failed to maintain peace on the election day.
- (g) Even the elected office bearers of the local governments were also cautioned that they would be removed if they failed to uphold neutrality.
- (h) Just before the day of nomination of the candidates the CTG had transferred all DCs and SPs of all districts.
- (i) Deployed armed forces and para-military forces on election time in the sensitive areas.

Election Commission(EC): Besides the steps taken by the CTG the EC had also taken some measures to conduct free, fair and peaceful election. In fact in normal situation the parliamentary general elections would suppose to be conducted by the EC under the auspices of interim government (elected). But the situation of the country had provided a new institution for holding parliamentary general elections. However, the most important task that the EC had performed during 1991 parliamentary general election had been the preparation of a Election Code of Conduct, which was first of its kind in the country. Nevertheless, this was not so effective. However, the EC after a joint meeting with the representatives of 67 political parties³⁷ had prepared this instrument on January 24, 1991.

³⁷ See The Holiday(English Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka)February 15, 1991, p 1,7.

The code of conduct for February 1991 Parliamentary general elections had 16 clauses. The salient features of the code of conduct were as follows:

- (i) All the political parties and candidates would assist the law-enforcing agencies in tackling any untoward situation. Everybody would remain conscious of their own rights vis-a-vis the democratic rights of others.
- (ii) A combined efforts would be taken up by everybody to maintain the law and order situation and to ensure security of the personnels conducting the elections.
- (iii) Everybody would restrain themselves in issuing statements and making comments during the election campaigns to make sure that the campaign would not turn into mud-slinging.
- (iv) If anybody is apprehended with arms by the police near the polling centres, nobody would try to free him/her.
- (v) All the candidates would restrain themselves to acquire votes by alluring people with money.

It was also agreed upon that in order to settle any dispute among the contesting candidates, the representatives of the concerned parties would constitute an election coordination committee for tackling the situation.

After preparing the code of conduct a large number of allegations had been publicly raised by rival political leaders that it had been violated. The news of violence relating to election campaign were being published in everyday in the newspapers. On the other hand there was no report that any coordination committee had been formed in any part of the country. The number of forces in the law enforcing agencies were also not sufficient for ensuring the congenial atmosphere.

Election Commission officials maintained that the commission had only a coordinating body for preparing the code of conduct in collaboration with the political parties. But it was never decided how and who were going to enforce the code. The EC was apparently helpless to tackle the situation. The Representation of the People Order, 1972 as modified upto January 1991, provided for tackling the situation during the continuance of the elections and also the post-balloting disputes, but does not take the pre-election situation into the account.

Thus the role of EC in conducting election has become confined within some limited activities— providing election officials including security force³⁸ and supplying election materials for smooth casting of votes and at last publishing election results.

However, normally the role of EC is critical in making representation effective. It is the task of the EC to make sure that candidates contesting the election are following the rules and regulations of the EC. But the musclemen and money factor have become important in the electioneering process alongside the electoral rules of the EC. Analysts view that even the results of free and fair elections can be manipulated by pumping black money in the face of blatant violation of EC's ceiling on expenditure.³⁹ The EC needs to look into these matters and take appropriate measures.

At last with massive preparation and vigilance the free, fair and peaceful parliamentary general election was held on February 27, 1991. This election was unevenly unique in country's history. The neutrality and efficiency of the CTG was also established in the minds of the people through this election. Thus barring some minor stray incidents the CTG of 1991 became the 'light house' in the history of democracy in Bangladesh.

It was expected that with only one instance of holding general elections (the 5th parliamentary general elections) under the CTG, the normal way of holding democratic elections would be established in the country. Accordingly, the government was formed by the majority party BNP after the 1991 election. Besides, with the 12th constitutional amendment, the country had returned to parliamentary democracy. But the subsequent events frustrated the expectation.

³⁸ The main authority to provide security forces is the CTG. The EC can consult with the EC in this regard.

³⁹ See Dilara Choudhury, "The people of the lie", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 31, 1998, p.4.

The Election Results:

There had been a total of 6,21,81,743 voters in the February 1991 parliamentary general elections. As many as 3,44,77,803 voters i.e.55.45% voters had cast their votes. Out of this total cast votes the election officials found 3,41,03,777 i.e.98.92%valid votes and 3,73,322 i.e.1.08% invalid.

Table- 33 gives us the election results for the 5th general elections in Bangladesh. In this election the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had emerged as the single largest party in the Parliament. The BNP won a total of 141 seats out of 298 seats. The widow of a former President, who draws much of her support from the millions of Bangladeshi, Khaleda's BNP took almost 1,05,07,549 votes, to 1,02,59,866 votes for her arch rival Hasina's Awami League, according to results announced by the Bangladesh Election Commission.¹ The election result gave the BNP led by Khaleda Zia 30.81 per cent of the votes, a 0.71 percent lead over Hasina's Awami League. The AL led by Hasina got 30.08%votes. Ex-President Ershad's Jatiya Party got about 11.92 percent votes.

Despite expectation of winning two-thirds seats, Awami League was defeated to BNP by a wide margin capturing a total of 88 seats, which was less than one-third. Jatiya Party of deposed President H.M.Ershad became the third largest party in the country's fifth JS winning 35 seats. Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh won 18 seats becoming the fourth largest party in the Parliament.

Table-33
Party wise results of February 27, 1991 general election

Party	Seats Received	Percentage of Total Votes Cast
Bangladesh Nationalist Party(BNP)	141	30.81
Bangladesh Awami League	88	30.08
Jatiya Party	35	11.92
Jamaat-e-Islami	18	12.13
Communist Party of Bangladesh	5	1.19
BKSAL	5	1.81
Islami Oikya Jote	1	0.79

¹ See *Nirbachani Karjakram Protibedan* (Report on Election Programme), Jatiya Sangsad Election, 1991, 27 February 1991, pp.48-50.

Workers Party	1	0.19
JSD(Siraj)	1	0.25
NAP(Mozaffar)	1	0.76
Ganatantri Party	1	0.45
NDP	1	0.36
Independent	3	4.39

Source: See *Nirbachani Karjakram Protibedan* (Report on Election Programme), Jatiya Sangsad Election, 1991, 27 February 1991, Bangladesh Election Commission, Dhaka, pp.48-50.

Though the result had surprised BNP's major rival parties but it was not unexpected to political analysts. However, the pre-polls survey conducted by some organisations indicated neck to neck fight between BNP and AL, the wave was created in favour of BNP. The national and international election observers had also welcomed the holding this election as free, fair and peaceful.

However, the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina expressed her desire to step down from the party leadership assuming the responsibility of her party's unexpected result in the parliament election. She had given her resignation letter to AL General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury on March 3, 1991 saying that she wanted to step down from the party leadership showing respect to the democratic values. However, latter on March 5, 1991 she had withdrawn her resignation letter after earnest requests from her party well-wishers to withdraw her resignation.² On the other hand, the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) in their first meeting on March 10, 1991 unanimously elected party chief Sheikh Hasina as their leader. The ALPP also empowered Hasina to appoint Deputy Leader of the Opposition.³ The majority party BNP had no such problem. The party Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia enjoyed absolute authority to lead the party's parliamentary group under the party constitution.⁴

² See *The Bangladesh Observer*, March 6, 1991, p.1, 8.

³ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, March 11, 1991, p.1, 8.

⁴ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, March 13, 1991, p.1, 8.

Table-34
Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh

SL. No.	Year	Total Candidates	Number of Voters	Voter Turn out (%)	Number of Political Parties	Remarks
1	1973	1089	3,52,05,642	55.61	14	
2	1979	2125	3,83,63,858	50.24	29	
3	1986	1527	4,73,25,886	60.28	28	Boycotted by the major parties other than AL.
4	1988	978	4,98,63,829	54.93	8	Boycotted by the major parties
5	1991	2787	6,22,89,556	55.45	75	
6	February 1996	1876	5,61,63,296	20.97	1	Only ruling BNP participated in the election massively rigged
7	June 1996	2574	5,67,16,935	74.96	119(81)	
8	2001	1933	7,52,26,722	74.87	81(52)	

Source: Dhaka Courier 7th June 1996, FEMA 1996 election report, Election Commission 1991, 1996 and Janakantha Pakkhik, 22 October –6 November 2001, p.7.

Out of total 2487 candidates (2363 from different parties and front and 424 independent candidates) 853 candidates had forfeited their election deposits for Tk.5000 each. The Election Commission had earned as much as ninety-six Lakh Seventy Thousand Taka only from the forfeited amount of these candidates.

The main features of the 1991 election were;

1. This was the first ever-general election in the country, which was conducted under a non-party caretaker government. In western democratic countries the question on free and fairness of the election does not arise because the party in power follows some principles and procedure. But in Bangladesh particularly during Ershad regime the system of election had become stained. Rigging, violence, intimidation, booth capturing, ballot stuffing, party interference, vote buying, manipulation of election results through media coup and in many other ways were the regular features. The electoral system of the country had earned notoriety during Ershad regime. Nevertheless, the 1988 general election for the 4th Jatiya Sangsad had been a furse-which was termed as 'voterless election'. Thus the electoral system had lost all of its credibility.

2. The number of participant political parties, fronts and alliances in this general election had crossed all the earlier records. According to the EC as many as 75 political parties had contested in this election. Among these there were ultra leftists who had no trust on any electioneering, rightists, moderates and nationalist political parties.
3. The February 1991 election had also disclosed the country's multi-party democratic character with two major parties in the leading. However, a host of small and pad-based political parties had emerged in the political scenario of the country. Even though, the EC had reserved election symbols for about ninety political parties only seventy-five had fielded candidates in this election other 15 parties had no candidates. The February 1991 election has demonstrated the way that more important political parties attract the most voters to be polarised to them. The numerous other parties have been eliminated in the process.
4. The election also showed more number of defeated candidates with their election deposit lost. About 69.39 percent candidates had forfeited their election deposits against only 30.61 percent who had been able to uphold their election deposits. The EC had earned Tk. 96,70,000.00 from the forfeited amount of the defeated candidates.
5. The election also showed the centralised character of the political parties of the country in the form of fielding multiple seat contenders by the central leaders of the major political parties. As many as seven central leaders of the political parties had fielded from more than one seats in this election. The number of multiple-seat contestants were four from Awami League including party chief Sheikh Hasina, one BNP-the party chief Begum Khaleda Zia, one from JP-the chief H M Ershad, one from Jamaat- Abbas Ali Khan.
6. The February 1991 election also had less number of candidates from women, minority community and even hardly any winning candidate from the major professional class of the country i.e. agrarian class or the representatives from the peasants.
7. The religion-based party Jamaat-e-Islami, which is identified as anti-liberation party, had found a comfortable popularity in this election, thus won third position in the parliament. It may be mentioned that Jamaat had participated in the anti autocratic movement simultaneously (with other parties) but independently and played an important

role in the anti-autocratic movement. Nevertheless, the concept of non-party caretaker government was the brainchild of this party.

8. In their respective election manifestos the participant political parties unequivocally laid trust on people's power. The parties recognised the people as the source of all power.
9. It was not only an election but also more than a constitutional arrangement for peaceful transfer of power. The general election for the 5th JS was held under an exceptional situation. This was a hallmark for institutionalisation of democracy in the country along with establishing democratic governance, economic development and improving law and order situation through elected government.
10. The February 1991 parliamentary general elections as have been viewed by some analysts that it was not a product of a normal-usual developmental process. This was a result of a popular political movement mainly centered round cities and specific historical process (Huq 1994). Thus they like to consider this election more as a historical exception than a usual incident. As such, political culture of money, manipulation and muscles centering round election is bound to persist and there is no denying of the fact that it persists.

Awami League described the election atmosphere as peaceful but termed the manner of the election as not proper. The party alleged that the polling was featured by way of fake voting, irregularities in the voter's lists, change of addresses of the voters and mysterious disappearances of the names of real voters from the lists.⁵ Earlier the majority party BNP called for mutual cooperation among the democratic forces to consolidate the victory of democracy achieved through the 1991 elections. Referring to the irregularities in the enlistment of names of the voter's list, BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia said her party could have secured more votes if all the voters were enlisted in the list.⁶ Nonetheless, both the majority party BNP and main opposition AL expressed gratitude and thanked to countrymen

⁵ *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), March 4, 1991, p.1, 8.

⁶ *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), March 1, 1991, p.1.

for voting in their respective parties⁷. However, almost all the national and international election observers had termed the February 1991 election as free, fair and peaceful.⁸

The successful holding of the general elections for the 5th Jatiya Sangsad had given a strong impetus to institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. A new, legitimate republic, had been born, it was most important in the checkered history of the country because it did not arise from a coup d'état or no one's throat was cut. Immediate after election questions arose in the political quarter regarding summon of parliament, oath taking, Acting President's resignation, activities and duration of the advisers of the caretaker government. Besides, the earlier question regarding the form of government had also emerged. The analysts argued that the main highlights of the package formula of three Alliance's declaration on November 19, 1990 were, among others, electing a sovereign parliament and upholding the ideals and values of the war of liberation. Accordingly, the AL-led 8-party alliance and left leaning 5-party alliance had settled their role to restore parliamentary form of government.

Meanwhile, as a consequence of the election the country had also witnessed a new polarization in its politics. People had become fade up with a huge number of political parties. It seems that they were not ready to see the presence of so many pad-based political parties. Accordingly, a handful of political parties, only four had been able to gain the voters' choice. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had been blessed with majority seats, alongside a nearer position to Awami League. The voters had also kept some seats for Jatiya Party and religion based party Jamaat-e-Islami. There was no trend of swim with the tide in the voting pattern. Analysts viewed that voters of the country had become matured gradually. With their experiences of pains and problems throughout different era they have become more conscious. However, the general election for the fifth Parliament was quite different from all other previous elections. Unlike all other previous elections the opposition has stood on a strong feet in this (1991) election.

⁷ AL chief Sheikh Hasina on February 28, 1991 and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia on March 3, 1991 welcomed the people, see the report in this regard in *The Bangladesh Observer* of March 1 and March 5 1991 respectively.

⁸The Common Wealth Observer Group, Non-governmental observers group from four SAARC countries, All-Party British Parliamentary observers group over saw the election. A good number of local observers had also over saw the election. Besides major foreign powers like USA, USSR and India had also apprised the election as neutral and acceptable.

In 1973⁹ parliament there was virtually no opposition. The picture was almost same in the Parliament of 1979. The number of MPs from the opposition camp were only 77. On the other hand, 16 persons won as independent MP candidate. Even in 1986 as the largest opposition in the parliament Awami League had only seventy-six seats. In this Jatiya Sangsad (of 1986) most of the thirty independent Parliamentarians had also sided with the government. However, the 1991 election provided a different result. Both in seat sharing and vote counting the two major parties, BNP and Awami League had proved themselves to be rival. Against BNP's 30.81 percentage of votes Awami League had got 30.08 percent of total cast votes. On the other hand, the future of the left oriented parties had become uncertain with this election. The only candidate of five-left parties' Alliance candidate and Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon had won. Five members of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) had been elected as candidates of 8-party alliance and also with Awami League symbol 'boat'. The 'scythe' symbol of CPB had been utterly defeated. All other candidates of CPB had lost their election deposits. The only candidate of Gantantri Party had also won with the symbol of Awami League 'boat'. The left oriented NAP's candidate had won with 'boat'. For the same reason BAKSAL candidates had also won. The analysts viewed that the process of polarisation must be furthered with the pace of democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy in future.

The February 1991 parliamentary election also witnessed massive use of religion. The Jamaat wanted to establish Islamic rule. The 'Bismillah' had been successfully used by the BNP. The Awami League had not also kept any stone untouched to exploit religious cause. Even the leftists had also used religion for political gain. The BNP proved itself to be the champion of Islam. However, the AL did not totally allow this fertile ground to BNP and staked a share in it. Since 1990's the Islam-friendly politics of the AL could be noticeable. Being a secular outfit officially it put on the mantle of Islam in a calculated way. However, in the February 1991 Parliamentary election all major

⁹ See Appendix for position of different parties in the 1st to 4th Parliamentary general elections in Bangladesh.

political parties of the country utilized Islam to win the support of the majority Muslim voters.¹⁰

The pattern of seat sharing and receiving of votes by Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Awami League also revealed some meaningful aspects. The BNP has won in 140 constituencies. The party occupied second position in 56 seats; third in 47 seats and the BNP nominees had forfeited their election deposits in 57 constituencies. Bangladesh Awami League, on the other hand, has got 88 seats. The party had secured 2nd position in 164 constituencies, third in 18 seats and lost deposits in two seats. Thus it can be assumed that the organising structure of the Awami League is much stronger than the BNP. The BNP does not enjoy the traditional impressive backup of effective rural-based organisations as the Awami League does. However, with this organisational weakness, BNP has a strong appeal in people's sentiment. Among the four divisions, BNP had the best result in Dhaka and Awami LEague in Khulna. Besides BNP occupied top position in Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions. The impact of social mobilisation and political participation (see Table-35, Table-36) might not be equal in all the divisions.

The following tables (Table-35, Table-36) give the Division wise data on some selected indicators of social mobilisation and numbers of seats and percentage of cast votes received in February 1991 parliamentary election by major political parties. In 1991, according to BBS, the rate of literacy in Bangladesh was 24.82%. Among the four divisions (in 1991) of the country Dhaka had the highest literacy rate 32.68% and Khulana and Rajshahi had the same and lowest literacy rate 20.47%.

While Chittagong Division had the second highest rate of literacy. Comparatively higher rate of literacy seems to be meant for higher rate of consciousness. Thus among the four divisions Dhaka and Chittagong seem to be more conscious than other two Divisions Rajshahi and Khulna. Bangladesh Nationalist Party had received higher number of seats in Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions. Furthermore, since Dhaka is the political heartland that holds majority of seats in the national Parliament, any party that wins Dhaka and some more seats in other divisions, is sure to re-emerge as a power to contend with. However, compared to Awami League the BNP received less number of

¹⁰ See Arun Kumar Goswami, "The Grits of Democratisation in Bangladesh", in *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Vol.1, No. 1, June 2001, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, pp.133-150.

seats in Khulna. That means Awami League has fared well in a less conscious Division, Khulna. In February 1991 parliamentary general election the number of seats received by Awami League in Khulna Division was higher than all other parties. As many as 26 seats had been received by AL in Khulna Division.

This crucial aspect reveals the need for a separate and further study to establish relationship (if any) between higher literacy rate and higher number of votes received by BNP in Dhaka and Chittagong. However, to understand and explain the causes of more seats in three divisions by BNP the underlying dissimilarities in relationships of voting and number of seats must be identified. In this respect birthplace of main leader may help explaining some causes. Even though in a apparently less conscious Rajshahi Division the BNP had also got higher number of seats, the causes of this increased number seats could be attributed to the birth place of BNP's founder Ziaur Rahaman. It may be mentioned that birthplace of Ziaur Rahaman was Bogra district in Rajshahi Division. The birthplace of Awami League's charismatic leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman was Gopalganj district in Dhaka Division. While Zia's image worked well for BNP's victory in Rajshahi Division, to some extent Ershad's image helped Jatiya Party to get more number of seats in Rangpur of Rajshahi Division than Awami League. Analysts preferred to attribute countrywide credible number of Awami League's votes and its strong organisational strength to the image of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. Three teachers of Dhaka University have investigated, among others, the prevailing popularity of three deceased top leaders ¹¹(Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and General Ziaur Rahaman) that was present at the time (before 1996). Their findings were quite close to the perception of common people. Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman was the most favoured with 60 per cent voting for him, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani came second with 41 per cent support and General Ziaur Rahaman came third with a mere 15 per cent favouring him. At the time the interviews were conducted BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia was mentioned as favourite national leader by only two (0.6 per cent) respondents and Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina was not mentioned even by a single respondent.

¹¹ See Shamsul I Khan, S. Aminul Islam and M. Imdadul Haque, *Political culture, Political parties and the Democratic Transition*, Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1998.

However, according to the analysts a number of causes appeared to be mainly responsible for BNP's win and Awami League's defeat in the general elections for the 5th Parliament, these were; i) Awami League underestimated the strength of the student's front of the BNP, ii) Awami League ignored the fact that late President and founder of the BNP Ziaur Rahman had been able to create a good image about him in rural Bangladesh, iii) the people who opposed the independence of Bangladesh may be insignificant minority but they could organise themselves well under, the military-cum-civilian rule of Zia and Ershad.¹² Nevertheless, the infighting and the voter apathy undermined the AL. Moreover the party's 88 seats in 1991 elections had been more than it received in the elections those were held during 1975-1990 period.

Table-35
Divisionwise share of seats by major parties in 1991 Parliamentary general elections

Division	Total No. Seats and Votes	Parliamentary Seats received by the major political parties				
		BNP	AL	JP	Jamaat	Others
Dhaka	90	56	27	3	1	3
	18965288					
Chittagong	78	37	19	5	2	4
	16480280					
Rajshahi	72	26	16	18	7	5
	14779603					
Khulna	60	21	26	1	8	4
	11956572					
Total	300	140	88	27	18	16

Source: For literacy rate Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book, 1992, pp 285-186, For number and percentage of seats and votes received respectively Bangladesh Election Commission, Nirbachoni Karjakram Protibedan (Report on Election) 1991, Dhaka, 1991, p .

Table-36
Divisionwise Indicators of Social Mobilization during 1991

Indicators of social mobilization	Dhaka position		Rajshahi position		Chittagong position		Khulna position	
Percent of Urban Population, 1991	27.97	1	13.54	4	18.06	3	18.31	2
Adult Literacy rate of population, 1991	32.68	2	29.53	4	32.51	3	39.85	1
University Students per 1000 population, 1990	0.94	1	0.45	2	0.26	3	0.07	4

¹² See AB M S Zahur, 'Braggadocios and brusqueness are defeating the democratic polity', in The Daily Star, June 27, 2001, p.5.

Percent of Households having Radio and Television, 1981-82	40.62	4	51.02	1	43.48	3	46.79	2
Percent of House hold Reported News paper, 1981-82	11.50	3	13.48	2	13.56	1	10.36	4

Source: Figures on University Students per 1000 population, 1990 have been calculated from BBS, Statistical Pocket Book, 1992, p.75. All other figures have been calculated from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh, 1999, Twentieth Edition, May 2001, for data on Urban population see p.39, for Adult Literacy data see p. 540, data on use of radio and television see p.545, and for data on newspaper see p.546.

With the February 1991 general election the country went back to elected civilian government. This election also brought hopeful prospects for institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. Thus Bangladesh was once more on its way towards a fulfilment of all those objectives which once shaped its response to the crisis in 1971, a moment in history when through liberation the country fashioned history in its own volition. But mere holding of free and fair elections was not sufficient for adherence of democracy. However, after the election results came out the Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed in an address to the nation over radio and television on March 1, 1991 said that it was not possible to form a cabinet at this moment under Article 58 of the constitution. Acting President's address had created some misunderstanding. In this situation a delegation of the BNP headed by the Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia on March 2, 1991 met the Acting President. The Acting President stated to the delegation that there was no ground for any apprehension. He said that the council of Ministers might be formed with in a week but he would summon the Parliament for its first meeting on April 5, 1991 after election of 30 women members in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. Justice Shahabuddin said according to the opinion of the Election Commission, election of 30 women members would not be completed before April 4, 1991.¹³

But the main opposition Awami League opined that the constitution of parliament has not yet been completed as such it was not possible for the Acting President to say which Members of Parliament commands the support of the majority in Parliament. They said repolling in some centres in four constituencies and elections in two constituencies were yet to be held. They also posed the point that the BNP has not got absolute majority in

¹³ *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), March 4, 1991, p.1, 8.

Parliament and since it was not parliamentary form of government the party getting single majority has no right to form a Ministry and then its majority in the Parliament when summoned.

But the Acting President said that the present form of Presidential Government would remain tact whoever was appointed as Prime Minister. The Acting President further said that he would not lose his neutrality, for, whoever was appointed Prime Minister under the presidential form. Because under the presidential form the members of the Council of Ministers are mere advisers and all powers remain in the hands of Acting President.¹⁴ However, after a much debate the Acting President summoned the 5th Jatiya Sangsad's meeting on April 5, 1991.

¹⁴ *The Bangladesh Observer*, March 5, 1991, p.1.

Chapter VII.3

Political Participation and the February 1991 Parliamentary general election:

The democratic transition in 1990s has brought the question of participation in the limelight. It became more evident during the subsequent general elections for the 5th Parliament. The events of election bring almost every categories of population into the process of political participation. Accordingly, the election of February 1991 has provided a grand scope in this respect. John Stuart Mill¹ maintains that the principle of participation implies universal suffrage. The reasons Mill gives for not excluding any portion of the citizens from a voice in representation exactly parallel the arguments he presents for extensive participation. Mill prefers to treat voting as a trust or duty. However, the complex events of election involve individual and collective decisions, which directly affect, and are affected by, the total political and social process. As Norman D. Palmer (1975)² pointed out that the elections open up channels between the polity and the society, between the elites and the masses, between the individual and his government. They are major agencies of political socialisation and political participation.

Analysts view that people's participation in the electoral process could be traced even during the colonial period of British India. Direct participation of the people in electoral politics at various stages of the country's political evolution immensely contributed to their political socialisation and politicisation of the society. Some major "political movements in the country have crystalized around, if not originated with, electoral politics."³ The desire of the Bengali's for cultural autonomy and political autonomy found its first expression during the elections of 1954 and 1970 respectively. The zeal for democratic revival set the ground for the elections in 1991.

¹ Cited in Dennis F. Thompson, *John Stuart Mill And Representative Government*, Princeton University Press, USA 1979, p.96.

² Norman D. Palmer, *Elections and Political Development, The South Asian Experience*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1975, p.1.

³ Enayetur Rahim, "Electoral Politics in Bangladesh: 1975-88" in Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed), *Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p.4. Cited in Muhammed A. Hakim, *Bangladesh Politics The Shahabuddin Interregnum*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1993, p.42.

Larry Diamond⁴ has termed Participation as one of the central elements of the ideal-typical mass democratic culture, which enhances legitimacy, quality and authenticity of democracy among citizens through direct experience with it. Inkeles⁵ has identified people's active interest in public affairs through their active participation according to proper information. This also necessitates orientation on modern authority with objective rule in place of traditional and/or arbitrary form of authority. For Almond and Verba⁶, apart from voting in elections, high levels political interest, information, knowledge, opinion formation, and organizational membership are the manifestations of a participant political culture, which involves an activist role of the self in the polity.

In Bangladesh, however, 'participation has more recently attained prominence'.⁷ The February 1991 Parliamentary general election was more significant in this respect than any such elections that held in the country, because of its holding immediate after the 1990's pro-democratic movement. So the warmth of movement was followed by the ardent zeal of election. On the other hand, eventhough the pro-democratic movement was initiated and succeeded by the people from urban centres, the Parliamentary general election afterwards provided a broader scope for participation by all groups of people. This was very much encouraging for democracy. However, different groups of people participate in the election with different objectives. The primary objectives of the competing candidates are to capture the state power. On the other hand the supposed objectives of the voters is to protect their interests. These differing objectives give very different meanings of the terms, free and fair election.

The freeness of an election implies voters' volition, i.e. their ability to cast votes out of their free will. Fairness of an election can be defined as complete neutrality of the election authority with respect to two conditions: (i) the creation of election environment in what all candidates enjoy equal opportunities to influence the voters and (ii) an unbiased vote counting. In other words, an election is said to be fair if vote counting is impartial and all candidates enjoy equal campaigning opportunities. In democratic

⁴ See Larry Diamond, op cit 1994, p.14.

⁵ Inkeles, "Participant Citizenship", pp.1120-1141, in Larry Diamond (ed), *Political Culture...* p.14.

⁶ Almond and Verba, "The Civic Culture", p.19, in Larry Diamond (ed), *Ibid* p.14.

⁷ John Kurien, "On Development and Public Action-A Reflection on the Kerala Experience", in Sunil Bastian and Nicola Bastian (eds), *Assessing Participation, A Debate from South Asia*, Duryog Nivaran, Konark Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1996, Pp.214-215 (215).

system around the world the state bureaucracy and /or the election commission conduct the general election, which operates under political party in power. The party in power continues to conduct all normal state business. However, if it fails to earn voters' favour, a new party is sworn in as the new government. But Bangladesh's experience is different. Here the political party in power used the bureaucracy to rig the election result in their favour. The system to conduct election by the party in power miserably failed to achieve trust by the opposition parties. Election did not frustrate the army rulers to civilianise or legalise their regimes. Unlike many other developing countries⁸ the authoritarian rulers of Bangladesh, who 'ventured to hold elections' had become happy.' While the 'opposition groups who pushed for elections and participated in them' had become frustrated. As a result elections were no more the way of democracy rather than a process of legitimacy for military dictators. The demand for holding elections under non-party caretaker government germinated from this situation.

There are mainly three sets of institution involved with the process of participation in the February 1991 Parliamentary general elections, i) the persons who vote to elect the representatives, i.e. the electorate, ii) the persons who contested to get elected i.e. the representatives, and iii) the Election Authority who conducts the election. For Bangladesh during February 1991 Parliamentary general election this authority includes Election Commission, Caretaker government, and the President.

However, the February 1991 Parliamentary election was crucially important for the changed political landscape of the country. "Elections are, indeed important moments in citizen political participation and their outcome can change the contours of politics."⁹ A simple investigation within the picture of participation by the 'voters' and their 'elected representatives' could clear the assumed changes in this regard. Nevertheless, the adaptation of *social mobilization and political participation*, which would be congenial for institutionalisation of democracy, becomes the much-questioned possibility during the elections.

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington has mentioned 14 countries, Brazil (in 1974), India (March 1977), Peru (May 1980), Uruguay (November 1980), Argentina (October 1983), Turkey (November, 1983), Korea (February 1985), Pakistan (1985), Chile (October 1988), USSR (March 1989), Poland (June 1989), Nicaragua (February 1990), Myanmar (May 1990), Algeria (June 1990), where elections were a way of weakening and ending authoritarian regimes. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, ...1993, pp.174-192.

Representation and Participation:

As has been mentioned earlier, there had been a total of 6,21,81,743 voters in the February 1991 election. As many as 3,44,77,803 voters i.e. 55.45% voters had cast their votes. However, during the February 1991 Parliamentary election, 55.82 per cent of the total eleven crore fourteen-lakh population was enlisted as voters. Again among the total (6.22 crore voters) 52.88 percent were men and 47.12 per cent women.

Table-37

Changing scenario of representation in the Legislature(s) of Bangladesh in different Years

Year	Population	Number of Voters	Voter as Percentage of Population	Number of MPs	Average Number of Voters per one MP
1954	4,41,65,740	1,99,41,563	45.15	309(MLA)	64,536
1970	6,77,02,985 ¹⁰	3,12,11,209	46.10	300(MCA)+ 169(MNA)=469 elected members	66,548(for each one of 469 members) or 1,04,037(for each one of 300 members)
1973	7,01,99,049 ¹¹	3,52,05,642	50.15	300	1,17,352
1979	71479071	3,83,63,858	53.67	300	1,27,880
1986	95945388	4,73,25,886	49.33	300	1,57,753
1988	99475497	4,98,63,829	50.13	300	1,66,213
1991	109876977	6,22,89,556	56.69	300	2,07,632
Feb. 1996	121798629	5,61,63,296	46.11	300	1,89,211
June 1996	121798629	5,61,63,296	46.57	300	1,89,211

Note: MLA= Member of Legislative Assembly, MCA=Member of Constituent Assembly, MNA=Member of National Assembly; Source: BBS and EC.

⁹ Geriant Pary, George Moyser and Neil Day, *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1992, p.3.

¹⁰ Calculated on the basis of 2.25% annual rate of growth on total population 5,52,22,663 from 1961 to 1970 approximately ten years and added the number with 5,52,22,663 i.e. Census population of 1961 to find out the population of 1970.

¹¹ Calculated on the basis of 2.25% annual rate of growth on total population 5,52,22,663 from 1961 to 1973 approximately twelve years and added the number with 5,52,22,663 i.e. Census population of 1961 to find out the population of 1973.

The elections were held peacefully with sufficient turnover of voters. The ratio of participation of voters in the urban and the rural areas was almost uniform. All the five parliamentary elections till 1991 suggested that in a large number of areas the people voted in favour of the party rather than the candidates. Many candidates who received votes do not really represent the people of their constituencies.

The ultimate result is that the process is hampering the growth of the local leadership. The genuine leaders, residing in their respective constituencies, are being forced to sacrifice their seats for urban-based leaders and thus it is becoming difficult for them to emerge as the national leaders although many of them have the requisite qualifications and potential.

It is often seen that after the elections the voters of those particular areas remain unrepresented as the national level leaders can hardly look after their welfare. The above Table gives us a numerical picture of representation in the Parliament since 1954. The average number of voters per one MP has been tremendously increased since 1954. The then East Bengal Legislative Assembly of 1954 had been constituted with total of 309 members.¹² The number of total voters at that time was 1,99,41,563¹³. The age-old rule of separate electorate was existed during 1954 election. However, in 1954 one member of the then East Bengal Legislative Assembly had to represent on average 64,536 voters. Forty-five point fifteen percentage of total population was voters in 1954 election. The next elections of the land were held in 1970. In those elections there were two categories of members. One category of members were elected for Pakistan National Assembly from the then East Pakistan, their number was 169. The second category of members had been elected for East Pakistan Constituent Assembly; they were 300 in number. However, the total numbers of elected representatives during 1970 were 300+169=469. The total number of voters in 1970 elections for National and Provincial Assemblies was

¹² Twenty-three years after 1954 election, the Bangladesh Election Commission had published the Report on the Election to East Bengal Legislative Assembly March 1954, on May 6, 1977. According to the report the categories of the members were, Muslim 228, General 30, Sceduled Caste 36, Women's: Muslim-9, General-1, Scheduled Caste-2, Pakistani Christian-1, Buddhist-2, Total=309. See Report on the Election to East Bengal Legislative Assembly, Bangladesh Election Commission, Dacca, 1977, p.22.

¹³ The categories of the voters were, Muslim 1,51,59,825, General 20,95,355, Scheduled Caste 23,03,578, Women's: Muslim-1, 61,966, General-25, 726, Scheduled Caste-14, 911, Pakistani Christian-43, 911, Buddhist-1, 36,417, Total=1,99,41,563. See *Report on the Election to East Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1954*, Bangladesh Election Commission, Dacca, 1977, p.22.

3,12,11,209. Thus for the total voters if total number of representatives are counted then the average number of voters per elected representative stood at 66,548. But if only 300 (as it was the total number of members in the then East Pakistan Constituent Assembly) is taken then average number of voters per one member stood at 1,04,037. Since then the average number of voters per one elected member to the Legislatures never went down below one lakh. The Jatiya Sangsad of 1973 was the 1st in independent Bangladesh. The population of the country at that time was 7,01,99,049. Out of this total population 3,52,05,642 persons were voters. The percentage of voters to population was 50.15%. But after eighteen years in 1991 while population of the country have become almost double and accordingly number of voters have also increased significantly, the number of Seats in the Jatiya Sangsad remained same, 300. The annual growth rate of increase in the number of voters from 1973 to 1991 was 3.22%, against the constant rigidity in the number of MPs in the Jatiya Sangsad. The total numbers of voters have become almost double in 1991 from 1973. In 1973 on average 1,17,352 voters had been represented by an MP in the JS with 300 seats. In terms of population the situation was more serious. In 1973 the total population (voter plus non-voter) of the country was 7,01,99,049 that means in terms of population an MP represented on average 2,33,997 people. But in 1991 the total population of the country increased to 10,98,76,977 that pushed an MP to do the representation job for average 3.75 lakh people. Thus excess number of voters might exert excess amount of pressure on an MP. The vastness of the electorate in a constituency restricted an MP to give proper attention on many of the public affairs. However, if the growth of population were considered then the picture would be grimmer. Compared to his predecessor in 1973 an MP of 1991 had to bear more than double pressure from population. 'If the former figure is already too high, the latter figure puts the MP in an odd situation of not being able to meet in person or over shake hands with those s/he is supposedly representing.' Thus the participation of the electorate and their representatives is gravely faltering in present situation. Analysts argued that the present situation generates a large gap between the MP and the voters vis-a-vis the people. 'The greater the gap between the representatives and the represented the more sinister is the corruption in representation.'¹⁴ Besides the politics in 1991 has

¹⁴ See Imtiz Ahmed, 1999, op cit, p.6.

become more competitive. It is generally true that more competitive the parties, the greater the likelihood of high rates of participation (Milbrath 1966: 96). Even non-partisan elections do not necessarily depress turnout if there is some competition for offices. Thus in a competitive environment with abnormal higher number of electorate and population the proper activity of an MP is bound to hamper.

Party competition probably affects participation by stimulating interest in a campaign and giving citizens the impression that their individual efforts affect the outcome. If party competition does not produce greater interest and a greater sense of efficacy, it probably has little impact on participation. The activities and roles of "political gladiators" are also affected by the competitiveness of parties. A safe major party has no problem in recruiting candidates because it is the major, or only, channel to political office; its minor party opponent may have to conscript candidates to run. (Seligman, 1961; Standing & Robinson, 1958). The Parliamentary election of February 1991 was competitive. A large number of political parties contested in national election, vacillating from 14 in 1973 to 75 in 1991 elections. The BNP, which has enjoyed a birth in the ovum of power, has secured a majority of the seats and also popular vote in election.

The February 1991 election was competitive yet in another way; they make a difference in who governs. With peaceful application of armed power General Ershad had kept BNP's elected government out of power since 1983. The party returned to power again through election but in a different way. The elected President Justice Abdus Sattar, a BNP candidate, with a popular vote was out of power but an elected Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the party chief, in a Parliamentary election had come into power.

Institutional changes in Bangladesh, since 1990s, have been prompted by, among others, one fundamental urge in the main: that is the urge of democratization. The same urges underlie the modifications that have been brought about during the last decade in the election and process of electioneering. As a result of these modifications new structure i.e. caretaker government and political process dominated by two major political parties i.e. Awami League and BNP have emerged. The surfacing of competitive two-party system with the February 1991 election has also significance in the context of other democratic countries. Unlike world's biggest practicing democracy, India, Bangladesh

have achieved the two-party system in 1991's election. It may be mentioned that the two-party system is a common phenomenon and familiar to Britain and the USA.

However, the manifold increase in numbers of the electorate has some other implications. The total number of MPs in the Jatiya Sangsad had been 300 in 1st JS of 1973. It remains the same even in the 5th JS and afterwards. While an MP gets only a part of the votes of the actual number of vote cast, he is given the power to decide the fate of average 3.75 lakh people. Thus "the political state has become too crowded, hampering the style and delivery of the political performers."¹⁵ Accordingly, 'representation is structured to reproduce the power of the dismally few over the excessively large'. The existing non-adaptable political process seems to be furthered due to excessive numbers of voters being represented by one member. Thus the numerical rigidity of the parliament membership having 300 members for about four decades expose the on going consolidation process of democracy to unpredictable vulnerability. Analysts have termed this type as 'misrepresentation'. This type of situation is more acutely felt when comes the case of women and peasants. The women consist 48.59 per cent of population, while peasants or those who employed in agriculture, forestry and fishery consist 68.88 per cent of the total employed persons. But both of these groups of voters have no or minimal representation in the Parliament. Eventhough women's representation is begotten by 30 reserved seats; there is hardly any representation from the peasants. Thus this group of persons or the majority people 'have only passive relationship to the system (Milbrath 1966:2)'¹⁶. Without the reserved seats, women representation comes down to simply 1.3 per cent in 1991. This is far behind the 30 percent target to be fulfilled by 1995 set by the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations. In spite of the fact that both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are Women the under-representation of the women in Bangladesh persists.

While compared to increased rates of social mobilization and political participation the numbers of parliamentary seats remain constant over the years, quality of institutional performances has even worsened and weakened. There are lots of instances in this regard. The changes in the characteristics of the electorate and members

¹⁵ See the letter titled "False moves", written by A MM Aabad, Dhaka, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 6, 2000, p.4.

¹⁶ Lester W. Milbrath, 1966, op cit p.2.

of the parliament, inactivity of parliament and lack of democracy in the political parties have been added aspects to the deteriorating quality of institutions.

The Constituencies:

The Jatiya Sangsad has 300 elected members, each of whom is the representative of a single member constituency. The precise boundaries of the constituencies are likely to have been altered at some time. The basis of representation in the JS is one member for each constituency. In February 1991 Parliamentary General Election on average each of the 300 constituencies had 2,07,272 voters. However, no systematic attempt was made to redraw the electoral map on the basis of approximately equal number of electorate. The ratio between the largest and smallest constituency in the February 1991 Parliamentary General election was 3.08:1 according to EC data. But calculating the BBS data the ratio would be more leaned to the largest one, 3.56:1. However, there was a gulf of difference between the largest constituency Noakhali-2 having 3,71,811 votes (EC) or 4,29,783 votes (BBS)¹⁷(Table-). On the other hand smallest constituency Moulavibazar-1 with 1,20,551(EC)/1,20,402(BBS) in 1991 Parliamentary election.

Table-38
Largest and Smallest Constituency in February 1991 election

Constituency	Area	Number of Voters	Source	Remarks
270 Noakhali-2	Begumganj Upazilla, Dist. Noakhali.	3,71,811	EC, 1991	Largest
		4,29,783	BBS, 1990	
234 Moulavibazar -1	Baralekha Upazilla, Dist- Moulavibazar	1,20,551	EC, 1991	Smallest
		1,20,402	BBS, 1990	

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission(EC) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics(BBS).

However, for each of the 300 constituencies there were approximately 100 polling stations. While each polling station had an average of 2,250 voters, some had 700 to 800 voters and some had over 5000 voters. In this regard a sharp look at the voting hour and rate of cast votes would reveal some conspicuous things. They are, for example, voting time was eight hours starting from the 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. The exercise was: a voter

came to the polling station, gave his/her name and address to a polling agent (of a candidate) generally seated outside the polling station. After checking the voters' list s/he was given a slip of paper with his/her voter number. S/He then entered in to the polling centre, handed the slip to the officer concerned who, after rechecking the voters' list, gave him the ballot paper, got his/her finger marked, and was asked to go behind a curtain or closed place namely polling booth to stamp his vote. The voter then went inside the polling booth and did the needful. After that he folded the ballot paper and inserted the folded paper into the ballot box. This whole process took between 4 to 5 minutes. However, let us stipulate 2-3 minutes. Accordingly 20 to 30 votes can be cast in an hour in a booth, hence 160-240 votes for 8 hours if excess voters enter into the booth within 5.00 p.m. then they are also allowed to vote. Thus 20 more people for one booth if added then 180 to 260 voters could exercise their franchise. Thus highest $260 \times 5 = 1300$ votes could be cast in a polling centre. Analysts view that "even when there is an ideal peaceful situation and a continuous flow of voters the whole day, not much more than 50 per cent of the votes could be cast"¹⁸.

The Electorate:

In February 1991 parliamentary general election Bangladesh's electorate had been constituted, as mentioned earlier, with 6.23 crore voters. The principle of universal adult franchise, which is being enjoyed by all Bangladeshi citizens, is the outcome of long evolutionary process. In fact the process was initiated during the British colonial period in 1919 (see for brief details Appendix-). However, the abolition of separate electorate during the 1970's election in Pakistan period has finally established the principle of one man/woman, one vote. The progress towards universal suffrage had been slow and gradual. This long painful process had been pushed forward by bitter struggle for autonomy and independence, followed by a series of Acts, and spread out over a period of more than one hundred years. In contrast to this fact the present form of electoral

¹⁷See for Election Commission (EC) figure 'Nirbachan Karjakram Protibedan' (Report on Election Activity 1991), pp.126-127, and for Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data, Statistical Pocketbook, 1990, pp.66-68.

¹⁸W.A.K.Panni, "Manifold aspects of electioneering in Bangladesh", in Holiday (Weekly Newsmagazine) January 25, 1991, p.2.

arrangement under a non-party caretaker government have originated only in the 1990s anti-autocratic movement. However, at present Part VII, Article 118-126, of the Bangladesh constitution deals with elections. The key figure in the election, argued by a Bangladeshi political analyst¹⁹, and in the reproduction of democracy-the voter-appears for the first time and that again only once, in Article 122, Clause 2 of the said article deals with voter's qualifications. According to this article, a person can be a voter if s/he: is a citizen of Bangladesh; is not less than eighteen years of age; does not stand declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind; and is or deemed by law to be a resident of that constituency. In fact the original constitution of 1972, there was a fifth criterion for voter's qualification and that was, "he has not been convicted of any offense under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order 1972. So far only one person was convicted under this order. However, the sub-clause was omitted by the second Proclamation order no. of 1978.

Along with above qualities mentioned in the constitution, one must be included in the register of voters to be a part of Electorate. But there is no liability of conviction for any person who refuses to comply or who gives false information. Thus there is much scope to make error of omission or commission in preparing voter's list. The prevailing system has many elements, which could hinder the process of people's voluntary participation. However, the voter list is pivotal to the exercise of people's right to franchise. Its reliability as a basic document has the stake of all concerned. Eventhough the right to vote is recognised; many eligible people can not exercise their franchise due to false voter lists. Hundreds of thousands of legal voters could not exercise their franchise due to false voter list. It was found at the time of election that many people could not find their names in the voters' list. And some where many fictitious voters were enlisted. Analysts viewed that the MP aspirants or their agents may have influence in the direction of this type of falsification with a view to facilitate their victory.

Alongside the lagging of compliance in preparing voter's list, lack of voter's education is also responsible to hinder people's voluntary participation and accelerate mobilized participation by the MP hopefuls. The 1990's political awakening has to be

¹⁹ See Imtiaz Ahmed, *op cit*.

absorbed meaningfully into the political system through the 1991 parliamentary elections. But as Samuel H. Barnes²⁰ has found in his study;

“The almost universally low levels of formal education and political competence contribute to the difficulties of mobilization. There can be little doubt that differences in formal education have political consequences. The evidence is compelling that persons of high education participate more, are more knowledgeable, feel more efficacious, and exhibit greater sensitivity to the ideological dimensions of politics. Going beyond the simple associations between participation, education and political competence, it is further evident that participation is more crucial as a means to political competence for the poorly educated than for the better educated. Formal education and participation in politics are both ways of achieving competence.”

Table-39

Some selected Indicators of social mobilisation and Political Participation of Bangladesh in different years

Year	Some selected Indicators of Social mobilisation			Political Participation in different general elections (Rate of Cast Votes)
	GDP	Literacy	Number/Circulation of Daily Newspapers	
1954	12360 million Rupees	(1951) 16.0%	Number 12 Circulation na	37.19%
1970		(1961 Census) 21.5%	Number 25 Circulation na	60%
1973	4907 Crore Taka.	24.3%	Number 35 Circulation na	55.61%
1991	75102 Crore Taka	32.4%	Number 1212 Circulation na	55.45%
June 1996	1301526 million Taka		Number Circulation na	74.87%

Note: *na Not Available*, Source: 1. Statistical Digest of East Pakistan, 1955, Page-315;

2. Human Development Report 1992, Page 137, 2. Bangladesh Election Commission.

3. Statistical Digest of Bangladesh 1973, p.164,

4. Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh, 1991, p.295,

5. Population Census of Pakistan 1961, Literacy and Education, Census Bulletin 4, p.vii.

6. Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 1992, p.533,

7. Economy of Pakistan (1950) Office of the Economic Adviser, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Karachi, 1951, p.4.

8. Bangladesh Economic Survey 1980-81, p.1.

9. Planning Commission, The Third Five Year Plan, 1965-70: Government of Pakistan Press, 1967, p.11, Cited in M. Nazrul Islam, 'Pakistan and Malaysia, p.141.

10. Report on Provincial Assembly Election of East Bengal 1954, p.

²⁰ Samuel H. Barnes, "Participation, Education and Political Competence: Evidence from a sample of Italian Socialists", in *The American Political Science Review*, Volume LX June 1966 No.2, p.348.

The above Table gives us the picture of changes in the main indicators of social mobilization and political participation over time. Since 1954 the rates of social mobilization and political participation have been increasing at a faster rate. But the quantity and quality of the major institutions have not increased and improved suitably. These social and economic changes must have impact on political arena, and it is now almost clear that the consensus among the urban-based privileged class was the key factor in the political change in 1990. Nevertheless, the newly emerged businessmen were most dominant among this privileged class. To the *nouveau riche* class, a role in the political process meant the ability to act on essential matters of capital and property with in a stable system, which guaranteed their possessions. "They drive from one party to another to earn political capital. With this capital they amass material fortune and keep hold on the herdsman and shanty rabble. They display it as a decisive vote base and thus enhance their price tag in the eyes of the crazy political parties."²¹ While both the BNP and AL agreed in early 1980s and in 1990s respectively to encourage private enterprise and not to further extend nationalization, none of the parties had identified themselves with the aspirations of the agrarian segments and mobilizing support from the peasantry. It may be mentioned that the dream of the Bengali peasants (predominantly of Muslim origin) advanced the cause of creation of Pakistan.²² Besides interests of all segments of the people of the then East Pakistan culminated into the cause for independent Bangladesh. Both historian and sociologist argued that in order to protect their narrow class interest the (Muslim) Upper class pretended to secure the leadership of the peasants. At that time this (Muslim) Upper class advocated to protect 'Muslim Communal interest in the form of job'²³. The urban politicians were 'instrumental in mobilizing the peasants

²¹ A R Shamsul Islam, "Their Unending Political Dribbles", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) 10 May 2000, p. 4.

²² See Binayak Sen, "Fragmented and Polarised Polity: Note on Political Parties in Bangladesh", in Jeevan Thiagrajah (ed), *Governance and Electoral Process in Bangladesh*, Report of the Non-Governmental Election Observers from South Asia (SAARC). Parliamentary Elections, June 12th 1996-Bangladesh, International Centre for Ethnic Studies in association with Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1997, pp. 165-188 (166).

²³ Noted Sociologist A.K. Nazmul Karim suggests, 'The Upper strata of the Bengali Muslim community in its bid for securing the leadership of the Muslim peasants sometimes even supported and led movements for land reforms and such other legislative measures, which were as such against their class interest. The Muslim Upper class could very well perceive that the advocacy for the protection of Muslim Communal interest in the form of jobs, etc., would benefit them more than the protection of their narrow class interest'

in all major political movements' during British period for Pakistan, and during Pakistan period for Bangladesh. But in Bangladesh during pro-democratic movement of 1990 the absence of peasants was acutely felt. Which made them more to be 'the first victims of politics'. However, the necessity to mobilize the peasants arose during the election of February 1991. Nevertheless, in both the cases i.e. for Pakistan to Muslim League and for Bangladesh to Awami League, election funds came from Adamjee, Ispahanis, Khojas, and Bohras.²⁴ After the independence the Adamjee, Ispahanis, Khojas, and Bohras had left the country. Meanwhile, in absence of any strong land owning class and industrialists in Bangladesh, some people had earned huge sum of money with the help of political patronisation and then turned into big businessmen. Latter on, in line with their political patronization they entered into the Parliament with the direct backing from the centralized leadership. Like the ambiguous process of rising of the nouveau riche and their implicit relationship with the political parties, "fund-raising by political party leaders and other functionaries remains outside the pale of questioning whatsoever". According to a Survey conducted by Bengali Daily *Bhorer Kagoj*²⁵, behind the scene fund collection by political parties has been identified as the principal cause for the spread of corruption in the country. Eighty-five per cent of the respondents held such a view reflecting what might be regarded as a majority opinion. In effect the circulation of a huge sum of money that is unaccounted for like in the case of black money. Which creates an economic underworld of its own.

When leaders at the top garner money from various individuals and groups it is not incumbent upon them to maintain any account of what was received and deposited in the party fund. There are risks of cuts and rip-offs being cornered by money collectors. Since accountability and transparency go by default at the highest echelon of any political party their functionaries in the districts and petty office bearers of outlying units would predictably be least bothered by any need to account for the money they collect. Hence, there is layer after layer of corruption induced by the countrywide fund-raising activities

in "The Dynamics of Bangladesh society", pp.241-241. Cited in Taj Ul-Islam Hashmi, *Pakistan as a Peasanti Utopia, The communalization of class politics in East Bengal, 1920-1942*, Westview Press, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1992, p.90.

²⁴ See Harun-or-Rashid 1987, op cit

²⁵ See The *Bhorer Kagoj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 7, 2000, p 1.2, (see Appendix for detail survey results)

of political parties and their front organisations, especially the trade and professional unions.

Huge sums of money are involved in party politics-keeping the organisation well-oiled, preparation for public rallies, maintenance of cadres, electioneering etc. are enormously expensive affairs. Therefore, the question about transparency of the sources of funding and how the collected money is being spent assume a critical importance if monetary corruption and criminalisation of politics are to be stopped across the board.

Having a non-transparent funding of political parties, an implicit and explicit relationship between the politics (of the major political parties) and the rich businessmen have been established in Bangladesh. The politics has thus become rich men's game. The place of *poor* peasants is far away from present state of politics. The peasantry is not assigned the status of any social group in accordance with the prevailing conditions of politics and thus is not well integrated into the system.

Researchers do not find any differences between the ideologies of the two major political parties of the country, except narrowness and their party viewpoint. Non-transparency in the electoral process, no source of political financing and weaknesses to implement law, encourage the politicians to view politics with commercial out look.²⁶ On the other hand politician and bureaucrats go hand in hand.²⁷ The growing presence in politics of a class of people who view politics as a business investment and will spend large sums of money in the electoral process which needs to be recouped when their preferred party comes to power. Such a commercialised perspective on politics is encouraged by the lack of transparency in the system of elected and political financing or the protection of law, as in the US, to enforce such transparency. However, the societal implications of such a transformation in the political culture of Bangladesh lies in its exclusively effect on a large segment of the population. People without wealth, or the patronage of wealth or who do not aspire to wealth, have little prospect of surviving in politics. This perspective on politics is of crucial significance in the disempowerment of the poor as well as women through their distancing from public affairs. This

²⁶Rehman Sobhan in a dialogue of a leading Bangladeshi think-tank, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in June 2000; see *Prothom Alo* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 19,2000, p.11.

²⁷Major (Retd.) Hafizuddin in a dialogue of a leading Bangladeshi think-tank, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in June 2000; see *Prothom Alo* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 19,2000, p.11.

development has important implications for agendas of poverty alleviation, gender and governance reform where sustainability depends on giving a political voice to the deprived members of society.²⁸

There may be correlation between GDP, literacy and communication on the one hand and political participation (Table-39) on the other. The increased rate of social mobilisation may help increasing the rate of political participation. The rate of cast votes in the so far (recognized) credible elections, for instance, was 55.61 in 1973, and remaining almost same in 1991 55.45 and rise to 74.96 percent in June 1996 election. The almost same rate of participation in 1973 and after 18 years in 1991 may be attributed to the prolonged authoritarian rule immediate before 1990's democratic transition, that might be resulted into people's callousness. The democratization process since 1990's helps removing the callousness of the people. Thus the rate of participation, as rate of cast votes, has been on rise. On the other hand during the period between 1990 to 1996 the GDP, urbanization and process of dissemination of information have been considerably increased.

The Election Observers followed that more and more women come to polling stations to vote. However, not only polling centres the presence of increasing number women's participation could be felt in the economic sectors of the country. Lack of official record on gender based data of actual vote cast leads us to assess the degree of women's participation, in other ways. In Bangladesh context analysts are interested to view the political participation of women from the perspective of economic dimensions. In textile sector, especially the garment components of it consisted of 90 percent of women as the labour force. This was evident that the principal contributors towards the sustainability of the economy were women; and it could be argued that labourers' contribution were major factors in determining the rights to be in the Parliament and to represent themselves.²⁹ Apart from the subjective assessments of the election observers the increased rate of women's participation in the outside economic activity may help assessing the situation. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) manages the data in this

²⁸Rehman Sobhan, 'Bangladesh's Confrontational Political System, The search for Solution', in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 25, 2000, p.7

²⁹ Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Report No.37, *Political Participation of Women in Bangladesh: The Issue of Constitutional Representation*, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka. and Pp.2-3.

regard. According to BBS total number of civilian labour force is estimated to be 51.2 million in 1990-1991 whereas it was 30.9 million in 1985-1986. This change is due to increase of female labour force from 3.2 in 1985-86 to 20.1 million in 1990-91. It happened due to large increase in the labour force participation especially in the agricultural sector of rural areas.³⁰ On the other hand compared to earlier years the rate of economic participation in the non-agriculture sector has been considerably increased over the agriculture sector (Table). The number and percentage of both male and female employed in the non-agriculture sector were 13461000 (44.2) and 2343000(11.9) respectively out of total 15804000(31.5%) persons employed in non-agriculture sector in 1990-91. For the agriculture sector the figure was 16981000(55.8%) for male and 17373000(88.1%) for female in the same period 1990-91. However, the share of non-agriculture sector increased to 15326000 person's i.e.45.6% for male and almost double, 4414000 person's i.e.22.6% for female in 1995-96. Whereas the agriculture sector employment declined over five-year period. In 1995-96 the percentage of employed person in agriculture sector went down to 63.2% in 1995-96 from 68.5% in 1990-91. The percentage of male employed in agriculture sector was 54.4% and female was 77.4 in 1995-96.

Table-40
Employment in broad economic category

Year	Sex	Total in '000' (Percent)	Agriculture number in '000'(Percent)	Non-Agriculture number in '000'(Percent)
1990-91	Male	30443(100)	16981(55.8)	13461(44.2)
	Female	19716(100)	17373(88.1)	2343(11.9)
	Both	50159(100)	34354(68.5)	15804(31.5)
1995-96	Male	33765(100)	18439(54.4)	15326(45.6)
	Female	20833(100)	16419(77.4)	4414(22.6)
	Both	54598(100)	34858(63.2)	19740(36.8)

Source: BBS 1997, Statistical Pocketbook, Bangladesh 97, and p.169.

This increased rate of economic participation by women and that again in cost of more increase in non-agriculture sector than agriculture sector might have corresponding effect on their participation in other sector. As a major indicator of social mobilization i.e. shifting of occupation from traditional agricultural sector to modern non-agriculture

³⁰See Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistical YearBook of Bangladesh 1996, and p 55.

sector this effect is more evident. As Deutsch³¹ has rightly pointed out that 'the effects if social mobilization are likely to be reflected in the electoral statistics.' Apart from increase in the non-agriculture sector employment by both sexes and particularly by women some other indicators of social mobilization can be mentioned.

In recent years urban population is growing at a faster rate than rural population. (Table) But actually high population growth rates in the rural areas helped fuel migration to the urban area.

Table-41
Urban-Rural Growth Differentials (URGD) in Bangladesh

	1951-1974	1974-1991	1951-1991
URGD(%)	3.19	5.56	4.20

Source: Calculated from the Bangladesh Population Census Report 1981 and 1991, BBS. Cited in Arun Kumar Goswami, *'Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh'*, in *Empowerment, A Journal of Women for Women*, Volume 5, 1998, Pp.45-74 (56)

Earlier mostly males migrated from rural areas, but at present females are also increasingly migrating. The informal sector now accounts for a substantial portion of employment growth in urban areas. The newly emerging garment industry of the country has been providing jobs for increasing number of females. A third to a half of all female urban migrants find jobs in domestic or personal service (UNFPA 1996). However, population change in urban areas is more rapid than in rural areas and recently change of number of women in urban areas is higher than that of men (Table).

Table-42
Population Change during 1981-1991

Gender	1991		1981		% Change	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Women	10.25	43.89	6.23	37.39	64.53	17.39
Men	12.20	45.11	7.86	38.43	55.22	17.38

Source: Bangladesh Population Census 1991, BBS 1994, p.43. Cited in Arun Kumar Goswami, *'Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh'*, in *Empowerment, A Journal of Women for Women*, Volume 5, 1998, Pp.45-74 (57)

The new economic opportunity provided by the growth of garment sector has brought some other changes in to women's lives in the country. This change has caused by, among others, the growth of garment sector, which began in the early to mid-1980s and has been especially rapid since 1990. Thus there has been a substantial changes in

³¹ See Karl S. Deutsch, 'Social Mobilization and Political Development', in *The American Political Science*

women's domestic lives, in the labour market, in reproductive roles, and in attitudes and aspirations about family life, marriage and children. The World Fertility Survey established that women working in the modern sector—that are those formally employed as teachers, factory workers, nurses, shop assistance and so on—marry an average of 2.4 year later than women doing domestic and agricultural work. Latter and higher age at marriage due to education and employment tend to reduce age difference between spouses and fertility rates. This process may also facilitate the women folk to participate in some other social and political activities.

Table-43

Women and Men in the labour force and crude participation rates

Year	Labour Force Total		Crude Participation Rate		
	Million	% Women	Total	Women	Men
1974 Census	21.9	4.3	28.7	2.5	53.0
1981 Census	25.9	5.6	28.8	3.4	52.7
1984-85 LFS	29.5	9.1	30.2	5.6	53.8
1989 LFS	50.7	41.2	46.9	40.0	53.3

Source: BBS 1994, Cited in Arun Kumar Goswami, "Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh", in *Empowerment*, Volume 5, 1998, Pp.45-74 (61).

A recent Asian Development Bank (ADB) study suggests that "Bangladesh's \$2.2 billion ready-made garment industry is transforming the social and economic landscape for the women."³²

Table -44

Average annual growth rate of Labour force participation by residence

Period	Urban		Rural	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1961 to 1974	0.4	1.8	5.2	5.7
1974 to 1985	9.8	1.8	14.9	5.8
1985 to 1989	21.6	1.9	162.5	1.3

Source: Labour Force Survey 1989, BBS 1994, Cited in Arun Kumar Goswami, 'Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh', in *Empowerment, A Journal of Women for Women*, Volume 5, 1998, Pp 45-74 (57)

The present state of women's labour force participation rate is very low (Table), however, it is growing at a faster rate than that of men. Despite the premiership of Bangladesh being twice held by women, very few women are members or activists of the

Review, Vol. LV, September 1961, p.500.

³² ADB Review (Undated), Manila, Philippines, p 3.

political parties of Bangladesh. Due to lack of the political activism and money they can not even compete in election. The temporary quota of ten- percent women membership in the Jatiya Sangsad has not benefited the women rather than the majority party. In 1991 general election forty women candidates contested from forty seats. Apart from the multiple seat contestants like Awami League's Sheikh Hasina from three seats, Syeda Sajeda Choudhury from two seats and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia from five seats, thirty-seven women candidates contested in these elections. Out of these forty candidates only four had won in this election.

The following *Table* gives us the figure of the winning women candidates from mainly two parties BNP and AL. From the Awami League camp, the three women candidates who won in this election were the Party President Sheikh Hasina and the two central leaders of the party Syeda Sajeda Choudhury and Begum Motia Chudhury. The single woman candidate from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party who won in this election was the party chief Begum Khaleda Zia. Mentionably Begum Zia won in a big way in all the five seats she contested. However, out of forty women candidates all the thirty-seven candidates had been defeated in this election, and as mentioned earlier only four had won.

Table- 45

Name of women candidates who won in 1991 election

Name of women candidates and their party affiliation	Constituencies
Begum Khaleda Zia, BNP	Bogra-7, Dhaka-5, Dhaka-9, Feni-1 and Chittagong-8.
Sheikh Hasina, Awami League	Gopalganj-3
Syeda Sajeda Choudhury, Awami League	Faridpur-2
Mst. Begum Matia Choudhury	Sherpur-2

Source: Election Commission 1991 Ibid pp.51-52.

In Bangladesh, nominating a few women candidates "has been merely a ritual to (some) political parties",³³ whether they win or lose. However, compared to previous years (Table) the number of women candidate as competitor in the general elections has increased yet their number is not at all significant.³⁴

³³ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 11, 1996, p.4.

³⁴ See Arun Kumar Goswami, "Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh", in *Empowerment*, Volume 5, 1998, p.63.

Table-46
Women's Political Electoral Participation: 1979-1996

Year	Number of Candidates				Number of Contesting Parties	Number of Parties with women candidates	
	Total	Male	Female				
			Number	Percentage			
1979	2125	2108	17	0.8	29	9	31
1986	1429	1409	20	1.4	28	5	18
1988	978	971	7	0.7	10	3	30
1991	2774	2727	47	1.7	75	16	21
1996	2569	2532	37	1.44	119	16	13.45

Source: BBS 1994, Bhorer Kagoj (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 5, 1996; Janakantha (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 28, 1996, Cited in Arun Kumar Goswami, *Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh*, in *Empowerment*, Volume 5, 1998, p.63.

Compared to their increased rates of cast vote in 1991 parliamentary election, women's representation in the parliament remained dismally low; the case of peasants in this regard were even darker. It may be mentioned that both in terms of economic participation and rate of cast vote presence of peasants is indispensable. It is due to the concerted effort of the peasants that country's GDP growth is making possible. The peasants with their tenacious objectivity, hardworking and unwavering commitment to their vocation had no representation in the JS. Stoically unaffected by the reverberations of frequent political standstills, confrontational flare-ups and economic shutdowns, the peasantry in Bangladesh remained focused on their job, in a sincerely intense way.³⁵ The peasants of the country are very laborious. Peasants' non-representation in the JS may be attributed to their inherent economic vulnerability. In a predominantly rural and agriculture based country, institutionalisation of democracy needs inalienable role of the women and the peasants.

Bangladesh is an agri-based country. The history of civilization witnessed the fact that society was moved around agriculture. Agriculture alone contributes 32 percent of country's GDP and the sector of cereal production alone contributes almost 23 per cent. As mentioned earlier more than 63 percent of country's labour force is employed in

³⁵ See The Editorial of *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 22, 2000, p.4.

agriculture sector and cereal production alone has 57%. It is nearly impossible to increase the size of arable land as at present only 1.4% of the arable land is uncultivated. According to the agriculture census of 1983-84 the total arable land of the country was 2 crore 1 lakh 57 thousand 564 acre. Latest census reveals that the size has been reduced to 1 crore 77 lakh 71 thousand and 339 acres. Due to urbanisation, construction of roads and embankments, establishment of industries and residential houses the availability of land is decreasing. According to statistics provided by BBS, a net area of 9.34-lakh hectares arable land has been declined over the years between 1984 and 1995. While the population has become double, the land has been reduced. The responsibility to fulfill the demands of ever increasing number of population is being borne by the peasants. But the peasants are neglected. Because there is hardly any representatives in the JS from the peasants. The persons who lead this sector politically, they have only political rather than any experience of agriculture. Even the leaders of agriculture sector are not peasants, not learned and experienced in agriculture science, agriculture production and agro-based industry.³⁶

On the other hand, considerable number of vote cast in the election is nothing but the presence of more number of peasants in the polling centres of the rural areas. Because more number of Bangladeshi i.e.88% are living in rural areas and more number of people in Bangladesh have been employed in agriculture sector i.e.68.8% in 1991. Clearly bulk of the 55.45% cast votes in the parliamentary election of 1991 might have come from the peasants. Again in case of representation in the Parliament they are nowhere. With "a negligible or almost no representation from the working classes and masses, the concept of democracy soon became a mockery and a farce."³⁷ Analysts view that 'people' have got involved in politics only in once in every five-year and that is in the election time, has the relevance of this harsh scenario. Nevertheless, only the opportunity to vote does not guarantee the opportunity to participate in the socio-economic decision-making process. Apart from their economic vulnerability the members

³⁶ See Khurshidul Alam Kazal, "Krishi O Krishibidder Bhabishyat Kon Dike", (Where is the future of agriculture and agriculturist) in *The Daily Ittefaq* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 11, 2000, p.5.

³⁷ Dilara Choudhury, "Musical Chairs", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) September 13, 2001, p.4.

of the peasantry “may not have risen to full skill or class consciousness”³⁸, that keep them away from the game of present state of politics. However, if the elected representatives do what they have pledged during the election campaign, then this type of argument need not to be posed. But the reality is different. ‘The MPs represented the interest of the business class and the bureaucracy. The peasants, the women, and the down trodden are not represented.’³⁹

The Representatives:

The most familiar identity of the people’s representatives in the Bangladesh Legislature is MP, stands for Member of Parliament. They are influential personalities in shaping and implementing public policy of the country. Article 66 of the Bangladesh constitution narrates the pre-requisites of the candidate seeking election to the Parliament. This has critical implication in so far as representation is concerned. Clause 1 of the Article says: A person shall subject to the provisions of clause (2), be qualified to be elected as and to be, a member of Parliament if he is a citizen of Bangladesh and has attained the age of twenty-five years.

2. A person shall be disqualified for elections as, or for being, a member of Parliament who- (a) is declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind; (b) is an undischarged insolvent; (c) acquires the citizenship of, or affirms or acknowledges allegiance to, a foreign state; (d) has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release.

(dd) holds any office of profit in the service of the Republic other than an office, which is discharged by law not to disqualify its holders, or (g) is disqualified for such election by or under any law.

In addressing the issue of qualification, critics have already pointed out that the candidate seeking election to the parliament is not required (generally) to enroll as a voter in the electoral roll of any constituency of the country. Among the MPs in the 5th

³⁸ Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics, Who gets, What, When, How ?*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. New York, London, 1936, p.18.

³⁹ Dilara Chowdhury, in a dialogue on 10 years of democracy: Lessons and way ahead, arranged by The Daily Star, see The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) February 13, 2002, p.4

Parliament and also for 7th Parliament,⁴⁰ Dhaka has been the regular place of residence for 35% of all candidates. Whereas in 1954 only 11.65% elected people's representatives to the then East Pakistan Legislative Assembly had their regular place of residence at Dhaka. 'More interestingly, most of these candidates make trips to their respective constituencies just before the election. While this situation is bound to pull resources towards Dhaka to the detriment of the rest of the country, it provides grounds for intermediaries' (mostly mastans and local touts) to organise and reproduce links between the candidate and his/her constituency. From the standpoint of representation, nothing can be more dangerous than this.

Even though, the February 1991 parliamentary general elections for the 5th Jatiya Sangsad were held under a Presidential set up, the inherent expectation, as has been envisaged in the Joint declaration of the three Alliances, was to create a 'Sovereign Parliament'. "The self-interest of politicians and bureaucrats, together with the role of political institutions and forms of government, were of wholly decisive importance."(Olle Tornquist 1999:38)⁴¹ The MPs of 1991 were also entrusted to make amendments in shaping the commitment for 'Sovereign Parliament', which they had successfully performed. The MPs' role is pivotal for making government's contribution favourable to lessen the sufferings of the toiling masses. Thus expectations and aspirations of MPs becomes the dominant parameter to change the prevailing miserable social, political and economic conditions of the country. The political scientists of Bangladesh are also well aware of the situation. A considerable number of authoritative studies have documented the demographic and class background, political background and on their perceptions and ideology of political issues. The studies of such categories could be found on the elections during British period⁴², Pakistan period⁴³ and on credible elections during independent Bangladesh⁴⁴. The study on the Members of the 5th Parliament found that

⁴⁰ Imtiaz Ahmed, 'Electoral process in Bangladesh', in *The Daily Star*, April 1, 1999, p 6.

⁴¹ See Olle Tornquist, *Politics and Development, A Critical Introduction*, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 1999, p.38.

⁴² Shawkat Ara Husain, *Politics and Society in Bengal*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1991 and Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh, Bengal Muslim League and Muslim Politics 1936-1947*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1987.

⁴³ Najma Choudhury, *The Legislative Process in Bangladesh: Politics and Functioning of the East Bengal Legislature 1947-1958*, University of Dacca, 1980.

⁴⁴ Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, Problems and Issues*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1980; and Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, 1994.

most of the MPs were from business and industrialist class. Most of the parliamentarians were not professional politicians. They were businessmen to begin with, or became so after being elected. Naturally, most of their time and efforts are spent on running their business and adding to their personal wealth. A significant amount of their time is also spent on lobbying government officials at the secretariat, which is considered to be the permanent seat of government. The reality is that they spend little time for legislative functions.

Table-47
Social Correlates of the Members of Parliament

Occupational Background of the MPs	1991(%)		1973(%)	1954(%)
Businessmen and Industrialists	53	Total Number 59	24	4
Former Army officers now businessmen and industrialists	6		--	--
Lawyers	19		26	55
Teachers	9		10	5
Landholders	4		18	19
Physicians	3		5	4
Retired civil servants	2		1	--
Religious leaders	--		--	7
Journalists	2		--	4
Whole time politicians	2		12	--
Miscellaneous	1		4	2

Source. Adopted from Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, UPL, Dhaka, 1994, p.151.

Table-48
Social Correlates of the Population (seen as electorates)

Population in 1991: 1114000	Voter as percentage of population 55.82%
Voters in 1991: 62181743	
Men Voters :3,30,40,757(52.88%)	
Women Voters :2,91,40,986 (47.12%)	
Percentage of agriculture, forestry and fishery among the employed persons	68.5%
<i>Non-Agriculture sector</i>	
Production and Transport	13.9%
White collar workers(Administrative, Managerial and clerical)	2.6%
Professional and Technical	2.9%
Sales	8.0%
Service	3.3%
Not adequately Defined	0.8%

Source: Adopted from the Labour Force Survey, 1990-1991 cited in *Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh* 1995, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), p.140 along with percentage of voters adopted from Election Commission (EC)

The above *Table* gives us a comparative picture of the occupation of the Parliamentarians in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad with those of the Parliamentarians in 1954 and 1973. Compared to the previous parliaments the 5th parliament of Bangladesh, as has been found in the recent study, had more number of businessmen than all other professionals. Besides the 5th Parliament had got more number of young aged, more number of post-graduates, alongwith more number of inexperienced parliamentarians who had no prior involvement even with politics. All of these characteristics of the parliamentarians of the 5th Parliament could be attributed to recent trend in social mobilisation and political participation in the country.

Since independence a *nouveau riche* class has been growing in large number with the help of state largesse. Researchers have found that the country had at least one thousand *crorepote* (millionaire) in 1991. The need of money to conduct the game of electoral race and political activities make political parties depended on this *nouveau riche* class. Thus *nouveau riche* (mostly businessmen and industrialists) in turn seek nomination from the major parties, which the parties both for money supply and get confirmed to win over election, are increasingly interested to abide by. The process of nominating the non-politicians business people drives out politicians or full time activists from the electoral contest. The party activists or politicians who have sacrificed his whole life for the party become frustrated during the election time, when his beloved party refused his nomination to contest in the election.

More number of inexperienced politicians thus fill-up the seats in the parliament in cost of refusal to some of the full time politicians by the major parties. Because of the inherent defect regarding lack of experience in politics of democracy alongwith other constraints, the priority to strengthening legislature had to be achieved. 'They, especially the so-called fresh faces the ones with money and muscle power began to make an unholy inroad into the mainstream political parties' fold. The *modus vivendi* was rather simple. It was the contributions of these groups in to the parties' campaign funds that played a catalytic role in bringing about this unholy alliance between the two. In the

absence of Political Parties Registration Act the parties had no difficulties, whatsoever, in accepting the money and thereby, willy-nilly, coming under their influence.⁴⁵

Table-49
Comparison of Education for Legislators of 1973 and 1991

Level of Education	Legislators 1973		Legislators 1991	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Post-graduate	78	28	114	38
Graduate	128	45	139	46
Below graduate	75	27	47	16
Total	281	100	300	100

Source: Adopted from Rounaq Jahan and Talukder Maniruzzaman⁴⁶

Comparison of Age for Legislators Elected in 1973 and 1991

Age	1973		1991	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
56 and above	13	5	62	21
46-55	61	21	101	34
36-45	112	40	113	38
31-35	63	23	20	7
20-30	31	11	4	1
Total	280	100	300	100

Source: Adopted from Rounaq Jahan and Talukder Maniruzzaman

Legislative Experience of Members of Assemblies of 1973 and 1991 in
Percentage of Total Members

Experience	1973 Percentage	1991 Percentage
No Experience	33	68
Experience of one Assembly	57	17
Experience of two Assemblies	10	7
Experience of three Assemblies	-	4
Experience of four Assemblies	-	4
	100	100

Source: Adopted from Talukder Maniruzzaman(1994)

There are even some other dimensions of business politics nexus. In Bangladesh most often the politicians help businessmen to borrow large sums of money from the banks. This has become evident from a recent survey and a seminar on the problem of default loans. The Bangladesh Bank survey found politicians' recommendations

⁴⁵ Dilara Choudhury, "Musical Chairs", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) September 13, 2001, p.4.

⁴⁶ See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, Problems and Issues*, University Press Limited, 1980; and Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, 1994.

responsible for 77% of the one thousand top loan defaulters. Government ministers are top among these politicians followed by the MPs. Besides some leaders of the ruling party's central wing, and some influential trade union leaders had often recommended for these default loans. However, the political interventions into the lending process of banks have come to the public sight. 'Analysts view the affairs of bank loan under the hostage of political power and strength'⁴⁷.

Two heirs of two deceased leaders, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and Lt. General Rahaman are leading the two major political parties in the country. Begum Khaleda Zia has been selected as the Chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) because she is the widow of Ziaur Rahaman. On the other hand Sheikh Hasina has been nominated as the President of the Bangladesh Awami League because she is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. Accordingly the family relations of this two leaders are most important in the hierarchy of the respective parties. It is very much unlikely that anything out of the consent of the main leaders would be decided in the executive committee of the parties or in any other echelons of the parties. The circles of central leaders encourage the tight grip of the main leaders. However, 'due to centralization of political power the big political parties are increasingly remote from voters'.⁴⁸ The most influential central leaders very often contest from multiple seats. Article 71, Clause 2, of Bangladesh Constitution facilitates a person to contest in the parliamentary election from more than one constituency. Provided, the multiple contestant can retain only one seat if s/he won more than one seats. 'Indeed, it has become a common practice for some of the leaders, particularly of major political parties, to stand in the election from more than one constituency (Imtiaz Ahmed 1999)'⁴⁹.

⁴⁶See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, Problems and Issues*, University Press Limited, 1980, and Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, 1994.

⁴⁷ See *The Daily Janakantha* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 1999, p 6.

⁴⁸ Richard Swift, "Democracy, Is that all there is?" in *NEW INTERNATIONALIST*, 324 June 2000, Pp.9-28 (10).

⁴⁹ See Imtiaz Ahmed, op cit

Table-50
Number of multiple seat winners in 1991 parliamentary general elections

Name of multiple seat winner and Party	Number of seat contested and won	Seats
Begum Khaleda Zia, BNP	Five	42 Bogra-7, 184 Dhaka-5, 188 Dhaka-9, 266 Feni-1, and 286 Chittagonj-8
Hussain Muhammed Ershad, Jatiya Party	Five	19 Rangpur-1, 20 Rangpur-2, 21 Rangpur-3, 23 Rangpur-5, and 24 Rangpur-6.
Tofael Ahmed, Awami League	Two	117 Bhola-1, and 118 Bhola-2.
Abdur Razzak, Awami League	Two	218 Madaripur-2 and 222 Shariatpur-3.
Total number of multiple-seat contenders = Six, Total number of multiple-seat winners = Four.		

Source: Election Commission 1991

The above table (Table-50) gives us the picture of multiple seat-winning politicians in the February 1991 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh. According to Election Commission source a number of central leaders of the BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat Islami Bangladesh had fielded nomination from more than one seat in the parliamentary election for the 5th *Jatiya Sangsad*. The total number of multiple-seat contenders was seven. Out of this seven only four had won all the seats they contested, two won partially and one lost all the seats. BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia won all the five seats she contested including two from Dhaka City. Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina who contested from three seats including two from Dhaka City, won one from her home district Gopalganj. Begum Sajeda Choudhury, a central big shot of the AL had also contested from two seats but she won only in one-Faridpur-2 seat. Other Awami League central leaders who contested and also won from two seats were Tofael Ahmed from Bhola-1 and 2 and Abdur Razzak from Madaripur-2 and Shariatpur-3. Jatiya Party Chief and former President Ershad won all the five seats he contested from his home district Rangpur. Mr. Abbas Ali Khan Acting Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh lost both the seats he contested. He contested from one seat in Dhaka City and the other at his home district Joypurhat. However, the practice for some of the leaders, particularly of major political parties, to stand in the election from more than one seat

has become a common phenomenon. 'While this is done apparently to guarantee the leaders' victory at least from one constituency, it is also viewed with pride and a kind of recognition of the leaders' position in the party as more than equal.' But the representation, particularly of the abandoned seats is bound to suffer as a result of leaders multiple candidature. Analysts have termed it as the part and parcel of the *hero or heroinization* of political parties. This *hero or heroinization* process of the political parties has several consequences; (1) it gives rise to uncouth, semi-educated sycophants and drives away those, who could possibly do the job much better without longing for return favour,

(2) it indicates the lack of democracy with in the political parties,

(3) it also facilitates the tendency to nominate the non-politician business tycoons instead of politicians, who are dedicated party leaders, activists and workers,

(4) the centralisation tendency of leadership in the political parties makes the process of already difficult task to institutionalising democracy even more complicated and difficult in the country.

Nevertheless, all of these consequences have stemmed up and sustained due to the absence of intra-party democracy in the leadership elections, nomination of party candidates for different polls, and party decision making. 'It is a problem with all the political parties of the land. The democracy in the party organisation and in its decision-making process constitutes the hallmark for a broader democratic framework. While the bulk of their own political understanding had been moulded in a centralised and authoritarian colonial context, the contradictions faced by the political leaders in the country were therefore real and not easily to be reconcilable. Absence of democratic culture within the political parties is a major impediment towards institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh.'⁵⁰

The business-politics nexus tends to deteriorate the moral fibre of politics. In Bangladesh, it helps developing strange affinity in the process of nascent democratic relationship between, state and society. That may create uncertainty in the process of institutionalising democracy in the country. Nevertheless, the ongoing process leads to a corrupt system.

⁵⁰ Arun Kumar Goswami, "Parliamentary By-election in Rajshahi-5 Constituency: An Analysis," in *Perspectives in Social Science*, a compilation volume of seminar papers, Volume 7, June 2001, Pp.123-156 (124).

Formation of government.

Oath taking and summoning of 5th Parliament

After the successful holding of general elections for the 5th Jatiya Sangsad on February 1991, it was time for the next constitutional steps in the direction of transition of power to the elected Members of the Parliament. The immediate problems in this regard were summoning of Parliament and administering the oath of office to the Members of the Parliament. Besides other pressing problems like submission of Acting President's resignation and question regarding continue or discontinue the aid and advice of the CTG's advisers even after the Members of the Parliament take oath of office. These were quite a few potential bones of contention between the major parties and alliances. However, amidst speculation the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on March 5, 1991 summoned the 5th Jatiya Sangsad to meet at the Sangsad Bhavan on April 5, 1991. The nation was keenly looking forward to the deliberations of the new Parliament. The expectations in this regard were centering on the strengthening the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalising democracy in the country.

In the midst of opposition from the main opposition Awami League to form a Ministry by the single majority party BNP,⁵¹ the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed dissolved the council of his adviser on March 15, 1991.⁵² On the other hand, the Jamaat extended its full support and cooperation to BNP in the formation of a stable government. In a letter to the Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Acting Ameer of the Party Abbas Ali Khan conveyed the message of support and cooperation to BNP.⁵³ However, the AL refrained from creating any tangle to the transfer of power to the majority party BNP.⁵⁴ The Acting President appointed Begum Khaleda Zia, chief of BNP and leader of the majority party, as the Prime Minister on March 19, 1991. A council of ministers

⁵¹ A delegation of the AL while meeting with Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on March 4, 1991 said that the BNP had not got absolute majority in Parliament and since it was not Parliamentary system of government the party getting single majority had no right to form a Ministry and then prove its majority in the Parliament when summoned, see *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 5, 1991, p. 1.

⁵² See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 20, 1991, p. 1, 8.

⁵³ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 12, 1991, p. 1, 8.

⁵⁴ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 20, 1991, p. 1.

with 11 cabinet and 21 state Ministers had also formed by him. The Council of Ministers headed by BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia had taken oath on March 20, 1991.⁵⁵ Thus Begum Khaleda Zia became the first woman Prime Minister of Bangladesh and second in the list of Prime Minister in a Muslim country after Benzir Bhutto in Pakistan.⁵⁶ However, the formation of the cabinet by the BNP was also grizzled by the absence of MPs and leaders of the Awami League and eight-party alliance, Jamaat-e-Islami, independent MP Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury, MP of National Democratic Party in the oath taking ceremony. Besides, the national anthem was not played on the occasion as it is done in such ceremony.⁵⁷ However, leaders of the five-party Alliance including lone MP-elect from Workers Party Rashed Khan Menon and Muslim League leader Kazi Abdul Kader were present in the occasion.

Amidst some sort speculation and refusal of major political parties to take oath from out going Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf had been designated to administer oath to the newly elected members of Parliament. According to the Rules of Procedure, if the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are unable to administer oath, the Speaker can designate a person to perform the duty on his behalf. However, the selection of a person by the Speaker delayed the oath taking for a few days. The speaker first designated the Acting Chief Justice who expressed his inability to administer the swearing in ceremony. Latter on the Speaker approached Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdur Rouf on March 11, 1991. The CEC had agreed to administer the oath. It may be mentioned that Speaker Shamsul Huda chowdhury had designated the CEC under Rule (2) of Article 148 of the constitution to administer the oath. On the other hand the members of Parliament who had been elected from more than one constituency, before oath they had to declare which constituency s/he wanted to represent as per Article 71 of the constitution.⁵⁸ Thus BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia vacated four seats; Jatiya Party chief and former President General H M Ershad vacated four seats. On the other hand Awami League leader Tofayel Ahmed and BAKSAL leader Abdur Razzak had vacated one seat each. The Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur

⁵⁵ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 21, 1991, p.1.

⁵⁶ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 20, 1991, p.1.

⁵⁷ See *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, March 21, 1991, p.1.

Rouf administered oath to the newly elected members of Parliament on March 17, 18 and 19, 1991.⁵⁹

The last formality to summon the first session of the 5th JS was to elect 30 Parliamentary seats reserved for women. The main opposition Awami League had been thinking to put candidatures for the women seats, but finally they abandoned the idea.

The other opposition Jamaat had offered conditional support to the BNP for 30 seats reserved for women. Jamaat had requested BNP to give it two of the 30 seats reserved for women and retain the 28 remaining seats. With this understanding on March 30, 1991 the 28 women members from the BNP and two from Jamaat, who filed nomination papers had been declared unopposed. With the election of 28 women MPs, the BNP's strength in the 330-member fifth parliament stood at 164, while Jamaat's MPs rose to 20.⁶⁰ However, without Jamaat's support BNP could not have secured 'an absolute majority in the legislature'.⁶¹

Accordingly at this stage the party wise strength in the 5th JS had stood as follows: BNP-164, Awami League-87, Jatiya Party-31, Jamaat-20, CPB-5, BAKSAL-4, Independent-3, and one each by JSD (S), NAP (M), Workers Party, Gantantri Party, Islami Oikya Jote and National Democratic Party.

With the 320-member (with out by-election in the abandoned seats of the persons elected from more than one seats), the 5th Parliament had a crucial task to amend the constitution according to the commitment of anti-autocratic movement, which was laid down in the Joint Declaration of three Alliances. The BNP wanted to amend the constitution according to their party resolution, which they had reached in their party council session, held on March 1989. But BNP's strength in the parliament was not enough to go for any unilateral constitutional change.

It may be mentioned that the parliamentary system of government was annulled in 25 January 1975, and it was restored in 18th September 1991 with the passage of 12th amendment to the constitution. In different countries of the world the Legislatures are activated with the elected people's representatives, to keep the executive organ of the

⁵⁸ See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, March 12, 1991, p.1, 10.

⁵⁹ See *Ibid* March 20, 1991, p.1, 10.

⁶⁰ See *Ibid* March 31, 1991, p.1, 10.

government accountable and bring transparency in the activities of the government. The Legislature of Bangladesh is known as Jatiya Sangsad. Both in the Parliamentary as well as in the presidential form of government, apart from the passages of different laws, the Parliament is set to ensure transparency and accountability of the government. With the 12th amendment to the constitution, Bangladesh returned to parliamentary democracy “after twenty-one years of abortive practice with Presidential form (Arun Kumar Goswami 2001).” The Parliamentary democracy paved the way for ensuring unhindered process of transparency and accountability of the administration. The functions of the Jatiya Sangsad ‘are carried out both by Parliament sitting as a whole and through an organised structure of committees’⁶². There are two ways in this regard. First, at the House level, during the working session of the House attended by all members of Parliament. Second, at the Committee level. Irrespective of party affiliation, the parliamentarians can raise written question(s), named as ‘star marked’ question, on different activities, decision and behaviour of the executive organ as well as on people’s demand, need, and allegations. The members of the government i.e. minister and state ministers answer those questions. Two more supplementary questions could be raised on the answers of every written question. Apart from these written and supplementary questions the members in the ‘House’ can take part in adjourned discussion and debate on any sudden and important event or emergency matter of public importance. Thus parliament can bring the government activities under transparency and accountability. But there are also lots of limitation to discuss these issues in the house.

Firstly, the house is a big arrangement of 300 members of parliament. Besides the size of the house is expanded with the technocrat ministers and indirectly elected women MPs. However, everybody can not take part in the discussions for ‘time’ and other constraints.

Secondly, a lengthy official procedure is required either to raise a question or to take part in the discussion. If any member of the parliament wants to do so s/he has to

⁶¹ Zillur R. Khan, “Bangladesh in 1992 Dilemmas of Democratisation”, in *ASIAN SURVEY*, Vol. XXXIII, No.2, February 1993, Pp. 150-156(151).

⁶² David Beetham and Kevin Boyle, *Introducing Democracy 80 Questions and Answers*, Polity Press UNESCO, UK, 1995, p.72.

submit a prior notice for enlisting his/her name for this purpose. The office of the whip of the parliamentary party entrusted to maintain the list of aspirant MPs

Thirdly, no hair-splitting analysis is possible in the house. The excessive number of members and limitations of time are responsible for this problem.

Fourthly, if it is assumed that any subject of discussion causes any harm for the ruling party then the members of the party in power, either openly or tactfully, will avoid co-operation with the opposition. Thus theoretically as the ruling party maintains majority, so very often the discussion will not be expected fruitful.

Fifthly, the agenda for discussion or for decision is resolved in 'yes' 'no' vote. The interest of the state or people is hardly considered in this respect. Thus, very often, this agenda or bill gets unexpected fate.

Sixthly, last but not the least if any sorts of accountability are held in the house, that happens for related or for state minister in charge, which may be termed as partial accountability of the government.

There is very little scope of accountability and hardly any situation in the existing system to ensure transparency. Moreover, it is hardly possible to bring transparency and accountability in an administration with widely dispersed 'bureaucratic network', through parliamentary sittings. Nonetheless, this may be possible in the committee level.

Chapter VII.4

Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution

End of so-called Presidential democracy:

Restoration of Parliamentary democracy,

The holding of free and fair election, however great it was for Bangladesh, was needed to be followed by a government for functioning on the basis of an unstinted cooperation between those forming the government and those running the opposition role. This is one of the indispensables of a government by consent and through debate. The 5th Jatiya Sangsad witnessed the *end of Presidential system and restoration of Parliamentary form amidst consent and debate*. For the government and the opposition working together for the welfare of the state the latter acting as a watchdog and the former letting itself be corrected by the opposition, criticisms are the essence of government by consent. This is a matter of principle and it will need to be preserved by a conscious effort, particularly in society where this fundamental principle has often been breached. One of the most significant features of the process of democratic consolidation in 1991 was that it had been moving amidst consent and debate. The restoration of parliamentary democracy in the country had been approved on the basis of consensus attained through a lot of debate.

The Process of Consent and Debate:

The country was anxiously waiting to hear the announcement regarding constitutional change in line with the November, 1990 declaration of the three alliances. The essence of the declaration of three alliances was that parliament must be sovereign and the government is made answerable to parliament. Bangladesh is familiar with parliamentary system since British days and a very well drafted constitution in this regard was available which was made after independence in 1972. However, Bangladesh's experience with presidential system has been mingled with unnecessary political turmoil. The 5th Parliament of the country started its first session on April 5, 1991 with the

inaugural speech of Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed. A good number of members of the Parliament belonging to both ruling and opposition parties had taken part in the discussion in the parliament. Both of them had discussed different aspects of parliamentary and presidential forms of governments. The key document of the anti-autocratic movement- Joint declaration of the three alliances of the political parties was discussed and interpreted by the members of the Treasury Bench and the Opposition in their own ways.

The members of the Parliament belonging to Awami League, Jamaat, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Worker's Party, and independent members made a strong plea for the establishment of the parliamentary system. They said that the essence of joint declaration of the three alliances, was the establishment of Parliamentary System.¹ On the other hand majority BNP's stand was not clear and they also favoured presidential system or a mixture of presidential system. The members of the Parliament belonging to BNP had also blasted and refuted the opposition's claim that the Joint declaration by the three alliances had mentioned about changing country's constitution to parliamentary system from the Presidential System.² They also claimed the Joint declaration never mentioned anything about switching over to parliamentary system from the presidential system. The parliamentarians of the BNP opined that the Joint declaration spoke about a sovereign parliament, which the presidential system could certainly claim to be so. They said if there were checks and balances in the presidential form it could never turn into autocracy as was being apprehended. However, the constitutionalists in BNP had also favoured introduction of check and balance in the constitution for a strong counterpoise between the President and the Parliament, both elected for a period of five years by the people. A group of constitutional lawyers close to BNP had been working on the modality of creating balance between the two powerful organs the President and the Parliament. They had ruled out the idea of amending constitution in order to introduce the parliamentary form of government. They argued that Awami League discarded the parliamentary form of government in 1974 through 4th Amendment to the constitution, Ziaur Rahaman and his government democratised the system introduced by Awami

¹ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 14, 1991, p 1

² See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 12, 13 and 14, 1991, p.1.

League. They said, “we are going to further improve it which we have developed so far by ‘trial and error’”. The system is now one of the basic structures of our constitution which we do not want to disturb.”³ In the midst of countrywide debate over amendment of the constitution regarding forms of government the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad and Worker’s Party leader Rashed Khan Menon submitted two Bills to the Speaker for shifting to parliamentary form of government from the Presidential one.⁴

On the other hand a writ petition was submitted to the High Court seeking mandate upon the EC under Article 102 (2) of the constitution to holding elections to the offices of the President and the Vice-president by June 4, 1991. The writ petition raised the question of interpretation of the constitutional provisions in order to determine as to when the elections to the vacancies in the offices of the President and the Vice-President would be held and what would be constitutional position of Shahabuddin Ahmed as Vice-President if the election is not held by June 4, 1991. However, the High Court rejected the writ petition.⁵

It may be mentioned that before the February 1991 general election, the eight-party and five-party alliances agreed in principle to form a greater election coalition aiming to restore parliamentary form of government.⁶ Accordingly the partners of these two alliances had made a concerted effort to restore parliamentary democracy. The Central Executive Committee of the Awami League on May 3, 1991 resolved to work for establishment of Parliamentary democracy implementing the Joint declaration of the Eight-party, Seven-Party and Five-party Alliances announced during the mass upsurge that ousted the autocratic regime and ensured the free and fair parliamentary election under a neutral caretaker government. The Communist Party in a resolution called upon all conscious sections to come forward to giving the multi-party parliamentary democracy and democratic values an institutional shape by erasing the trend of seizing

³See report titled, “BNP for balance between President and Parliament”, in *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), March 12, 1991, p.1.

⁴See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), June 26, 1991, p.1.

⁵The writ petition was submitted by Mr. Saleem Ullah an Advocate of High Court Division and Secretary General of the Association for Democratic and Constitutional Advancement of Bangladesh. A Division bench comprising Justice Md. Abdul Jalil and Justice Md. Badruzzaman of the High Court Division heard the petition and rejected it. See *The Bangladesh Observer*, May 8, 1991, p.1.

⁶*The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), January 7, 1991, p.1, 10.

power through coups and repealing all amendments to the constitution done during the autocratic rule of Ershad. The resolution of the CPB maintained, 'there is no bar in the way of establishing multi-party parliamentary democracy as the three alliances bound by the common political frame work have more than two-thirds majority in the 5th parliament.'⁷ A team of Awami League leaders while meeting with the President had referred Joint declaration of different political parties on November 19, 1991 which provides transfer of power to a Sovereign Parliament.⁸ Despite repeated emphasis on parliamentary form of government by the opposition parties the ruling BNP claimed, "the Joint declaration often quoted by the Opposition did not specifically mention the parliamentary system of government."⁹ However, the BNP also maintained that the parliament would decide the form of government. At one stage of the debate over the interpretation of Joint declaration to remove confusion about its content speaker Abdur Rahaman Biswas called for a copy of joint declaration Speaker Abdur Rahaman Biswas called for a copy of joint declaration.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the ruling BNP had been facing criticisms from various quarters including political parties for its long delay on the issue.¹¹ The BNP in its election manifesto was silent on the issue. However, the ruling BNP finally had favoured the changeover to the parliamentary form of government.¹² A constitutional amendment bill with necessary checks to prevent floor crossing had been introduced before the house during the budget session of 1991.

However, on June 20, 1991 Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz presented two Amendment Bills submitted earlier from the opposition bench¹³-one by the Awami League a partner of 8-party alliance and the other by the Worker's Party a partner of the 5-party alliance. The bills were taken to the Acting President since an advance recommendation of the President was needed before such bill involving expenditures from Public exchequer were introduced in the House. Latter on the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on June 22, 1991 met with the Acting President and informed him that though two months had passed since he had given notice to move a constitution Amendment Bill

⁷ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), March 13, 1991, p. 1.

⁸ See *Ibid*, March 12, 1991, p. 1.

⁹ See *Ibid*, March 14, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁰ See *Ibid*, March 15, 1991, p. 1.

¹¹ See *Ibid*, June 11, 1991, p. 1.

¹² See *Ibid*, June 11, 1991, p. 1.

it was not tabled in the Sangsad on the Private members day in 20 June 1991.¹⁴ Before formal presentation of the constitution Amendment Bill regarding changeover to parliamentary government, the opposition members belonging to Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat separately walked out from the Sangsad on June 11, 1991 when the Speaker rejected their adjournment motions. Again in 16 June 1991 the Opposition MPs except Jamaat staged walk out from the Parliament protesting remarks of the Deputy Speaker on Opposition MPs.¹⁵

On July 9, 1991 a Parliamentary Select Committee was constituted to consider Seven Constitution Bills. Of the Bills two was introduced by BNP named as 11th and 12th Constitution Amendment Bills on July 2, 1991, one by Deputy Leader of the Opposition on July 4(Private Members Day). They were aimed at reverting parliamentary system. The remaining four constitution Amendment Bills were introduced by Workers' Party Leader Rashed Khan Menon on July 4, 1991 relating to the participation of people through elected representatives in all administration levels, treaties with foreign countries and fundamental rights.¹⁶

The discussion between members of the ruling party and Opposition regarding Constitution Amendment Bills were centering around paving the path for switch over to parliamentary system and return to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to the previous office of Chief Justice. Awami League and other opposition members in the parliament were opposed to certain punitive measures proposed in the 12th constitution Amendment Bill for floor crossing. The Parliament members also opposed them to the procedural formality regarding election of the President. The Treasury Bench proposed that the Speaker of the Sangsad should conduct the election while the Opposition members wanted the EC to conduct it.¹⁷

After a lot of discussion and disagreements during discussions, all the members of the Select Committee finally agreed to with draw their notes of dissent and as a result, a

¹³ See *Ibid*, June 21, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁴ See *Ibid*, June 26, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁵ See *Ibid*, June 17, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁶ See *Ibid*, July 10, 1991, p. 1, 10.

¹⁷ See *Ibid*, July 14, 1991, p. 1.

unanimous decision as to the amendment of the constitution Amendment Bills had been reached.¹⁸

On July 28, 1991 Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz presented the unanimously adopted report of the Select Committee on the Constitution Amendment Bills, before Jatiya Sangsad amidst applause both from the Treasury and Opposition Benches excepting Jatiya Party, the historic document of the 12th Amendment to the Constitution Bill switched over to parliamentary system of government after 16 years of Presidential form.¹⁹

In 6 August 1991 the 12th Amendment Bill was accepted in the Parliament amidst cooperation and support from both the ruling and opposition parties. The people in a referendum had further accepted the amendment on September 18, 1991 as per Article 14(1.A) of the Constitution. The rate of voter turnout in this referendum was 34.42 percent. Among them 84.42 percent favoured the Amendment with "Yes", while only 15.68 percent put "No" against the motion. It may be mentioned that among all the major Amendments to the Bangladesh Constitution which changed the basic nature of government, electoral procedure or state principles only the 12th Amendment Bill was put forward for referendum. Needless to say that according to constitution, all such types of Amendments which caused basic change to governance, electoral procedure or state principles must be placed for referendum. But the procedure was hardly followed in all the cases except in the 12th Amendment. Thus the process of approval of the 12th Amendment had the credibility to follow the constitutional procedure hence termed as the most commendable way to institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. With the approval of 12th Amendment Bill all the remainings of the 4th Amendment had been wiped out. It may be mentioned that Ziaur Rahman had scrapped other provisions of the 4th Amendment like abolishing the one party system, existence of only state owned newspaper etc. Analysts viewed that both the passage of 4th Amendment by the then President Sheikh Mujib and later on partial abolishment of some provisions of the 4th Amendment and incorporation of the 5th

¹⁸ See *Ibid*, July 28, 1991, p.1.

¹⁹ See *Ibid*, July 29, 1991, p.1.

Amendment by Ziaur Rahman, which changed the state principles had to be approved by the referendum. Besides at the time of partial scrapping of the 4th Amendment had also posed the question, i.e. why presidential form of government was not changed at that time? Analysts viewed that both General Ziaur Rahman and General Ershad had been the beneficiary of this portion of the 4th Amendment i.e. presidential form of government.

In view of our above analysis we may conclude at this point that from the successful holding of parliamentary elections in February 1991 to the restoration of parliamentary democracy, the intentions of the emerged 'forces' had been contained democratically through 'consent and debate'. This may also be termed as conscious effort. The process of pro-democratic movement was based on consensus among political forces of the country. Nevertheless, immediate after the Joint declaration of the three alliances in November 1990, mainly two major aspects helped the democratisation process. One was temporary arrangement for NPCTG and the other was adherence of the process of consent and debate by the ruling and opposition parties. The formation of NPCTG headed by the Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed confirmed the peaceful transfer of power, for the first time in country's independent history. Thus, it has been marked as the hallmark and first stage of democratisation i.e. democratic transition. Nevertheless, the general elections for the 5th JS was held under this NPCTG. Thus it also helped strengthening the second stage of democratisation i.e. democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy.

Second, The process of consent and debate in the parliament is regarded as the best way of democratic governance. However, it always helps strengthening the process of democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy. The process of incorporating 12th Amendment to the constitution and restoration of Parliamentary democracy has been historically remarkable as the best instance of adherence to consent and debate by the ruling and the opposition parties.

However, the formation of NPCTG in 1990 was quite a temporary arrangement. It was expected that only one instance of such type of government would be sufficient. On the other hand, the process of "consent and debate" is always recognised as a permanent way of democratic governance. It was expected that for the sake of institutionalization of democracy both the ruling and opposition parties in the Parliament

would follow this process in the subsequent years. Thus the process would help strengthening the parliament as a sovereign institution of the country. Nevertheless, the subsequent events witnessed the turning of temporary i.e. arrangement for caretaker government into permanent and the process of 'consent and debate' which was expected to be adhered by the parliamentarians that became a retrospection of the past. The 'golden instance' of 'consent and debate' was never seen again. Contrary to the general expectations the political forces of the country seemingly feel shy to comply with the process of consent and debate.

The study concerned institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. As hypothesized, higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation existed in the country during 1990-1996 compared to earlier years. We found the hypothesis accepted in this chapter, Chapter VII. We have also found that compared to increment in the rates of social mobilisation and political participation the political institutions are weak both in quality and quantity. Besides, our investigation have pointed to its resultant into emergence of considerable number of middle class population. With the dominant role of middle class people the pro-democratic movement of 1990's had been directed to a successful end. The teachers, lawyers, journalists, poets, physicians, businessmen, women, men, students and politicians comprised to this middle class population. Nevertheless, encouraged by the students' organisations the three alliances of political parties led the anti-autocratic movement. The conscious attempts of these political forces had been manifested through the Joint Declaration of Political Parties in 19 November, 1990. As for other part of the hypothesis regarding primary task to build and modify political institutions had also been succeeded to some extent. We found formation of caretaker government for the February 1991 parliamentary elections for the 5th Jatiya Sangsad in this respect.

The process of social mobilisation and political participation might be unending. With the conscious effort and adherence to the process of consent and dedate in the parliament the political forces would regulate the process. Accordingly, the task is supposed to be unending to regulate and adapt further effects of social mobilisation and political participation. This process would help building nexus between society and state democratically. For institutionalizing democracy the emerged forces in 1990's

democratic transition had to be aware about their actions, but that remains in rhetoric rather than reality. However, Chapter VIII generally, but unevenly, confirmed the hypothesis. Accordingly, at this point the following conclusions could be drawn.

1. We found that in Bangladesh the indicators of social mobilisation, like rate of literacy, rate of media exposure, urbanization and university students per 1000 population have increased tremendously over the years.
2. The rate of political participation as votes cast in different elections have also increased considerably. However, in most cases, if not all, this participation seemed to be mobilised rather than voluntary.
3. We also found among others, that a considerable number of middle class population has sprung up due to increased rate of social mobilisation.
4. The considerable number of urban centric middle class population that was the main driving force of 1990s democratic movement had been in making since independence of the country.
5. The *effort* to modify institutional arrangement, transformation of governmental form from presidential to parliamentary democracy through the 12th Amendment of the Constitution had been a conscious one. Nevertheless, the process of adapting 12th Amendment was based on the democratic process of *consent and debate*.
6. The environment that had created the demand for caretaker government was the result of either inexperience of politicians or due to growing presence of nouveau riche businessmen turned politicians in the parliament who have been importing money and muscle into politics. Nevertheless, the breakout in the moral fabric of politics is also caused by the criminalisation of politics. All of these result into mistrust among the political parties in the country.
7. For institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh following of the democratic devices like *consent and debate* by the members in parliament is of utmost important.

8. We also found that there was a good number of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh those were posed during 1990-1996. However, most of them, if not all are equally relevant for the subsequent periods.

The government of the BNP during its five years rule from 1991 to 1996 had maintained the precedence in determining the future course of institutionalizing democracy in the country. The next chapter will be dealing with these aspects.

Chapter VIII

Governance of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its challenges

The paces of social mobilisation and political participation have bestowed the democratic transition along with the emergence of a huge array of forces accompanying the revival of expectations. Until the referendum on 12th Amendment the process of democratic transition and democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy have been proceeding with conscious attempts of the ruling and opposition members in the Parliament. It has been observed that the members of the Parliament have followed the process of consent and debate for approving the 12th Amendment to the Constitution. After the referendum on September 15, 1991 the country has formally backed to the parliamentary system of government. However, the consensus during the pro-democratic movement and unanimous event of restoration of parliamentary democracy did not offer the BNP government (during 1991-1996) a bed of roses.

The democratic regime during 1991-1996 has had some favourable count from which democratic process does not automatically assure the performance of a democratic system (Baxter 1992).¹ However, for the messy situation in almost everywhere of the government had unlikely to give BNP government any chance to repose. Some of the basic services of the government- law and order, poverty alleviation, attaining education for all, attracting foreign investment, industrialisation had been badly needed to be improved and made efficient by introducing a more workable system. Accordingly, the elected representative institution, 5th Jatiya Sangsad had more options to contribute for a 'democratic society' than any other previous legislatures of the country. To facilitate the governance, the ruling BNP needed critical support in policy making and implementation for the betterment of the country. Nevertheless, for survival in the challenging situation the government should be "most responsive to change"². Accordingly, the inability or unwillingness to institute fundamental reforms and enforce social

¹ See Craig Baxter, "Bangladesh in 1991, A Parliamentary system", in *Asian Survey*, Volume XXXII, No. 2, February 1992, pp 162-167 (167).

² Charles Darwin cited in *The Economist*, January 20th 2000, p.16.

discipline that makes, according to Gunnar Myrdal,³ *soft state*, may come under the flux of social mobilisation, however, they do persist.

In view of this background this Chapter analyses the governance of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) during 1991-1996. There will be six sections in this chapter. Section 1 briefly analyses the governance of BNP. Working of the 5th Parliament has been discussed in section 2. Section 3 analyses the formation of parliamentary committees. Challenges to the governance have been mentioned in section 4. Section 5 analyses economic challenges. Political challenges of the BNP government has been discussed in section 6. There are again two sub-sections in section 6. Accordingly, section VIII.6.a presents 'February 1996 general elections for the 6th Parliament and section VIII.6.b presents the installation of caretaker government through the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. The June 1996 parliamentary general elections have been discussed in this section.

Governance of the BNP: Government means different things to different people. For majority of the Bangladesh electorate, governance means evolution of effective policies through participation and the implementation for the general welfare of the people specially the poorest and the weakest. The people of nouveau riche class understand the term very differently. For them a good government is that government that satisfies their needs and desires and permits them to influence and determine state policies. They would prefer a government that promotes capital growth through privatization and competition with no state interference. The role for the state, as far as these nouveau riche are concerned is to provide stability, status quo, and subjugation of the masses through hegemony or through brutal force. Nevertheless, good governance and human rights – the very essence of democracy, has become an international agenda. Besides, accountability and democratic government are prerequisites to good governance. The World Bank has identified three factors as being crucial for good governance-the form of political regimes, the process by which the authority is exercised in the management of a nation's economic and social resources for development and the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions (World Bank 1994:XIV). Basically, the thrust of the World Bank has been on

³ Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama, An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Pelican Books, p.126.

liberal democracy at the political level and liberalization, privatization and globalization in economic sphere. What is good for the World's dominant power is considered good for all. This is not some thing that is acceptable. For this reason, the word governance is conflict-ridden. Its usage and definition is determined by people situated in a context of their own.

Of late, the World Bank Group⁴ on 'Governance & Public Sector Reform Sites' come up with a definition of the governance. It says 'Governance can be broadly defined as the services that governments provide to the governed (i.e. citizens) and the environment that is created within which the citizens can then operate.'

Thus to measuring 'good governance', governments ability to 'how effective is the quality and delivery of public service provision', are most important to consider. The World Bank argued that 'crisis in governance emerge from the monopolistic nature of service provision, immediate oversight and corrective actions by the government, the lack of knowledge and consciousness of the people about how the services should ideally be delivered, and the absence of organisation and collective action by the citizens to demand better service.

In a pre-dominantly authoritarian society along with the increased and growing rates of social mobilisation and political participation, government's role is single most important 'as a monopoly provider of services'. This role becomes more important at a time when democratic consolidation or institutionalisation of democracy are being carried out in the country. Besides, only government can allow the voices of opposition political parties, different social groups, media, non-government development organisations and the 'commons' to air their opinions, 'that act as a strong catalyst for change'. For institutionalising democracy there is no scope to 'disregard people's feedback'.

As has been mentioned earlier, the term 'governance' conveys different things to different people depending on their socio-economic and cultural situation, values and interests.⁵ A noted Bangladeshi economist, Rehaman Sobhan in his 'Bangladesh Problems of Governance'⁶, argues

⁴See The World Bank Group, Governance & Public Sector Reform Sites "Bangladesh. Governance ScoreCards", 2001, Dhaka, p.1 of 3.

⁵ Ambrose Pinto, "Crisis in Governance and the Need to Reinvent Governance", in *Social Action*, Volume 51, July-September 2001, pp.233-240(233)

⁶ Rehaman Sobhan, *Bangladesh, Problems of Governance*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1993, p.1.

that governance derives from the socio-political circumstances of society in particular phases of its history.' Accordingly, he evaluated the role of the state in terms of whether its choices derive from the consent and needs of its citizens and the consequences which follow from the tendency to exercise state power without representative credentials.'

The elected BNP government had representative credentials. Whether the decisions of the government had derived from the consent and the needs of the people, that should be considered to term it as good governance. Figure 3 provides us features of the 5th JS that may facilitate or undermine the process of good governance or institutionalization of democracy. The government was representative, adhering the democratic process of consent and debate parliamentary democracy was restored. The existence of considerable number MPs from the opposition camp provided an opportunity to sort out the actual necessity of the country through the process of debate and consent. Besides, formation of parliamentary committees had provided a positive ground to exercise accountability and transparency so that good governance becomes possible. But more number of inexperienced MPs, more number of businessmen and industrialists in parliament, no or minimum representation from the women, and peasants or religious minority groups might disfavour the process of governance. Nevertheless, the prolonged boycott and en mass resignation by the opposition MPs from the parliament trapped the regime in a shambling gait. It could be mentioned that aspects, which are negative for the good governance, they are also negative for the institutionalisation of democracy.

While the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have been creating substantial pressures on the government, the bottom line for the survival of the government was to cope with the pace of change democratically.

Figure-3
Features of the 5th Jatiya Sangsad that may facilitate or undermine the process of good governance or institutionalisation of democracy in the country

Features	Possible impact on governance and/or institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh
More number of Opposition MPs	+
Approval of 12 th Amendment to the Constitution (restoration of Parliamentary democracy)	+
Adhering democratic process of consent and debate during first part of the 5 th JS	+
More number of inexperienced MPs	-
More number of businessmen and industrialists elected as MPs	-
No or minimal representation from women/peasants/religious minority groups	-
Formation of parliamentary committees	+
Presence of both the ruling and opposition MPs in the Parliament during the first part of the 5 th JS	+
Prolonged boycott and en masse resignation by the opposition MPs	-

Note: The “+” sign means positive impact, and the “-” sign means negative impact.

During the early life of democratic regime, according to Larry Diamond articulation of democratic institutions with traditionally legitimate authority, socialization, expansion of education and other types of social and cultural change are also unavoidably important for democratic culture. Besides, alongside the economic growth and social reform, the assessments of the capacity to maintain order, to govern with probity and transparency, to maintain a rule of law, and other wise to respect, and preserve the democratic rules of the game⁷, are also necessary.

However, to ensure people’s rights and in order to develop democratic culture in the country, there is no alternative to good governance. Eventhough this could not be done

⁷ See Larry Diamond, “Introduction: Political Culture and Democracy”, in Larry Diamond (ed), *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*, TextBook edition, LYNNE RIENNER Publishers, Boulder London, 1994, p.13.

with in five years term, but the most daunting task of the elected representatives, especially for the ruling BNP was to build a 'tolerant and liberal society'. A real democracy needs the habit of free speech, impartial judges who administer a law accepted by all, independent political parties and strict obedience to the rules between elections.⁸ It would be nice to believe that a well-educated political upper class, unconfused by the demands of universal suffrage, would know best how to restore for everybody the blessings of free speech, the rule of law and so on. The most competent institution to summarize the needs of the country is the parliament. It is the parliament where the democratically elected government is obliged to consult with the opposition at regular intervals. The people's consent to governmental action occurred through parliament. Nevertheless, democratic governance can define some of the social conflict that might otherwise result from the increased rate of social mobilisation.⁹

Even in the very first year of BNP rule campus violence erupted across the country. 'Thirty-eight incidents claiming five dead and over 200 injured, were reported during 1991, and comparable incidents of student partisan, and factional violence occurred during 1992.' During 1992 the student politics became stronger in degree, unpredictable, and frequently destructive. Many held BNP's getting absolute majority with the help of Jamaat responsible for depletion of Khaleda's image during this time. Because according to them most Bengalis associate the Jamaat and the party leader Golam Azam with the 1971 collaborators of the Pakistani military.¹⁰ The Golam Azam issue had regenerated serious controversy over the liberation war. The question of national identity had also fallen into this strife. However, revival of the age-old issue of national identity had hardly any necessity to democratize the society.

⁸ Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of illiberal Democracy", in *Foreign Affairs* at the end of 1997, see *The Economist*, A survey of the New Geo-politics, July 31st-August 6th, London, 1999, p.5

⁹ This assessment can be drawn from Tocqueville's thesis that political democracy can defuse some social conflict that might otherwise result from the emergence of a democratic social system. See Stephen Holmes, "Tocqueville and democracy", in David Copp (et. al.), *The idea of democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 1993, pp.23-63.

¹⁰ See Zillur R Khan, "Bangladesh in 1992, Dilemmas of Democratization, in *Asian Survey* XXXIII, No. 2, February 1993, pp.150-156.

Besides, as a result of the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque in December 1992 a wide repercussions felt in Bangladesh. In reaction to the mosque incident a large number of Hindu temples were destructed. This was 'caused by vested interests related to private property, the opposition's anti-government strategy, and acts of vengeance by fanatics.' However, "this brought back bitter memories of Hindu-Muslim conflicts to many Bangladeshis and, perhaps, renewed the search for national identity.¹¹ During the summer 1994, Bangladesh was swamped by protests, demonstrations, pitched battles in the streets and clashes with the police over the destiny of controversial author Taslima Nasreen. Consequently, Bangladesh seemed to be preoccupied with two swelling cultural tides Islam and the liberal forces.¹²

In a democracy a majority of the voters is supposed to decide how the country is to be governed; the loosing minority waits patiently for the next vote, hoping it will then become the majority. But sometimes minority stays stuck as minority, usually because the majority party in power convinced themselves that they know what the country needs are all too likely. An essential feature of parliamentary democracy a degree of moderation among the political parties or what may be called political forbearance. the minority agrees that the majority should govern and the majority agrees that the minority should criticize.

Economy of the country during 1991-1996:

With the advent of democratisation since 1990's and taking over power by a democratically elected government in 1991 the age-old economic problems of the country had been expected to be solved.

"Few problems in the transitional states are regarded as more urgent than the problem of

¹¹ See Zillur R. Khan, "Bangladesh in 1993, Values, Identity, and Development", in *Asian Survey* XXXIV, No. 2, February 1993, pp.160-167.

¹² See M. Rashiduzzaman, "The Liberals and the religious right in Bangladesh", in *Asian Survey*, Vol.XXXIV, No.11, November 1994, pp.974-990.

economic development.”(Kahl 1968:329)¹³

On the other hand a flourishing economy is essential to the stability of democracy (David Gopp 1999:3)¹⁴. Thus in the context of institutionalising democracy, take a closer look on the economic condition of the country is essentially important. However, for our present purpose we briefly state the economic conditions of Bangladesh during 1991-1996. It may be mentioned that during this period the country witnessed the performance of Fourth Five Year Plan 1990-1996. The main objectives of the plan were:

- a. Accelerating economic growth to achieve an overall annual GDP growth rate of 5 per cent.
- b. Poverty alleviation and employment generation through human resources development and
- c. Increase self-reliance.

Implementation of Fourth Five Year Plan;

Table -51
Plan Size, actual expenditure and GDP growth rate of different years (In milion Taka)

Plan	Plan Size			Estimated Actual Expenditure			Growth Target	Realised Growth
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Per cent	Per cent
First Five Year Plan	44550	39520	5030	20740	16350	4390	5.50	4.00
Two Year Plan	38610	32610	6000	33590	24020	9570	5.60	3.50
Second Five Year	172000	111000	61000	152970	103280	49690	5.40	3.80
Third Five Year Plan	386000	250000	136000	270110	171290	98820	5.40	3.80
Fourth Five Year Plan	620000	347000	273000	598480	274083	324397	5.00	4.15

Source: Planning Commission, Bangladesh.

The above table gives us a comparative picture of plan size, actual expenditure and GDP growth rate of different years. One of the main features of the development plans since independence was the increasing trend of private sector allocation. This increasing trend was significantly higher during the tenure of Fifth five year plan, i.e.1990-1995. Whereas the plan size of the private sector was also higher in the past plans. The plan size of private sector was, as usual less than public sector. On the other hand, the estimated actual expenditure, in the

¹³ Joseph A. Kahl, 'Some Social Concomitants of Industrialization and Urbanization,' in Harvey G. Keeschull(ed.) Politics in Transitional Societies, The Challenge of change in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Corporation, New York, 1968, p.329.

¹⁴ See Introduction of David Gopp(et. al), 'The idea of democracy', Cambridge University, UK, 1999, p.3

sectors of all other previous plans was less than that of public sector. But in the plan of 1990-1995 the estimated actual expenditure in private sector surpassed even the public sector.

Other features, of different plans were that in none of the past plans the growth target was above 5 per cent, but the achievement was always less than 5 per cent. However, during the 1990-1995 the growth target was fixed at 5 per cent and the achievement was 4.15 per cent. This achievement was the highest among all other past plans, while the target of this plan was least of all other past plans.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate:

The average annual growth rate during 1991-1996 was 4.15 per cent. The low growth rate was caused by 'almost stagnant agricultural production'. The growth rate of agricultural sector during this period was 0.98 per cent. 'Agricultural growth suffered due to problem with fertilizer distribution and lack of adequate public procurement of grain at support prices.'

Table-52
GDP composition and Growth Rate in different years during 1990-1995

Sector	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	Annual Growth Rate	
							Target	Achievement
Agri	190354	193421	197662	201230	201915	190822	3.42	0.98
Industry	49322	50503	54211	59140	63786	69302	9.02	7.05
Electricity, gas and natural resources	5561	6704	7876	8933	10184	11339	9.28	15.31
Construction	29349	31087	32471	34032	36074	38593	5.86	5.34
Transport and Communication	59024	60840	63349	66416	70089	74203	5.39	4.68
Trade & Other services	105124	110237	115780	122041	129516	140115	5.00	5.92
Housing	38030	39316	40656	42187	43792	45457	3.62	3.63
Public Service	20363	22334	24184	26240	28484	30962	10.65	8.74
Total GDP	497527	514442	536189	560219	583840	609793	5.00	4.15

Source: Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh.

A modest growth rate of 7.05 has been observed in the manufacturing sector. On the other hand the energy sector showed an accelerated growth of 15.31 per cent. The public service failed to show any remarkable growth rate. The housing and other services showed marginally higher growth rates.

Changes in economic structure: During 1990-1995 there had been a marked change in the structure of Bangladesh economy. The historical declining trend of share of agriculture and increasing trend in the manufacturing and service sectors protracted during the period. The share of the agriculture sector went down to 32.77 per cent in 1994/95 from 41.77 per cent in 1984/85. In spite of these shifts, the economy continued to be dominated by agriculture; so it remained susceptible to natural hazards. However, economy's shifting from agriculture to non-agriculture sector might lead to increased rate of social mobilisation.

Savings and investment: Historically, the levels of aggregate savings and investment have been very low in Bangladesh. However, there have been some improvements in domestic savings and investment rates during 1990-1995. Domestic savings as a rate of GDP increased from 2.72 per cent in 1989/90 to 8.31 per cent in 1994/95. The increased savings rate was due to higher savings by the government as well as by the private sector.

Compared to that in many developing countries the investment level in Bangladesh economy is low. The rate of aggregate investment in 1990/91 was 11.50 per cent, which rose to 16.63 per cent in 1994/95. The target of investment was 14.80 per cent. Thus there was 1.83 per cent higher rate of investment. This rising trend is a positive development in resource mobilisation for faster economic growth, and socio-economic upliftment. In this period, the relative share of private investment rose while that of the public sector declined. This reflects the reorientation of the Bangladesh economy towards the private sector. However, under the Board of Investment a considerable number of entrepreneurs have got registration.

Table -53

Accounts of registration under the Board of investment during 1991-1996(In million US\$)

Industrial Sector	1991-1996		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total
Oil, Gas and Electricity	203	129	332
Textile	1116	639	1755
Engineering	271	373	644
Glass and Ceramic Industry	165	175	340
Food based	154	89	243
Agro-based	285	105	390
Chemist Industry	198	1061	1259
Leather and Rubber	82	47	129
Printing and Publication	100	10	110
Miscellaneous	80	501	581
Total	2654	3129	5783

Source: UNCTAD Report published in The Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) November 6, 2000, p.9.

Increase Annual Development Programme (ADP) size: During the period of 1990-1995 a gradual increase in the public sector allocation and realisation was witnessed. The increase in ADP size was due to lumpy project like Jamuna Bridge, Madhyapara Hard-rock and Barapukuria Coal Development Projects. Increased investment in education, particularly in primary and mass education, stipend for female students, food for education and rapidly enhanced investment in rural roads, electrification, water supply etc., also necessitated significantly higher resource deployment in the public sector.

Domestic and External Financing of the ADP: It was expected and projected that during 1990-1995 the share of domestic resources to the total project size would be 34.29 per cent, but on average there was a shortfall; together with lower aid inflow, resultant into a lower development expenditure in the public sector than planned.

Tax Collection: Due to the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) during 1990-1995 there was a significant rising in tax collection. Domestic resource mobilisation exceeded 33.55 per cent from the targeted amount of Tk.119, 000million to generated amount Tk.158, 920 million at 1989/90 prices. The target of revenue collection was Tk.457000 million and non-tax revenue was Tk.379480 million and non-tax revenue was Tk.92, 090 million. On average at 1989/90 prices 10.00 per cent increase total

revenue receipts increased annually 10.00 per cent. tax revenue and non-tax revenue grew at the average annual rates of about 8.76 per cent and 16.15 per cent respectively. Tax/GDP ratio increased to 9.71 per cent in 1994/95 exceeding the target of 9.30 per cent. In spite of this, there was shortfall in public development out lay as revenue expenditure were more than planned.

Private Investment: In real terms (at 1989/90 prices), private investment was more than double the target during 1990-1995. Eventhough, the performance of industry was affected due to political unrests, yet the share of private investment to this sector rose from 14.85 per cent in 1989/90 to 29.32 per cent in 1994/95. The private investment grew at an annual average rate of 25.40 per cent. However, there were some shortfalls in agriculture, transport and communication, and in trade and service sectors.

Comfortable balance of payments: The 1990-1991 and 1991-1992 fiscal years witnessed a relatively comfortable balance of payments position. This had been the result of higher growth of exports and remittances and a sharp decline in imports. But the balance of payment situation worsened during 1994-1995 fiscal year, largely because imports recovered substantially from the unusually low levels. Total imports grew at an annual rate of 6.14 per cent, which exceeded the target of 5.11 per cent. Merchandise imports were less and food grain imports exceeded the target.

The average annual growth rate of exports was a little higher (12.20 per cent) than that (11.60 per cent) envisaged in the target. There had been a significant rise in import at an annual rate of 6.14 per cent that exceeded the target of 5.11 per cent. This rise in import was due to sharp increase of food grains to \$622 million in 1994/1995 against the expectation of a fall to \$100million. The projected merchandise import was \$19811 million but it was \$ 130 million less. Compared to the projected imports of non-food and intermediate goods 6.6 per cent respectively, the achievement were 5.4 per cent and 5.5 per cent. Imports of capital goods declined by 2.20 per cent rather than rising of 1.70 per cent as projected. The slow growth of imports of non-food, intermediate goods and decline of imports of capital goods indicate and manifested a depressed domestic demand.

The targeted annual growth of exports was 11.60 per cent but on average a little higher rate 12.20 per cent has been achieved. During the period 1991-1995 the non-traditional exports grew at

a higher annual rate of 17.20 per cent than the projection of 16 per cent. On the other hand the traditional exports observed shortfall.

Faster growing rate of labour force: Since independence the labour force of the country has been almost doubled. It has been growing at a faster rate than the population. Faster growing rate in labour force indicates the increased rate of social mobilisation in the country. The unemployment rate had showed a declining tendency during 1991-1996. It could be mentioned that during 1990-1995 the government had specifically laid emphasis on employment generation to alleviate poverty. Nonetheless, some marginal gain in the overall average productivity of labour was observed as the domestic employment increased at an annual rate of 3.30 per cent, and GDP grew at 3.90 per cent a year.

Structural adjustment and Trade Liberalisation: The reform measures which were initiated during 1980s under the Structural Adjustment Facilities (SAF) loan, was further strengthened in 1990s. The aim of these measures was to liberalising the foreign trade and exchange rate regimes, restructuring the industrial sector, strengthening fiscal and monetary management, encouraging private sector participation in development and privatising the state owned enterprises (SOEs). These measures brought 'lower inflation rates, smaller fiscal and current account deficits and higher foreign exchange reserves.

This economic stability could be observed from the very fact that in the first year of Structural Adjustment Programme during 1986/87 the overall budget deficit was 8.40 per cent of GDP (Tk.45.03 billion) and by the end of the decade, it was 7.70 per cent of GDP (58.10 billion). During the next two years the deficit declined further to reach around 6 per cent as a result of a sudden spurt in public expenditure. The per centage incurred in Public expenditure (revenue) grew by 18.57 per cent when revenue receipt rose by 13.16 per cent only. Compared to the previous year net foreign financing covered the budgetary gap to a large extent (72.18 per cent), and public borrowing doubled to Tk. 22.17 billion. After 1992/93 fiscal deficit in both absolute and relative terms as percentage of GDP was the lowest. The result of 1993/94 and 1994/95's fiscal operation and increased public borrowing produced expanding monetary aggregates thus those concerned

years witnessed increased in total liquidity by 33.87 per cent. This caused into inflation and higher level of consumer price index (CPI)[at Dhaka Middle class] in 1993/94 after falling to the lowest level (1.40 per cent) in 1992/93, partly due to fiscal and monetary restraints but mainly due to good harvest.

The growth performance during 1995/1996 was modest-in terms of overall GDP. During 1995/96 a growth of 5.40 per cent was registered. The growth in agriculture was 3.70 per cent in 1995/96 compared with a negative growth of 1.04 per cent in 1994/05. The growth of industry declined from 8.64 per cent in 1994/95 to 5.29 per cent in 1995/96. The contribution to GDP was 32.24 per cent by agriculture, 11.34 per cent by industry, 6.25 per cent by construction, 1.94 per cent by power, gas and water and 48.21 per cent by other services.

However, compared to 1991/92 (5.10 per cent) the inflation rate rose to 5.22 per cent in 1994/95. The domestic imbalances of over-expenditure and inflation had their logical effect on the external sector also; current account deficit crept upto 3.54 per cent of GDP in 1994/95, exceeding that of 1991/92 (2.43 per cent) even though export earning was about double during this period and wage earners' remittances rose by about 50 per cent. Rising imbalance in the external sector led to exchange rate depreciation.

Chapter VIII.2

Working of the Parliament

In a Parliamentary democracy, the Assembly of representatives is known as Parliament. The executive heads of the government departments or ministers are usually Members of the Parliament. But there may be some minor exceptions. Article 58(4) of Bangladesh constitution had provided that the number of non-MP ministers would not be more than one-fifth i.e. 20 per cent of the total number of ministers. However, the 12th Amendment to the constitution reduced the quota for induction of ministers from outside the House from 20 to 10 per cent.¹ The collective body of ministers called cabinet. This is misnomer of government, which is accountable to the electorate. This accountability comes through the working of parliament, which is elected by the electorate. The electorate elects both ruling and the opposition party members in the parliament. The Government is not elected directly by the voters, but is appointed from amongst the members of the majority party. Thus in a parliamentary democracy, Parliament becomes the Supreme body. It is the power centre in a democratic polity, as the fusion of the executive and legislative powers in Parliament is established in the constitution. For a reasonable equilibrium of these powers within the House, the Government must not fear the constant challenges, which the Assembly offers to its programme. The Assembly, in turn must resist the temptation to usurp the functions of Government. Parliament is the elected voice of the people. Parliamentarians are also the sole lawmakers.

However, the initial minutes of the 5th Jatiya Sangsad were favourable for democratisation. Until passage of the 12th Amendment to the constitution on August 1991, parliamentary decisions were resolved following the process of 'consent and debate'. Members of Parliament from both the ruling and the opposition parties had been following it. With the change over to parliamentary system, the joint declaration on the eve of the fall of

Ershad Government was fulfilled. Thus, the constraints of institutionalising democracy—mistrust, antagonism and prejudices that have been hindering to create broad based consensus on some vital national issues, was possible to subvert. After gaining people's verdict with the holding of September 15, 1991 referendum on the 12th Amendment to the constitution Begum Khaleda Zia had taken oath anew as a Prime Minister under the Parliamentary form of government. Meanwhile, the election for the post of President had been drawing nearer. The ruling BNP had nominated Speaker Abdur Rahaman Biswas as their presidential candidate.

On the other hand, with an appeal of consensus the main opposition Awami League had nominated Justice Badrul Hyder Chowdhury as President candidate. Besides Awami League leader Mockbul Hossain had also submitted his candidature for presidential post. Latter on he had withdrawn his candidature on September 30, 1991. During this time the ruling BNP announced an Ordinance terming presidential election as a part of parliament's function. This law was an amendment to the presidential election law of 1991.

The leaders of the Awami League filled three writ petitions with the Appellate Division of the High Court on October 1, 1991 against this ordinance. However, the ruling BNP as a democratic government proved its responsiveness to the opinion of the opposition. They withdrew the ordinance on October 3, 1991. Accordingly, the leave bench in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court had rejected AI's petition. The Presidential election was held on October 8, 1991 under the supervision of the election commission. The BNP candidate Abdur Rahaman Biswas won in the presidential election bagging 172 votes. The Awami League candidate Justice Badrul Hyder Chowdhury received 92 votes. In this presidential election the MPs from Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami refrained from voting. On October 9, 1991 Abdur Rahaman Biswas had taken oath as newly elected President. Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed returned to his former post on October 10, 1991 according to the provisions of 11th amendment to the constitution. The ruling BNP by dint of its majority in the House got party MPs Sheikh Razzak Ali and Humayun Khan Panni elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively on 12 and 13 October 1991 respectively.

Apart from the passage of the 12th amendment, the narration of the fact during the time proved parliament's supremacy as the nerve centre not only for legislation but also for

¹ See The Bangladesh Times (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 28, 1991, p.1, 8.

all political activities. Eventhough, there had been some bone of contention, both the opposition and ruling parties had so far been able to prove their adherence to the parliamentary system.

Table- 54
Sessions and working days of the 5th Jatiya Sangsad

Sessions	from	to	Working Days
First	5 April 1991	15 May 1991	22 Days
Second	11 June 1991	14 August 1991	43 Days
Third	12 October 1991	5 November 1991	14 Days
Fourth	4 January 1992	18 February 1992	27 Days
Fifth	12 April 1992	19 April 1992	6 Days
Sixth	18 June 1992	13 August 1992	41 Days
Seventh	11 October 1992	6 November 1992	20 Days
Eighth	31 January 1993	12 May 1993	32 Days
Ninth	9 May 1993	13 May 1993	5 Days
Tenth	6 June 1993	15 July 1993	31 Days
Eleventh	12 September 1993	27 September 1993	12 Days
Twelfth	21 November 1993	8 December 1993	14 Days
Thirteenth	5 February 1994	7 March 1993	19 Days
Fourteenth	4 May 1994	12 May 1994	6 Days
Fifteenth	6 June 1994	11 July 1994	25 Days
Sixteenth	30 August 1994	14 September 1994	10 Days
Seventeenth	12 November 1994	8 December 1994	21 Days
Eighteenth	23 January 1995	23 February 1994	18 Days
Nineteenth	24 April 1995	27 April 1995	4 Days
Twentieth	14 June 1995	11 July 1995	17 Days
Twenty-first	6 September 1995	26 September 1995	10 Days
Twenty-second	15 November 1995	18 November 1995	3 Days
Total	5 April 1991 to 18 November 1995		400 Days

Source: Mostafa Kamal, *Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Theke Jananetri Sheikh Hasina Kakali Prokashani, Dhaka, 1997, p.137.*

But the things had started getting tempted and rigidity instead of flexibility seems to become the rules of the game at time. The issues of grievances of the main opposition Awami League were, dilly-dallying by the ruling BNP with the issue of Indemnity Ordinance, oppression on the opposition activists, trial of Golam Azam; sedition case against 24 eminent citizens of the country. The eight-party and five-party alliances had extended their support to AL's demand for trial of Golam Azam. At on stage on mid April 1992. In reply to Speaker's speech the opposition bench requested him to adjourn the ongoing JS for a short while. Ignoring opposition's proposal the Speaker allowed a BNP MP to deliver

speech. However, members of the treasury bench had raised a very indecent loud uproar at a time when the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina tried to deliver a Speech. As a result the members of the opposition AL and some other minor parties alongwith two independent members staged a walk-out from the fifth session of the fifth parliament. They never returned to the (fifth) session. The sixth session of the JS started on June 18,1992. This was the budget session for the 1992-1993 fiscal year. The then finance minister M. Saifur Rahaman presented the budget in an Assembly where the opposition seats were deserted. However, to bring the opposition members back to the House the Deputy Leader of the Parliament Professor Badrudozza Chowdhury had taken an initiative. At one stage the boycotting opposition members had presented a four-point demand to the government. The government side had given a word of honour to opposition demands. Thus the opposition members had agreed to return to the parliament. The four points demand were;

- i) *The trial of war criminal Golam Azam according to law of the land and International Criminal Law(Tribunal law 1973),*
- ii) *withdraw the sedition case against twenty-four eminent personalities and organizers of people's court for trial of Golam Azam,*
- iii) *irrespective of differences of political opinion ensure democratic behaviour including right to hold gathering by every political party,*
- iv) *in no circumstances the microphone of the Leader of the Opposition could be stopped alongside ensuring dignity of all parliament members.*

With this understanding the main opposition Awami League returned to parliament. However, to realise their demands the opposition Awami League continued street agitation and general strikes, which hampered the parliament centric politics. On the other hand ruling party's non-committal to the understanding and parliamentary norms helped the opposition to keep the street more vibrant than the parliament. Apparently it seemed that both the party in power and opposition had hardly been succeeded to discard their habitual non-institutional behaviour while undertaking the task to institutionalise democracy in the country.

The pervasive mutual mistrust among the political parties had been manifested once again with the holding of by-election in Mirpur-Pallabi constituency on February 1993. The opposition Awami League alleged that the ruling BNP's nominee Md.Mohasin had won the by-election with the help of massive rigging. The opposition allegation became more

accurate when the chief Election Commissioner denied the responsibility to the by-election results circulated through radio and TV. On February 5, 1993 a heated debate had taken place in the JS on this by-election between the ruling and opposition parties.

However, compared to previous four parliaments of the country the 5th one had more sessions and working days.

Table-55
Number of Sessions and Working Days of different Jatiya Sangsad in Bangladesh

Jatiya Sangsad	Date of Sessions		Number of Sessions	Number of Working Days
	From	To		
First	7-6-1973	17-7-1975	Eight	134 Days
Second	2-4-1979	3-3-1982	Eight	206 Days
Third	10-7-1986	13-7-1987	Four	75 Days
Fourth	25-4-1988	25-8-1990	Six	162 Days
Fifth	5-4-1991	18-11-1995	Twenty Two	400 Days
Sixth	19-3-1996	25-3-1996	One	4 Days

Source: Adopted from Parliament Secretariat Source cited in Mostafa Kamal (1997) p.36.

The fifth Jatiya Sangsad have had 22 with 400 working days. Of which 13 sessions and 286 working days were participated by both the ruling and opposition members in the parliament. The opposition parties started boycotting the sittings of the JS sessions from its fourteenth session. Among the previous four Parliaments none has had more than eight sessions and 206 working days. However, the second JS during Zia regime had eight sessions with 206 working days. The first JS of Mujib era had also eight sessions with only 134 working days. The fourth JS had six sessions and 162 working days. While the third JS had only four sessions with only four working days. The third and fourth Parliaments were the handmaidens of General H M Ershad.

Never before in the parliamentary history of independent Bangladesh ranging from the immediate post-liberation period to 1988, could a parliament hold so much sessions with so many working days. By hindsight, lives of different parliament were cut short in varying degrees by promulgation of martial law, switch over to presidential system of government with rubber-stamp assemblies. However, seen in this historical perspective, with the near completion of the tenure with as many as 22 sessions and 400 working days, Bangladesh have added a half-decade-long parliamentary democratic experience from 1991 to 1996 with her 5th JS that have also added to her democratic legacy.

With the end of 5th parliament, Bangladesh had been looking for a further step towards institutionalisation of democracy through installation of a non-party caretaker government.

The ruling BNP, lately, became responsive to the opposition demand to amend the constitution for caretaker government. However, the opposition parties had refrained from participating in the February 1996 parliament election and subsequent arrangement for adopting the 13th Constitution Amendment Bill in the single party sixth parliament that facilitated installation of non-party caretaker government. Thus in view of national consensus based on participation from the ruling and opposition parties it was hardly possible to satisfy the task of institutionalising democracy, as far as the passing process of 13th amendment is concerned.

Different studies and observation reports were made both in and outside the country on the working of fifth parliament. With regard to parliamentary activities, the question hour is an important means to ventilate people's grievances and defend individual rights. As far as the working of 5th JS is concerned only in 13 sessions out of its total 22 sessions, the opposition members were present. The functioning of the rest nine sessions were made amidst boycott of the opposition members. However, during these 13th sessions when both the ruling and opposition members were present, the parliament had been centre for all legislative and political activities. Nevertheless, it was vibrant. Unlike the traditional political culture of street agitation and general strikes alongwith violent political activities, the country's political actions were seemed to be taken place in the parliament. Hence, the institutionalisation of democracy seems to be a real process rather than rhetoric. It has been found by the researcher² that 7701 starred and 2631 unstarred questions alongwith 5 short notice questions discussed and answered during this 13 sessions of the 5th parliament. However, a very negligible portions, only 64 of the total 1790 received notices from the opposition bench were accepted by the House. That means major portion (1726) notices were dismissed and only a few 3.57 per cent were attended in the parliament. The proportionate allocation of numerical divide in the opposition bench was observed to be maintained. Most of the accepted notices i.e.25 notices were tabled by Awami League MPs

² Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1998, p.152.

followed Jamaat MPs having 7 motions, 3 from National Democratic Party and one each from three MPs belonging to 3 opposition parties, Workers Party, JSD and Jatiya Party. According to Rules of Procedure of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad with the Speaker's permission any member may 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 latter hour or date.

As many as 251 notices were raised by the opposition members during the 13 sessions which were participated by the oppositions. Again major portion of the notices i.e. 151 were put forward by Awami League members, while the Jamaat MPs raised 56 notices, Jatiya Party 19, Worker's Party of Bangladesh 4, Gantantri Party 2, NDP 4, and JSD MPs raised 4 notices calling attention to urgent public importance. However, out of these 251 notices calling attention to urgent public importance the concerned ministries in form of statement attended one hundred and fifty one and remaining one hundred notices were lapsed. Besides, during the first 13 sessions of the 5th JS the House received 774 notices on Matters of Urgent Public Importance according to Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure.³ Major portions of the notices— 91.47 per cent (708) were dismissed and only 8.53 per cent notices (68) were accepted. Out of these 68 notices the opposition members in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad raised 62 and the rest 6 was raised by the ruling members. Of these 62 opposition notices, 37 were raised by Awami League, 11 by the Jamaat, 6 by Jatiya Party, 5 by Workers Party and rest 3 by NDP members. One of the most remarkable aspects in the Rules of Procedure is that 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 education.

The opposition members in the 5th JS had duly participated in the half-an-hour allotted discussion. The first 13 sessions of the 5th JS had received 133 notices for half-an-hour discussion, most of these notices were dismissed i.e. 121 and a few, only 12 were accepted for discussion. All the 12 notices were raised by opposition members. Of the 12

³ Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure provides that any member desires 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 clearly specifying the matter to be raised.

accepted notices 7 were raised by Jamaat members, 4 by Awami League, and only 1 by Jatiya Party members.

Table-56

List of Adjournment Motions tabled by the Opposition till the Thirteenth session of the 5th Parliament.

Sessions	From	To	Working days	Number of received notices	Number of accepted notices
First	5-09-1991	15-5-1991	22	180	2
Second	11-06-1991	14-8-1991	43	61	0
Third	12-10-1991	5-11-1991	14	149	1
Fourth	04-01-1992	18-02-1992	27	249	1
Fifth	12-04-1992	19-04-1992	06	88	14*
Sixth	18-06-1992	13-08-1992	41	17	0
Seventh	11-10-1992	06-11-1992	20	129	0
Eighth	03-01-1993	11-03-1993	32	295	4**
Ninth	09-05-1993	13-05-1993	05	77	22
Tenth	06-06-1993	15-07-1993	31	96	01
Eleventh	12-09-1993	27-09-1993	12	158	1
Twelfth	21-11-1993	08-12-1993	14	116	07
Thirteenth	05-02-1994	07-03-1994	19	175	11

N.B. Out of total 88 notices 84.09 per cent were dismissed.

Source: Parliament Secretariat, Bangladesh.

*Detailed statements of the dismissed notices were not available, however, analysts viewed that majority of the dismissed notices were raised on Golam Azam and *GanaAdalat* (People's Court) issues. Nevertheless all 14 accepted notices were about Muslim refugees from Rohingya, Myanmar. All of these 14 accepted notices were dismissed in the House.

**Contents of these accepted notices are not available.

In the 13 sessions of the fifth Parliament the House received 1054 notices with regard to special privileges of the members. The House dismissed 865 notices and accepted only 189 notices. Of the 189 notices 26 were raised by the members of the Treasury bench while major portion i.e. 163 notices were raised by the opposition parties' members.

Figure-4

The issues of the adjournment motions tabled during the 5th JS

Issues of opposition Awami League MPs:

1. Protesting Golam Azam's selection as the formal chief of Jamaat-e-Islami;
2. Maintenance of the Haji Camp;
3. Police raid on the people while observing Independence Day on March and the Bengali New Year.
4. Raid by Islami Chatra Shibir (Students wing of Jamaat-e-Islami).
5. Condition of medical colleges in the northern region of Bangladesh.
6. Hoisting of national flag at the Washington embassy.
7. Trafficking of women and children.
8. Establishment of illegal embankment.
9. Mismanagement in land record system.
10. Disrespect to national flag.

Issues of Opposition Jamaat MPs:

1. Ferry problem in Aricha ghat and communication system.
2. Haji Camp maintenance.
3. National bank loans.
4. Police attack on masses during observance of Independence Day.
5. Injurious effects of radiation emanating from X-ray machine.
6. Closing of shrimp cultivation project.
7. Women trafficking.

Issues of Opposition National Democratic Party MP:

1. Maintenance of Haji camp.

- 2.Repression by police on the masses during Independence Day celebrations.
- 3.Killing of 4 Bangladeshis by the Indian BSF at Meherpur border.

Issues of Opposition Jatiya Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Workers Party MPs;

- 1.Clash of two student groups at Dhaka University.
- 2.Police attack on the people during Independence Day.
- 3.Women trafficking.

Of the above 38 adjournment motions raised by the opposition members 14 were discussed in the House, 23 were referred to the concerned Committees and only one was lapsed.

Figure-5

Issues of call-attention notices to matters of urgent public importance raised by the MPs in the 5th JS.

- 1.Damage of food grains at Sunamganj.
- 2.Drought and supply of diesel for water pump machines in certain places.
- 3.Indian occupation of Bangladesh's Talpatty island.
- 4.Killing of Bawalis by tiger at the Sundarbans.
- 5.Flood in Moulavibazar district.
- 6.Environment pollution in Dhaka City.
- 7.Problems of Khulna Medical College.
- 8.River erosion problem of the country.
- 9.Dahagram-Angorpota enclave issue between Bangladesh and India.
- 10.Cluster-village programme.
- 11.Exporting manpower to Kuwait.
- 12.Barisal-Bhola road constructions.
13. Impact of Farakka barrage on Bangladesh.
- 14.Rural electrification of Bhola and Bogra district.

Figure-6

Issues for discussion of matter of urgent public importance for short time.

1. Rehabilitation of expatriate Bangladeshis from Kuwait.
2. Water logging at Baridhara.
3. Fish cultivation in reserved tanks.
4. Closing of the Chittagong University.
5. River erosion at Faridpur.
6. Lack of sufficient beds at the Pabna central hospital.
7. Deficiency of food in the northern region of the country.
8. Rohingya refugees' problem.
9. Mongla port scandal.
10. Abnormal raise of essential goods.
11. Mobility in the banking sector.
12. Problems of the country's poor peasants.
13. Bosnia-Harzegovina issue.
14. Police harassment on chief whip of the opposition in Parliament.
15. Poverty alleviation programme.
16. Assault on teachers by the students of Jahangir University.

Figure-7

Issues of half-an-hour discussion as per Rule 60 of the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure during 5th JS's term.

1. Misappropriation of 42 crore Taka by the employees of 4 national banks.
2. Exploitation of a question posed earlier.
3. Discrimination and irregularities in the test-relief-wheat distribution.
4. Trade deficit of Tk.6329 Crore.
5. Irregularities in agri-loan distribution among the farmers.
6. Problems of sugar-marketing.
7. The issue of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation.
8. Issue on huge areas of uncultivated arable land.
9. Illegal encroachment into forest Department land.
10. Incurring losses in the Government owned sugar mills.
11. Issue of former President Ershad's Daily Janata newspaper.

12. developemnt of non-government secondary schools in the country.

Most of these notices, however, lapsed.

Table-57

Call attention notices on matters of urgent public importance during the opposition-participated sessions of 5th Jatiya Sangsad

Sessions	Number of received notices		Number of dismissed notices		Number of accepted notices		Number of opposition notices	
	Number		Number	per cent	Number	per cent	Number	per cent
First	364	100	349	95.88	15	4.12	11	3.02
Second	444	100	425	95.72	19	4.28	19	4.28
Third	290	100	277	95.52	13	4.48	10	3.45
Fourth	833	100	789	94.72	44	5.28	28	3.36
Fifth	169	100	160	94.67	9	5.33	7	4.14
Sixth	626	100	559	89.30	67	10.70	36	5.75
Seventh	526	100	479	91.06	47	8.94	26	4.94
Eighth	529	100	476	89.98	56	10.59	38	7.18
Ninth	157	100	145	92.36	12	7.64	9	5.73
Tenth	307	100	285	92.83	23	7.49	17	5.54
Eleventh	246	100	225	91.46	22	8.94	14	5.69
Twelfth	320	100	302	94.38	18	5.63	14	4.38
Thirteenth	345	100	313	90.72	32	9.28	22	6.38
Total	5156	100	4784	92.79	377	7.88	251	4.87

Source: Adopted from the documents of Parliament Secretariat

Table-58

Notices on matters of urgent public importance for short duration in the opposition-participated sessions of the 5th Jatiya Sangsad

Sessions	Number of received notices		Number of received notices		Number of received notices		Number of received notices	
	Number		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
First	57	100	51	89.47	6	10.53	4	7.02
Second	118	100	107	90.68	11	9.32	9	7.63
Third	57	100	51	89.47	6	10.53	6	10.53
Fourth	87	100	78	89.66	9	10.34	9	10.34
Fifth	26	100	25	96.15	1	3.85	1	3.85
Sixth	24	100	21	87.5	3	12.5	2	8.33
Seventh	30	100	24	80	6	20	5	16.67
Eighth	55	100	48	87.27	7	12.73	7	12.73
Ninth	28	100	22	78.57	6	21.43	6	21.43
Tenth	86	100	81	93.10	5	5.81	5	5.81
Eleventh	65	100	60	92.31	5	7.69	5	7.69
Twelfth	49	100	46	93.88	3	6.12	3	6.12
Thirteenth	92	100	92	100	0	0	0	0
Total	774	100	703	91.47	68	8.79	62	8.01

Source: Adopted from the Parliament procedure of the 5th parliament.

The picture that emerges from the 'number of notices received' 'number of notices dismissed' and 'number of notices accepted' for clarification and discussion in the House, in different categories e.g. 'matters of urgent public importance', 'call attention notices on matters of urgent public importance' and also 'notices for half-an-hour discussion' reveals that –

- (i) more number of notices were dismissed,
- (ii) only a meagre number of notices were accepted,
- (iii) the acceptance of notices for discussion did not depend upon the member who presented the notice.

A number of causes may be responsible for such a huge number of notices being raised and most of them dismissed. They are,

- (a) the problems were robust,
- (b) the expectations from the parliament were unlimited,
- (c) the members were in a horns of dilemma so was the Speaker, with these huge numbers of notices.

It may also be the result of increased rate social mobilisation (as has been demonstrated and proved in the earlier section of this chapter) that led to increased amount of consciousness among the people. Either voluntary or mobilised, what ever it may be, increased rate of political participation is also caused by growing consciousness. Barring the population who is recognised as poorest of the poor, all are involved with the process.

However, the size of the electorate has increased tremendously compared to earlier periods, when the population size was lower than today's. With the growing number of electorate the same number of representatives had to deal in the 5th JS. Nevertheless, apart from the normal problems, the complexities of the present world are multifarious. An MP as a representative of the electorate is supposed to express the grievances of the people in the Parliament. The democratisation process has provided the opportunities to air the views and demands in the parliament. But how to manage the situation, that is the vital question for all who are involved with the democratisation process. People may be conscious about their own interest, which may not necessarily be the knowledge regarding parliamentary procedure. Thus more number of inexperienced MPs in the 5th Parliament may be one of the

causes of number notices being dismissed by the Speaker. Because Speaker had to consider the time and relevance of the notices and many other aspects. Nonetheless, the other side of the story may be equally true. The Speaker was a partisan person. Due to his mental attachment with his party in power he may feel shy to accept most of the notices which might be embarrassing for his party. Or, the notice, which might enhance opposition party's popularity in cost of ruling party's failure, might not be accepted by the Speaker.

Chapter VIII.3

Formation of Parliamentary Committees and its Workings:

The institutionalization process of democracy was strengthened with the adherence of consent and debate for rejection of presidential system and re-acceptance of parliamentary system in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad. ‘ The passage of the 11th and 12th constitution Amendment Bills in the parliament on August 6 signifies a gigantic replacement of an odious authoritarian political system by that of a representative political order.’¹The next laudable step in this regard had been the formation of Parliamentary Committees.

Parliamentary Committee means a committee appointed by parliament or nominated by the Speaker in accordance with the constitution and the Rules of Procedure. Article 76 of Bangladesh constitution provides for the standing committees of Parliament and, generally, Chapter 27, (Rule 187 to 266) of, the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Bangladesh detail the composition functions and method of working of the committees.² Rules of procedure of Bangladesh Parliament have defined parliamentary committee as set up by or under the authority of parliament and include its sub-committees.

Formation of parliamentary committees, their power and responsibilities as well as procedures followed by them or in respect of them are regulated by relevant provisions in the constitution, the Rules of Procedure, Parliamentary Conventions and rulings of the Speaker. However, a parliamentary committee can not include in it any person who is not a Member of Parliament.³ There are mainly three types of committees in Bangladesh. They are standing committee, select committee and special committee. Again there may be two types of standing committees, 1. Those nominated by the speaker called core committees, and 2. those appointed by the House called Ministerial Committee. Select Committee is constituted to examine Bills referred to it and report to the parliament. Its

¹ See *Star Magazine* (English Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) March 6, 2002, p.12

² Cited in Abdul Matin Khasru, “Committee system and power of the Executive”, in *Report on Conference of Parliamentary Committee systems*, Institute of Parliamentary Studies, Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, Dhaka, 27-28 May 1999, p.17.

³ Khondaker Abdul Haque Miah, “ The Committee System in Bangladesh”, in *Ibid* pp 64-76

tenure ends with the submission of report based on its specific terms of reference. Special Committee is formed by any specific motion. Its composition and functions are specific in the motion for its appointment. Its tenure ends with the submission of the final report based on its specific terms of reference.

The early years of parliamentarianism did not have committees. Everything was stated, debated and approved in the House. Parliamentarians were summoned for a few days in a year, they heard the Ministers speak, they responded and voted and then returned to their constituencies. Nowadays, parliamentary decision-making involves a deeper complexity. The demands emanated from increased rates of social mobilization and political participation.

These demands were made in response to an informed public opinion. Besides it was meant for making a democratic society. There has to be a mechanism, which allows draft Bills to be presented before a smaller group of Members, to be discussed and debated. There must be a mechanism, which allows policies to be explained to parliamentarians who can contribute with specialized knowledge. And there must be a mechanism, which allows public accounts to be scrutinized by MPs who have been following up the budget. This is the origin of the evolution of the parliamentary committees. For these reasons, strengthening the parliamentary committee system is a must. Committees are the very core of the parliamentary machinery. Experienced parliamentarians often argued that 'Committee system is the most effective organ through which the growing and altered needs of a parliament are well performed.'⁴ Woodrow Wilson⁵ asserted that, "Congressional Government is Committee government, congress in its committee room is congress at work.". Committees and sub-committees are in real sense the "ears, eyes and hands" of a parliament. 'Slowly, gradually and perceptively' the Committee system has evolved in the democratic world. In fact Committees are "microcosms" and an extension of the Parliament with wide power. The first parliament of Bangladesh (1973-1975) had put into practice the concept of having a standing committee on each of the ministries. In the 2nd Parliament (1979-1982) 41 Standing

⁴ See Sheikh Razzaque Ali, MP, "Functions of the Chairpersons in the Committee Systems", in *Report on Conference of Parliamentary Committee systems*, Institute of Parliamentary Studies, Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, Dhaka, 27-28 May 1999, pp.201-205.

Committees were formed including 36 standing committees on ministries. The 3rd JS (1986-1987) witnessed only 6 standing committees. As many as 43 standing committees including 32 on different ministries were formed during the life term of 4th JS during 1988-1990.

One of the notable features of the 5th parliament was the formation of various parliamentary committees and sub-committees⁶, which were overseeing the government activities.

Table-59
Parliamentary Committees in 5th Jatiya Sangsad

Name of Committees and Sub-Committees		Number
A	Standing Committee	
	i Core Committee	
	1 Financial	3
	2 Audit	1
	3 Inquiry	2
	4 Service	2
	5 House	3
	Sub-Total	11 (Eleven)
	ii Ministerial Committee	34
B	Select Committee	5
C	Special Committee	2
D	Sub-Committee	--
TOTAL		52

Source: Parliamentary Secretariat, Government of Bangladesh, Agargaon, Dhaka.

Table-59 shows the number and name of parliamentary committees during the 5th JS. The 5th JS witnessed the formation of 52 parliamentary committees including 34 ministerial committees. Each standing committee for ministries meets at least once in a month. The functions of the standing committee are:

To examine any Bill or other matter referred to it by parliament to review the works relating to a Ministry, within the jurisdiction of the committee.

To inquire into any activity or irregularity and serious complain in respect o the Ministry.

To examine, if it deems fit, any such other matters within its jurisdiction.
And finally make recommendations.

On the other hand, five select committees and two special committees which had constituted during 1991-1996 for seven constitutions Bills including 11th and 12th

⁵ Quoted in *Ibid*

⁶ See M. Nazrul Islam, op cit

amendments to the constitution for return to Acting President Shahabuddin Ahamed, to the previous post of chief Justice and paving the way for switch over to parliamentary democracy. Through 36 sittings of the select committee the ruling Party and the opposition Parties had been succeeded in ironing out differences on a number of constitutional issues and reached a consensus. However, all members of the 15-member select committee on July 26, 1991 night agreed to withdraw their notes of dissent paving the path for unanimous decision. Members of the Select Committee put their signatures on agreed report on July 27, 1991 afternoon. Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz on July 28, 1991 presented, the unanimously adopted report of the select committee on the 11th and 12th Constitution Amendment Bills before the Jatiya Sangsad amidst applause both from the Treasury and Opposition sides excepting Jatiya Party.⁷ The report was a historic document.

The House took up the Constitution Amendment Bill for discussion on July 29, 1991. The discussion continued for two to three days. The 13th amendment bill (no number was proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad) was introduced on Private members day on July 4, 1991. They were aimed at reverting to parliamentary system. After having had the understanding these bills were merged into one, 12th amendment bill. The remaining four constitution amendment bills were introduced by Rashed Khan Menon on July 4, 1991 relating to the participation of people through elected representatives in all administration levels, treaties with foreign countries and fundamental rights.⁸

⁷ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 28, 1991, p. 1

⁸ See *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 10, 1991, p. 1, 10.

Table-60

Meetings of the Parliamentary Standing Committees those nominated by the Speaker

Serial Number	Standing Committees	Number of Meetings
1	Business Advisory Committee	46
2	Privilege Committee	23
3	Rules of Procedure	15
4	Parliamentary	20
5	Estimate	27
6	Public Understanding	48
7	Government Assurance	04
8	Private Members Bills & Resolutions	23
9	Public Accounts	50
10	Petition	27
11	Library	05
TOTAL		288

Source: Bangladesh Parliament (Law Section 1 and 2) for information on the meetings of 11 Standing Committee

Table-61

Meetings of the Standing Committee those appointed by the House

Serial Number	Ministerial Committees	Number of Meetings
1	Defense	27
2	Foreign Affairs	28
3	Law and Parliamentary affairs	46
4	House	25
5	Communications	34
6	Establishment	28
7	Planning	35
8	Finance	23
9	Education	47
10	Energy and Mineral	39
11	Religious Affairs	36
12	Agriculture	29
13	Civil Aviation and Tourism	42
14	Jute	28
15	Parliament Secretariat	31
16	Textile	46
17	River Transport	39
18	Health	27
19	Women and Children	36
20	Industries	27
21	Environment and Forest	34
22	Housing and Public Works	33
23	Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operative	34
24	Youth & Sports	21
25	Commerce	39
26	Cultural Affairs	42
27	Social Welfare	32
28	Food	31
29	Irrigation, Water Resources and Flood Control	25
30	Fisheries and Livestock	37
31	Information	26
32	Land	24
33	Science and Technology	08
TOTAL		1097

Source: Parliament Secretariat (Law Section 1 and 2)

Apart from the select committee and special committee, the 46 standing committees on different ministries and subjects were formed during the tenure of 5th JS. The five categories of standing committee those had been nominated by the Speaker were financial, audit, inquiry, service and house. In the 5th JS there were 3 financial, one audit, two inquiry, two service and three house committees. Totally 11 core committees, were nominated by the Speaker. The other category of the standing committee was 'those appointed by the House'. There were 34 Ministerial Committees in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad.

The eleven core committees had held 288 meetings on different matters during the tenure of 5th Jatiya Sangsad. On the other hand, the 34 Standing Committees on different ministers had held 1097 meetings during the same period. Thus altogether the Parliamentary Committees during 1991-1996 had held totally 1421 meetings. The number of meetings for the general sessions was far below. Compared to 1421 meetings of the Parliamentary Committees, generally the 5th Parliament had only 400 working days with almost same number of meetings. Thus, in view of continuance and regularity of works, parliamentary committees seemed to be more effective than the general sessions of the 5th parliament itself. On the other hand since 14th session of the 5th JS the opposition political parties did not participate in the parliament. But the opposition political parties did not refrain from participating in the meeting or sittings of the parliamentary committees of the 5th parliament had been more effective than the parliament had been more efficacy of the 5th parliament had been the result of the effectiveness of the parliamentary committees.

The works of the committees 'lie at the heart of legislation'. The working atmosphere in the committee room is immensely informal. A bill is usually examined close by close. All the amendments selected by the chair are subject to debate, and, at the end of this process, often the clause itself. Members of the committee may speak more than once to an amendment. Besides, members may not stay far from the committee room, since divisions are called with only a modest gap of time before the vote is taken. Committee work can become very onerous for Mps if they are serving on a highly controversial bill where the debates become very lengthy. In effect they become prisoners of the committee room and can not attend other business in the House.

Once a bill has completed its committee stage it is 'reported' back to the House. However, the circumstances of the committee stage of a bill –many amendments and no restraint on frequency and length of speeches-mean that the opposition has ample opportunities to delay the bills are interrelated. Normally the government and opposition will agree informally on the time needed for a bill. There is still plenty of debate, but the virtue of nocturnal activity is discounted.

Barring some minor exceptions, during the representative government in 1991-1996 the parliamentary committees could not function effectively because the recommendations of the committees on different ministries failed to draw much attention. As has been observed by the experts; 'Parliamentary committees were not adequately equipped and their findings were often ignored.'⁹ The multilateral donor agency World Bank in a paper proposed for the Bangladesh Development forum held in March 2002 in Paris had also similar observation. "The parliamentary working committees do not get opportunity to review and discuss budget proposals as they are placed in the full house just a month ahead of the start of a fiscal year."¹⁰

⁹ See observation of Frederick T Temple (former World Bank country Director of Bangladesh) in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) September 11, 2000, p 1, 11.

¹⁰ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 6, 2002, p 12.

Chapter VIII.4

Challenges to Governance

Democracy is seen as an important tool, which assists in generating people's views on different social, economic and cultural issues confronting them in their everyday lives. The February 1991 Parliamentary elections provided the people's expectations to be fulfilled for democratic governance carries out through the people's representatives. However, the BNP government had been succeeded in governing the country during the first quarter of their five-year term. But the situation changed and the real problems had been posed to be faced by the government. Samuel P. Huntington (1991) had considered the countries where democratic transition had taken place earlier and where the governments had been facing the problems of democratic consolidation. And lastly, in some of the countries 'democratic political systems shifted to authoritarian forms of government.'¹ Not exactly present in Huntington's example, but in one of the South Asian countries the same thing happened. This became evident in a later period when democratically elected government in Pakistan had been deposed by the military in 1999.

However, considering the recent trends of challenges being faced by the democratic regimes for institutionalising democracy, Bangladesh's governance during the first quarter of 1991-1996 had been hopeful. One of the critics of the BNP regime argued that compared to post-liberation AL government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during 1972-75, the BNP regime led by Begum Khaleda Zia had been blessed with much better political opportunities² along with consensus among the political forces of the country during 1991, in a rather 'fractured polity'. In fact the new democratic politics of the 1990s found the nation in a uniquely favourable situation.³ With the emergence of two-party system, the polity of Bangladesh

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Third Wave, Democratization in the late twentieth century*, Norman and London: University of Oklahoma, 1993, p.208.

² See Mahmudur Rahman Manna, *Khaleda Zia Sahasra Ekdin* (One thousand one days of Begum Khaleda Zia), Ankur Prokashani, Dhaka, 1994, p.16, 26.

³ Shahid Latif, "Democracy and our agony", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 14, 1999, p.6.

would expect to be a stable one. However, the main challenge of the regime was to establish the democratic governance. As has been pointed out by a noted Bangladesh Political Scientist, "Khaleda's main challenge was translating into reality the promise of democratic governance"⁴.

In earlier section we observed that the political parties with opposing views had been forced to forge unity in latter part of the 1990's. From the preparation of joint declaration to formation of caretaker government and holding of free, fair and neutral elections, the unity with in diversity continued. Even after formation of government by the majority party BNP, the process of 'consent and debate' between numerically divided party-members in parliament helped restoration of parliamentary democracy through 12th Amendment to the constitution. However, the 'tentative understanding and agreement made the parties during their movement against the authoritarian rule broke after a consensus on parliamentary system of democracy.'⁵ Thus the process of democratic consolidation in a fragmented political community had fallen into a tough challenge. That reminds Huntington's argument about developing countries. Citing Walter Lippmann's quotation in moment of despair about the United States, Huntington argued, "the political community is fragmented against itself and where political institutions have little power, less majesty, and no resiliency-where, in many cases, government simply do not govern."⁶ Nevertheless, the expectations of emerged forces during the 1990's democratic movement had to be realised.

Besides, the speedy current of social mobilisation had created variety of social forces that needed to be adapted in an orderly fashion. But compared to social forces the political institutions seemed to be weak. "Legislatures and executive, public authority and political parties remained fragile and disorganised. The development of the state lagged behind the evolution of society."⁷

This portion of the thesis will analyse the challenges of BNP government during 1991-1996. While the last decade of third millenium's final century witnessed democracy's

⁴ Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh : Promise and Performance*, The University Press Ltd. Dhaka, 2000, pp 3-41.

⁵ See Ataur Rahaman, "In Quest of democratic governance", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 24, 1999, p.4.

⁶ Walter Lippmann (in *New York Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1963, p 24) wrote, "I do know that there is no greater necessity for men who live in communities than they be governed, self-governed if possible, well-governed if they are fortunate, but in any event governed." Cited in Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1968, p 2.

⁷ See Samuel P. Huntington, *Ibid* p.11.

resurgence through a *third wave* advance, its reawakening in Bangladesh at time had been threatened from within mainly due to non-compliance of the democratic norms by the politicians in general, and specifically “by the intransigence of the ruling party and the opposition.”⁸ Rampant civil chagrin in view of the prevailing crisis, campus violence, and commotion engendered by perceived fundamentalist spree and dissent provided a gavel for awful stagnation and recession in economic growth and a gloomy investment climate.

Fundamentalism rises: Analysts view, during 1994 ‘the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, affecting both politics and the society’⁹. As many as three factors seemed to be responsible for this phenomenon. The Golam Azam issue, Taslima Nasrin issue and clash of different Islamic groups with non-governmental organisations(NGOs).

Since Golam Azam’s election as Jamaat chief there was a serious controversy triggered over the liberation war, reviving a new the search for a national identity.¹⁰ This also generated a morale boost among the fundamentalists. The opposition political parties had criticised government’s stand for Golam Azam. A group inside the BNP had also claimed trial of Golam Azam. However, Azam’s newly active involvement in politics and appearances in public meetings were vehemently criticized by various groups and parties supporting pro-liberation politics. Throughout the year, confrontation between Islamic fundamentalists and pro-liberation opposition political parties led to hundreds of injuries and several deaths. However, a faction in the BNP government, known to be pro-Islamist and formerly friendly with Golam Azam, extended tactical support to him in the hope that he would cooperate with the government¹¹. However, encouraged by the main opposition Awami League some leading personalities established some organisations to trial the 1971 war criminals alongwith Golam Azam. The Golam Azam case and the opposition move to bring alleged Bengali “war criminals” to trial together with AL’s planned mass protest movement and the threat to resign by the leader of the opposition in November 1993, embarrassed Khaleda Zia’s government.¹² The victory of Awami League’s candidate in two important

⁸ See Golam Hossain, “Bangladesh in 1994, Democracy at risk”, in Asian Survey, Vol XXXV, No 2, February 1995, pp.171-178.

⁹ See Ibid

¹⁰ See Zillur R Khan, 1993, op cit.

¹¹ See Golam Hossain, 1995, op cit.

¹² See Zillur R Khan, 1994, op cit.

mayoral elections-Dhaka and Chittagong, had provided a further momentum to opposition movement.

Corruption: One of the main challenges of the government was corruption. In fact corruption has always been a challenge for successive governments in Bangladesh. It promotes the interest of a few over many. The cancer of corruption has become all pervasive. It has worsened the law and order situation, slowed down investments both local and foreign, impeded growth, prevented a fair distribution of earnings and in general has made a mockery of any kind of good governance. Accountability and transparency are the two pillars of good governance, which is a pre-condition for sustained social and economic development of a society in a country. However, one of the measures to check corruption is the system of oversight. Bangladesh have not inherited an administrative system with strong oversight functions by responsible institutions either in the discharge of public duties or expenditure of funds from the public coffers.¹³

Rule of Law: Rule of law is important to ensure good governance. Good governance is not possible when crime rate goes up so high. The backlash can also be attributed to the nature of governance by the preceding regime. The accumulated outcome has spilled over during 1991-1996. However, during the BNP regime from 1991-1996 the law and order situation of the country was far away from satisfactory level. During the period the criminal activities were on rise. Table -62 shows the number of reported crimes in different years.

¹³ Former Acting President of 1991 Caretaker Government Shahabuddin Ahmed in an International Conference on 'Improving Oversight Function. Challenges in the New Millenium', see report in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) September 11, 2000, p 1, 11.

Table-62
Figures of Reported crimes from 1991-1997

Year	Total Crime	Murder	Dacoity	Rape	Ratio of police to people
1991	67682	2477	942	1723 incidents	1:1381
1992	71682	2422	1036	from 1991 to	1:1389
1993	72069	2287	889	1994 i.e. 430.75	1:1312
1994	75309	2567	834	yearly	1:1279
1995	82931	2991	907	NA	1:1295
1996	93310	3131	924	238	1:1310
1997	1021613	3084	933	733	1:1274

Sources: Compiled from Jajaidin (Bengali Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) 21 August 2001, p.11, Odhikar Report in The Independent (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) 15 August 2001 and Dhaka Courier (English Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) October 12, 2001, pp.31-32.

It is often argued that corruption and law and order situation are positively related. One gives rise to other. Law enforcers are kept “happy” with a big chunk of the profit the unscrupulous traders make. It could be that the chain of corruption goes right up to the top from the field-level personnel. Whatever the case might have been, the people at the top have certainly failed to envisage the dire consequence. “A poor and developing country like Bangladesh has been perennially vulnerable to the on slaught of such mindless moneymaking.”¹⁴

From Table-64 it becomes clear that the reported crime during 1991-1996 had been increasing alarmingly. The increasing tendency of the reported crime even continued in subsequent regime. However, during 1991 the total number of reported crimes in the country was 67682, it increased to 71682 in 1992, 72069 in 1993, 75309 in 1994, 82931 in 1995 and 93310 in 1996, and ultimately it crossed one lake limit in 1997, 1021613. It never came down below one lakh in subsequent years. Sociologists argued that more number of crimes indicate the unrest reality of the society. The social unrest again, might be the out come of breaking down of the traditional social fabrics. It also indicates the incapacity of the democratic regime to identify the complex shape of the problems. And response in a flexible mood to face the problems.

The article 27 of the Constitution stipulated that all citizens are equal before law and entitled to equal protection of law. Therefore, the government should ensure security for the citizens. If the elected government fails to ensure minimum security and safety to the people, gives rise to the question regarding government’s moral justification to remain in power. From a glance through Table-64, one gets the impression that killings, rape, snatching,

¹⁴ See The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 23, 2000, p.23

dacoity in broad day light had increased manifold during 1991-1996. Since the government assumed power the law and order situation coupled with price hike of essential commodities, and general maladministration have brought the country on the verge of ruination. Load shedding in energy sector every day had added further misery to the city dwellers in particular.

Apart from law and order situation the BNP government of 1991-1996 had been facing several other challenges. One of such challenges was inefficiency of bureaucracy and political system as a whole. The nature and attitudes of bureaucracy, analysts argue, were not favourable to democracy and good governance. One of the causes of excessive power being exercised by the bureaucracy is that in lower criminal court the magistrate as an administrative official holds two sorts of power alongside its related position. As the magistrate he acts as an official in the law enforcing agency and at the same time he holds the power to judge the accused. The function of law enforcing is considered as a function of executive organ while the act to judge belongs to judiciary. Thus the power and function of executive and judiciary are being exercised by the personnel of government's executive organ. The handling of excessive power being exercised by one organ creates the possibility of corruption and injustice.

There had been a long-standing demand for separation of judiciary from the executive branch of the government. After the fall of the autocratic Ershad government, all political parties including BNP and AL had promised to take steps in this regard if voted to power. However, after the BNP came to office in 1991, Salahuddin Yusuf, an AL parliamentarian, placed a bill in the select committee of the parliament. But it never saw the light of the day as the BNP forgot its election pledge. Analysts termed it as 'the handi work of strong state'. In terms of Huntington which may be called as the symptom of simplicity and rigidity. "The tendency for a democratic government to believe it has absolute sovereignty (that is power) can result in the centralisation of authority often by extra constitutional means and with grim results."¹⁵

The political attributes of the social unrest would be partially important, if its social and economic origins are ignored. The increased rate of social mobilisation ultimately

¹⁵ Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy", cited in Moinul Husain. "Ganatantrer Apa Mrituya Je Bhabo Kara Hoiteche", (The way democracy's unnatural death is being ascertained), in The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) October 21, 2000, p 4.

resulted into many political consequences. The number of land less people has been increasing. More number of people had been shifting their occupations from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. There is convincing evidence that the labour market has changed substantially between the 1960s and 1990s. Over the last three decades, employment in agriculture has decreased while trade, transport, and manufacturing have increased substantially. In rural areas the shift from agriculture to nonfarm occupations appears to have occurred in the post-independence period. A few numbers of people own a large quantity of land. In a survey of 1980 it had been found that only 2 per cent people owned 25.1 per cent of cultivable land. Whereas only 4.8 per cent land was owned by 50 per cent farmers. The people who own very small pieces of land, very fast, they were losing the ownership of land.

Human Development: Good governance has to grow from within, it can not be imported from outside. It emerges through a process of trial and error. The movement for democracy in 1990 and February 1991 parliamentary elections had rekindled the expectations from the government. Nevertheless, Bangladesh contained one of the deepest pockets of hardcore poverty, high rate of unemployment, low literacy rate, low life expectancy at birth, and many other underdevelopment syndrome.

Table provides us the number and proportion of population below recommended calorie intake and “hard core” poverty lines by residence. Even though compared to earlier years the number and per cent of poor people have declined. However, their proportion was high at the end of BNP’s governance in 1995-1996. Since its independence Bangladesh has made some progress. Nevertheless, at the end of BNP’s government in 1995-1996, according to analysts, country’s growth has been slow, poverty and malnutrition was pervasive. The predominantly rural and agrarian country, Bangladesh’s rural and agrarian population was more unemployed, more illiterate, suffered from malnutrition and poorly paid for their works.

The quiet violence of poverty has exacerbated, among others, the social and political discontents. The ever-increasing number of jobless educated youth, has been a potent force for socio-political destabilization. Despite some improvements, the unfinished agenda for human resource development in the country was very large.

Table-63

Number and proportion of population below recommended calorie intake and "hard core" poverty lines by residence

Year	Poverty Line I		Poverty Line II	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	<i>Absolute Number of poor (million)</i>			
1973-74	5.6	57.4	2.0	30.7
1983-84	7.1	47.0	3.8	31.3
1988-89	10.8	40.5	5.0	24.9
1991-92	6.8	44.8	3.8	26.5
1995-96	9.6	45.7	5.2	23.9
	<i>Percentage of Poor</i>			
1973-74	81.4	82.9	28.6	44.3
1983-84	66.0	57.0	35.0	38.0
1988-89	44.0	48.0	20.5	29.5
1991-92	46.7	47.8	26.2	28.3
1995-1996	49.7	47.1	27.3	24.6

Source: BBS, (i) Statistical Pocket book of Bangladesh 1992, and p.310, for figures of 1973-74 to 1988-1989.

(ii) Statistical Pocket book of Bangladesh 1995, p.341, for figures of 1991-92.

(iii) Statistical Pocket book of Bangladesh 1997, p.383, for figures of 1995-96. The BBS has calculated the figures from the report of the Bangladesh Household Expenditure Survey, in related years. Note: (a) Poverty Line I = Recommended Calorie intake (2122 K. cal. / day/ person). (b) Poverty Line II = "Hardcore" Poverty: 1805, K. Cal. /day/person.

A few examples illustrate the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead. About 65 per cent of the adults were illiterate in Bangladesh; life expectancy at birth was significantly lower than that of the developed countries. Access, to primary health care in Bangladesh was limited. In the context of staggering needs for investment, it was doubtful whether Bangladesh by herself would be able to marshal such resources for basic human development.

An overwhelming majority of the poor in Bangladesh are young and impatient with their lot. The rate of unemployment in Bangladesh in 1995 was about 37 per cent far exceed the catastrophic heights of joblessness during the Great Depression (about 18.2 percent in the USA).¹⁶ Furthermore, the effects of massive poverty do not remain confined to the family, the locality (rural or urban), community and even the state to which the poor belong. Poverty silently crosses boundaries carrying in its wake drugs, diseases and terrorism. *Poverty is also a potent threat to political stability of the country.*

In Bangladesh the impoverish situation in the rural areas pushed the poor people from their ancestral home. The urban opportunities pull them for livelihood. The swelling urban

¹⁶ See M. Saifur Rahaman, "Steady flow of ODA needed to combat poverty", in The Bangladesh Times (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 5, 1995, p.5.

slums become their shelter. These shanties provide safe haven for criminal and anti-social elements. A study revealed that in Dhaka there are 44 slums with 19432 families' totals into one lakh population.¹⁷ Eventhough per capita income has gone up, but the two poles of accruals and poverty has also distanced. In spite of all the good inspiring things, this has also led to the marginalisation and the lack of participation. "The differential access to public resources has also become very prominent in that way."¹⁸

The reflection of democracy in the economic field had been under the aegis of the introduction of the market forces. Basically the liberal democrats thought more right to economic activities, private sector development, and with drawl of the state would essentially bring more democracy within the economy, which was essentially right. Analysts argued that concentration on the new institutions instead of necessarily strengthening the old ones might not be congenial. As a result a pervasive economic process in that way has grown up as a reflection of politics in the economy.

Thus alongside all the economic achievements-GDP growth, export expansion, rural infrastructure development and so on some serious constraints has also posed. According to development economists, they are, among others, 'a very distorted process of privatisation', 'loan default culture', 'system losses in the public utility systems'. Even in one of Bangladesh's success areas-micro-credit, the poorest of the poor could not be reached.

The Challenges at a glance: To consider the challenges of the BNP government during 1991-1996, one has to look into the electoral pledges, deliberations and commitments of the ruling party leaders on various national problems. The most important among these were the rights to speak in the parliament by the opposition MPs, treatment of police against the MPs and persons in custody, law and order situation, abolishing black law like special power act (SPA), arbitrary application of SPA and section 54 of CrPC against the opposition members, police excesses, human rights violations, failure in market management and skyrocketing price spiral, arrests and punishment of the culprits and terrorists belonging to the ruling party vis-a-vis opposition, fierce gun battle between the factions of students in the

¹⁷ See The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 13, 2000. p 4

¹⁸ Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya in a 'Dialogue on 10 years of democracy: Lessons and way ahead' arranged by The Daily Star during January 2002. See The Daily Satar (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) February 13, 2002, p 5

campus, terrorism in the Universities, exercise of democratic rights of the students not belonging to the ruling party's student front residing in residential halls of the universities, corruption by the police and government officials and so on.

Besides crucial problems like, 1. non-implementation of four point accord signed with the opposition during June 1992, 2. implementation of the government's promise to provide TV-radio autonomy, 3. oppression on the opposition students political activists, 2. Government's failure to control law and order situation generated after the Babri mosque turmoil in India, 5. Charging tear gas and stick on the opposition rallies in Dhaka and other parts of the country, 6. Government's failure to arresting and punishing the terrorists without any parts of the, 7. violation of democratic rights of the people to bring out street procession charge, shooting rubber bullets, 8. stopping police barbarism and awarding punishment for their crimes rapes in custody and corruption, 9. failure to curb widespread murders, hijack, loot, arson, toll collection, rape, abduction usually perpetrated by the beneficiaries of the party in power, 10. stoppage of attacks, filing of false cases and harassment of the press and journalists for objective reporting, 11. failure to curb power politics and politics vengeance and confrontation, 12. maintenance of transparency, accountability and democratic principles in governance.

Moreover, apart from these specific problems the great failure the great failure during 1990-1996 is that the country is yet to build-up any democratic culture. This challenge has become a threat to many expected goals. Due to lack of democratic culture the parliament has become moribund, political parties have become the instruments of few personality cult. Only during election time people can feel empowered, that also hamper by muscle exposition. Analysts argue that for Bangladeshi people, democracy starts and ends with an election in every five years. Nevertheless, the government of the people, thus become the government of political party. The reckless competition of the power mongering political parties has become a considerable threat for institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. The following sections discuss the economic and political challenges to the BNP regime during 1991-1996.

Chapter VIII.5

Economic Challenges to BNP regime during 1991-1996

Since *institutionalization of democracy* is related with *economic growth*, one will be dependent on the other for the development as a whole, which in turn ought to lead the country from the present state of underdevelopment to a stage of progress and enlightenment. However, in order to achieve a successful transition to development, the real challenge before the nation had been *economic*. The over-all economic condition, being directly linked with human development is no doubt an essential pre-requisite for a fuller enjoyment of true democracy. The country, therefore, had the need to achieve a faster rate of economic growth along with a higher scale of economy. A flimsy democracy confined for the benefit of some privileged groups is no democracy at all unless the opportunity or awareness of such rights are available for the larger sections of people. In view of this need the economic challenges before the democratically elected government of BNP during 1991-1996 had been tremendous. We discuss below the economic challenges to the BNP government during 1991-1996.

Challenges to implementing development programmes: One of the classic examples regarding non-implementation of government orders, what has been termed as *disorder* by Samuel P. Huntington, could be found in chronic defect and shortfall in implementing Annual Development Programmes of the country. During 1990-1995 shortfall in ADP implementation was a matter of grave concern for the government. The non-implementation of the development programmes has been a major problem throughout the era. The trend of

allocating large amount of money for ADP could be seen since independence. Usually a large amount of money is allocated for the rapid socio-economic development in the country. This allocation was bigger during 1990-1995. To rectify the course of dilly-dallying the implementation of development projects some reform measures were taken. These were delegation of authority to the project directors, reinforcement of the review and monitoring process, reallocation of developmental resources from the slow-moving to the fast-moving projects through objective review exercises and gearing up of the project approval process were identified as necessary steps for improvement of implementation of annual development projects. It is claimed that through adoption of some of these corrective measures, the rate of utilization picked up appreciably from 1993/94 and the process of improvement was more or less sustained during the last portion of 1990-1996. However, the full implementation of the government developmental programmes was never attained.

Decline in the flow of foreign aid: During the period a sharp decline in the flow of foreign aid is observed due to 'emerging donor priorities' and implementation problems.

Low remittances: One of the biggest sources of foreign exchange earning, the export of manpower of overseas employment, had been passing through a tough phase. Accordingly foreign exchange earning from the sector had also fallen. Total home remittances during 1990-95 amounted to \$4,296 million, lower by only 0.69 per cent than the target of \$ 4,326 million. The annual growth of private transfer was slow, 4.80 per cent against the projection of 5.10 per cent. Annual manpower export reached its pick of 238 thousand approximately in 1992/93 from 110 thousand in 1989/90 but thereafter fell below 205 thousand and was about 200 thousand in 1994/95. However, in latter period the manpower export has also increased (Table). Annual remittances increased from \$761 million in 1989/90 to \$1094 million in 1994/95. Total foreign employment was 0.95 million in the year. Analysts' view, the fall in

demand for manpower in the Middle East and Gulf countries, the major market in manpower export from Bangladesh, had caused increase in migration costs and decline in salaries in those countries.¹

Table-64
The number of overseas employments in different years

Year	Number
1990	1,03,814
1991	1,47,131
1992	1,88,124
1993	2,44,508
1994	1,86,326
1995	1,87,543
1996	2,11,714
1997	3,81,077
1998	2,67,667
1999	2,68,182

Source: Weekly Holiday, January 11, 2002, p 16.

Flexible exchange rate: The country has been pursuing flexible exchange rate policy to ensure competitiveness in international trade. Since January 1, 1992 the official rate and the exchange rate in the secondary exchange market have been unified. On the other hand during the financial year 1996 exports retention rate has been increased from 20 per cent to 40 per cent. The unification of the two rates has been strengthened due to these liberalisations. During 1990-95 taka was depreciated by 22.10 per cent. It is argued that both export and worker's remittances have been stimulated and Current Account gap in the external sector has reduced for this

¹ See Ghulam Ahad, 'Manpower export declining, salaries down', in Holiday (English Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) January 11, 2002, p. 16.

depreciation. However, economists argued that due to some inherent structural limitations of the country's economy it remains to be mattered.²

Table-65
Devaluation of Taka in different years

Date /Year of Devaluation	Dollar	Pound
1988-89	32.23	50.19
1989-90	30.85	60.94
1990-91	35.74	60.13
1991-92	38.95	74.12
1992-93	39.75	60.18
1993-94	40.15	62.35
1994-95	40.00	63.04
1995-96	41.65	64.70
1996-97	43.55	72.47
1997-98	46.15	76.93
1998-99	48.95	77.02
1999-2000	50.85	77.21
2000-2001		
July	50.85	76.43
August	53.85	78.56
May	56.50	-

Source: The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 28, 2001, p.9.

Rough increase of consumer Price Index: During the period 1991-1995 the consumer Price Index for the middle income families particularly in the capital city increased roughly at an annual average rate of 4.50 per cent compared to the average rate of 9.80 per cent during the preceding five years. During 1992/93 the inflation rate came down to as low as 1.40 per cent. But later on it began to rise and in 1994/95 reached upto 5.20 per cent. The availability of consumer items including foodgrains was adequate and stable. On the other hand the

² See Interview of Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud in The Daily Jugantar (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 28, 2001, p.1, 15.

money supply was contained particularly during 1991/92, 1992/93, and 1993/94. These two major factors contributed to lower inflation rate. However, during 1994/95, 1995/96 the money supply rose significantly which resulted in a higher inflation rate.

Bangladesh introduced free market economy in the late 1980's. In short the free market economy means making the economy free from all types of restrictions so that the economy can move in its own footing. The government of the period i.e. the BNP government of 1991-1996 had undertaken various policies to pave the way for a free market economy. A number of reform-measures in the industrial, financial and trade sectors were undertaken during the period in pursuit of free market economy. These may group into following categories,

- a. Reorganization of public sector- in this category various steps were undertaken to reduce the size of government sector;
- b. Privatisation;
- c. Money convertibility;
- d. Trade Liberalisation;
- e. Encouraging foreign private investment.

It is argued that many countries in the world including some neighbouring countries of Bangladesh have attained a considerable success by introducing free market economy. With the introduction of free market economy the private sector in Bangladesh is gradually expanding. Government had even allowed very big investments in private sectors like private airlines, heavy industries, telecommunication, railway etc. However, the private sector of the country was never very big and both the government and the private entrepreneurs are not well experienced in handling and administering this sector. During Pakistan period almost all-big private investments were made by the West Pakistanis. After liberation all these big industries were nationalised. Eventhough, government has announced many incentives to local investors to come forward to invest in different sectors with a view to ensuring speedy

industrialisation. But the responses from the local entrepreneurs had been frustrating. However, it is widely recognised by the academicians and economists that the reform measures have widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Structural adjustment did not bring any real benefit to the hard core poor; rather, it widened the gap between the rich and the poor (Atiur Rahaman 2001)³. The poverty alleviation process slowed down after implementation of structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the promised benefits for the disadvantaged groups were not obvious and perceptible. Analysts view that the country's experience in structural adjustment is neither an unmitigated success nor a case of dismal failure. The number of poor is growing as the population growth rate surpasses poverty reduction rate (Debapriya 2001)⁴. On the other hand corruption has increased in the country and there is no sign that it would reduce due to reforms.

Governance: Good governance has been identified as a major factor in economic growth. A leading think tank of the country the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in its report in 1997 states,

“Environment suggests that economic liberalisation may not be enough for generating the envisaged supply responses unless accompanied by other non-price reforms such as those relating to the quality of public administration and the functioning of the financial and labour markets. The issue of good governance essentially addresses the question of how to create the stable polities with flexible institution that can respond to the need of economic development.”

The same tone could be found in the World Bank Economic Update in the same year. It states,

“The Government has repeatedly stressed its intention to establish an efficient and transparent government as a top priority.”

³ Atiur Rahaman in a presentation at the Second National Forum of Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI) Bangladesh, on March 2001, report in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) 15 March 2001, p 6.

⁴ Debapriya Bhattacharya Ibid

At the ground level, however, good governance is singularly lacking. The major impediment to growth has been the conflict between the major political parties. Although all concerned glibly talk about reforms, but in reality, we see the rise in economic crimes that generate huge illegal incomes, whether it be from willful default of bank loans, or corruption in tax administration, or electricity pilferage, or leakage in public development expenditures. 'Illegal toll collection may now account for larger proportion of the country's GDP compared to rent seeking incomes.' While the government and opposition had been busy with show-down and counter show-down, top officials of Bangladesh Bank had expressed concern at the macro-economic situation. The country's foreign exchange reserve had been falling, import had been declining, tax revenue collection had been decreasing and the government borrowing had been on the increase.

To aggregate the overall situation, the report of crop failures in 1994-1995 had been sending chilling signals throughout the financial system. Central Bank apprehended that food shortage might lead to price hike and import of food grains, putting further pressure on the forex reserve.

However, in 1995 the government had to go for high foodgrain import. That had cost the country nearly 400 to 500 million dollars. The government also spent nearly 150 million dollars annually for the import price as subsidy. The import of rice and wheat pushed out the private sector further from the banking system, signaling a chilling winter that could be longer and colder amidst heated political activities in the country.

However, the crop-failures led to a less than expected GDP growth of six-per cent forecast. The dismal economic performance had also affected the two stock exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The government of Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Begum Khaleda Zia during 1991-1996 had been successful in some economic areas such as to keep the inflation rate within the limit of 3.5 per cent. Besides analysts argued that whatever may be the deteriorating

situation, compared to Pakistani rule before 1971 and the authoritarian regimes of Bangladesh after 1971 the rate of growth has become double, level of poverty has been reduced, population growth has been declining, infant and child mortality rate has been reduced and the rate of enrollment in the primary level has been increased.

But compared to other South Asian Nations, the advancement of Bangladesh is hardly remarkably comparable. The macro management of Bangladesh economy during the years from 1991-1994 had been commendable.

GDP growth: The growth of GDP after stagnating around 4 per cent annually for the last 15 years has shown some signs of improvement in recent years. In fact, at 5.7 per cent GDP growth in financial year was the highest since the beginning of 1990s. The increase in the GDP for both 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 can be attributed entirely to high agricultural growth. Which had been due to mostly bounty of nature and use of high breed seeds.

Table-66
Annual GDP growth rate during 1990-1996.

Year	GDP growth rate
1989-90	6.6 per cent
1990-91	3.4 per cent
1991-92	4.2 per cent
1992-93	4.5 per cent
1993-94	4.2 per cent
1994-95	4.4 per cent
1995-96	5.4 per cent
1996-97	5.7 per cent

Source: National Income Section, BBS, Statistical Pocketbook of Bangladesh, 1995 and 1997, p.252 and 278.

Eventhough, in none of the years from 1991 to 1996 the growth rate of economy had reached 6.6 per cent of 1989-90. However, the total period of BNP's governance had observed a modest growth rate ranging from 3.4 per cent in 1990-91 to 5.4 per cent in 1995-96. Analysts

held responsible the lack of 'favourable environment' for lagging behind to push up to at least six per cent or above.'

During 1994 the price of gas was upped by executive order. Under the revised rates, prices of gas on average have risen by nearly 10 per cent for consumers in power, industries and commercial sectors. This was not so favourable for industries and trade.

The price of imported fuel oil, at the time, had been more than double its price in international markets. From importing to distribution of imported petroleum, the state run monopoly, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) spends about Tk. 6 for a litre of petrol. But the retail price of the same in the local market was Tk.13.70. This had also a negative impact on costs of production in industries, which burn imported oil to generate power, road transport sector and railways. Agriculture had also suffered because much of the irrigation was done by power pumps, which run on imported diesel oil. Bangladesh had a negative balance of trade with India. This balance was widening more and more to Indian industries benefit. The competitive edge which Indian industries had vis-a-vis Bangladeshi industries had been directly attributed to Indian industries receiving power at the rate of 95 paisa whereas per unit price of electricity consumed by Bangladesh industries varies from Taka Four to Taka Five.⁵ It should be understandable therefore why Bangladeshi industries, paying notably higher costs for power, find themselves at a great disadvantages to compete with Indian industries.

The Value Added Tax (VAT) had no doubt led to mobilisation of greater resources for the government. However, businessmen and traders were increasingly showing unease with VAT and calling for its rationalisation. In some cases they considered the rate of VAT as too high and in other cases they pointed to realisation of VAT several times from the same item with change of hands.

⁵ See The Bangladesh Times (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 5, 1994, p.5

Agriculture: The GDP growth in the last three decades was four per cent on an average. It picked to an average five per cent in the 1990s. The agriculture sector achievements are remarkable. Food grain production recorded a 270 per cent growth in the last three decades from a mere volume of 10 lakh tons in the early 70s to 27 lakh in 2000. This has been achieved in spite of depleting arable lands and irrigation coverage of only 50 per cent land.

During the concerned period of 1990-1996, agriculture sector was the single largest-about one-third-contributor to the GDP of Bangladesh. It also provided nearly 63 per cent of the total employed persons in the country. The share of agriculture to the total GDP of the country has been diminishing over the years. The sub-sectors of the agriculture are crops, forestry, livestock and fisheries. Among these four sub-sectors of agriculture, the contribution of fisheries and livestock has increased considerably. During 1989-1990 and 1990-1991 fisheries and livestock have contributed 3.5 and 3.3 per cent respectively, whereas its contribution rose upto 4.2, 4.7, 4.9 and 5.0 per cent respectively during 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96 fiscal years. On the other hand, livestock contributes 3.4 per cent and 3.2 per cent during 1989-1990 and 1990-1991 respectively it also increased up to 3.5 per cent during 1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96 fiscal years respectively.

Almost all the sectors have grown up sharply from the first three fiscal years to the last three fiscal years, i.e. from 1990-91, 1991-92, 1992-93 to 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96. Only one sector Banking and Insurance, and three sub-sector-small scale sub-sector (of manufacturing) and crop and forestry sub-sector (of agriculture) have diminished modestly.

The modest falling of crop sub-sector could be attributed to 'inadequate quality seeds, irrigation facilities and extension services coupled with natural calamities like floods, droughts, salinity, etc, contributed largely to the sluggish growth of agriculture during 1990-1996'(Ministry of Planning 1999:16)'. Attainment of food autoarcky was always the target of Bangladesh. The pace of growth in food grain production was slow.

Table-67
Sectoral shares of GDP at current market prices

Sector	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
1. Agriculture	36.8	36.0	35.9	30.5	29.7	30.9	30.0
i Crops	26.3	26.1	27.9	19.5	18.2	19.2	18.1
ii Forestry	3.6	3.4	2.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.3
iii Livestock	3.4	2.2	3.6	6.2	3.5	3.5	3.6
iv Fisheries	3.5	3.3	2.8	4.2	4.7	4.9	5.0
2. Mining & Quarrying	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
3. Manufacturing	8.8	8.7	10.1	9.7	9.9	9.6	9.6
i Large Scale	5.1	5.1	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.2	6.3
ii Small Scale	3.7	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3
4. Construction	5.8	5.7	6.0	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.9
5. Power, gas, water & sanitary services	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.2
6. Transport, storage & communication	10.2	11.7	11.8	12.9	12.5	11.9	11.4
7. Trade Services	8.4	8.2	9.0	8.3	8.4	8.6	9.0
8. Housing Services	9.0	8.8	7.6	9.2	9.4	9.1	9.6
9. Public administration & defence	4.4	4.6	4.5	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.4
10. Banking & Insurance	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0
11. Professional & Miscellaneous Services	13.3	13.0	10.7	14.4	14.8	14.7	14.9
12. GDP at market price	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: National Income Section, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistical Pocket of Bangladesh 1992, p.220, 1995, p.251 and 1997, and p. 278

The following Table shows production of rice and wheat during 1990-1995.

Table-68
Production of foodgrain during 1990-1995

Crops	1989/90 Benchmark	Plan Terminal Year	Target	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
Aus	2.49	2.42		2.33	2.18	2.08	1.85	1.79
Aman	9.20	11.00		9.17	9.27	9.68	9.42	8.50
Boro	6.17	7.20		6.36	6.80	6.59	6.77	6.54
Wheat	0.89	1.20		1.00	1.07	1.17	1.13	1.25
Total	18.75	21.82		18.86	19.32	19.52	19.17	18.08
Other Coarse grain	0.10	0.16		0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09
Total foodgrain	18.85	21.18		18.94	19.40	19.60	19.25	18.17

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh

Low farm productivity of the country is often due to factors such as inefficient methods of irrigation, lack of mechanization in farming, inadequate supplies of fertilizer, natural disasters and lack of marketing system. If all farmers can be provided with production inputs, the financial can be provided with production in puts the financial system, the market and the agricultural knowledge they can improve the agriculture.

Thus total rice production was 17.69 million ton in 1995/96. With the wheat production of 1.37 million metric ton, total food grain production was 19.14 million metric ton in 1995/96, but still below the 1992/92 level.

The estimate for total cereal production during the year 1996/97 was at 20.43 million metric ton, the highest ever production of cereals. The Aman production rose to 9.59 million metric ton while Aus, Boro and Wheat gained marginally only to 1.87 million metric ton, 7.42 million metric ton and 1.45 million metric ton respectively.

“Available evidence suggests that the slow-down of agricultural growth in the first half of the nineties has played an important role in influencing the modest progress in poverty reduction.” The poor performance of the crop sector in the first half of nineties has naturally affected the overall growth of the agricultural sector. Agricultural GDP, which grew at an annual rate of 2 per cent during the period between 1983/84 and 1991/92, declined to 1.4 per cent over 1991-92-1995/96. This slow-down had implications for the trend in real wages.

Industry: Compared to agriculture, industries sector has better scope to become the engine of development. It is in this sense that due to ‘constrained by land and under-employment situation’ agriculture has to bend on relatively low output-labour ratio. During previous years a larger fluctuation was seen in the growth rate of the manufacturing sector. The annual growth rates of the manufacturing sector in 1972-76, 1976-78, 1978-82, 1982-86, and 1986-90 were 7.35, 6.21, 0.93 and 4.22 per cent respectively.

During the initial years after independence development policies and programmes were concentrated on repairs, rehabilitation and consolidation to restore the sector at the pre-independence level with some new investments in priority areas. The first development plan of the country was mainly aimed at better utilization of the existing capital stock. The primary objectives of industrialization in second and third plans were to support the agricultural sector, meet basic needs of people and strength the balance of payments situation.

With the introduction of the New Industrial Policy (NIP) of 1982, Revised Industrial Policy (RIP) of 1986 and reform measure during the Fourth five-year Plan (1990-95) a number of changes and improvements were made in various procedures and incentive structures to promote private investment in industry.

To boost-up private sectors government has taken a number of measures. Disinvestment of government owned industries is one such measure. During 1986-1990, 39 public enterprises were disinvested and transferred to the private sector. “However, the

payment of purchase price installments by the privatised enterprises has been very poor. (P.24).”

The fourth five-year plan (1990-95) fixed 9.02 per cent as the annual growth rate of target for industrial sector. But the achieved growth rate was 7.05 per cent, i.e. the actual growth industrial growth was 1.97 per cent less than the targetted rate. According to the government estimation, mismanagement, obsolete machinery, lack of fund and proper planning, industrial unrest, power failure were the constraints of industrial growth. As a result both expected level of employment and production were hampered in the industries of the country. It may be mentioned that the industrial sector provided employment 1.32 million persons during the period. This number was 1.20 million less than the targetted figure 2.52 million. On the other hand the slow pace of increment in foreign exchange earnings from major industrial products continued during the period. Private investment (in 1989/90 prices) was about Tk.99, 000 million, and the public investment was Tk.5, 030 million during the same period. Nevertheless, most of the public corporation of this sector incurred losses during 1990-95.

The annual average increase of population living in poverty in a decade from mid-80s to mid-90s has been 0.8 per cent in Bangladesh. This increase has been at about double the rate of Bangladesh in India (1.9 per cent). At present, half of the total populations do not get two meals a day as per their need. They are deprived of their fundamental rights and affected by various social discriminations. They have no land, no production in puts. Poverty is declining by only point five per cent per year. If this trend is continued, the country can not reduce poverty even by 15/16 per cent with in the next forty/fifty years. At present landless people constitute the largest deprived minority in the country. Experience shows that land ownership in our agrarian society and economy makes a man powerful and provides him social, political, economic security. Eighty per cent of the total population in Bangladesh lives in the villages and directly depends on rural economy. Again, rural economy totally

depends on land. The dominating role of land in national economy still exists and there is no reason to think that it will be changed significantly within the next one/two decades. Seventy-two per cent of the total labour force is still involved in agricultural production based on land and forty per cent of the national production comes from agriculture.

Bangladesh have at present a larger population poor than it had when it won freedom. The middle class has expanded but the economic benefits have not. In fact, the yawning gap between the haves and the have nots has widened further. The country suffers economic and political backwardness. Being a *soft state*, to use the phrase a Swedish political economist Gunnar Myrdal,⁶ the tackling of problems was not decisive. The failure of the country is visible both in building up institutions and also badly in economic front. The theme of development is woven around the people, the market and the state.⁷ The primacy of economic growth, importance of the private sector, the need for the better resource use in government, the need to address the problems of governance, the need to empower households and local communities and for better co-ordinated action should be common of the approaches.⁸

It is argued that if large numbers of people in a country are constrained to eat less than adequate food, the most basic of the basic needs of each individual, there is a fundamental development challenge that the country faces in addition to the moral and ethical quagmire that such large-scale deprivation entails. The longer the challenges remains unresolved, the more entrenched it may become, adversely impacting on the nation-building process on a continuous basis.

⁶ See Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*

⁷ Pranab Mukhopadhyay, BIOBIAS, Book Review of Ignacy Sachs, 'Understanding Development: People, Markets and the state in Mixed Economics', in *Indian Review of Books*, Volume 9, Number 8, May 16 2000-June 2000, EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., India, 2000, p 12.

⁸ Clare Short, 'Challenge of a new century: Reduction of poverty in Asia', in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) February 17, 2000, p.7.

Macroeconomic Balance: Despite 5.7 per cent GDP growth the strains in the macroeconomic balances have persisted. The external current account deficit, which also been reduced from an unsustainable level of over 5 per cent of GDP in 1995-1996 to less than 3 per cent in 1996-1997. The pressure on the balance of payments has persisted, as evident from the continued draw-down on external deficit has been made possible mainly because of a sharp decline in the growth of import demand, which in turn appears to have resulted from a subdued level of manufacturing and investment activities. Only remittances from Bangladesh workers abroad seemed to have saved the situation. Inflation was within tolerable levels.

Total investment rate is reported to have increased from 17 per cent of GDP in financial year 1996 to 17.40 per cent in financial year 1997. Both CPD and WB reports find this figure suspect.

According to National Board of Revenue (NBR)'s Trade Data, imports of iron and steel declined by 10 per cent while imports of capital goods increased by less than 1 per cent and value-added in construction grew only by 3.6 per cent in financial year 1997. Even after taking into account the 4.6 per cent nominal exchange rate devaluation and less than 6 per cent growth in domestic production of cement in FY1997 the magnitude of increase in the size of nominal investment appears inconsistent with this data. The national savings rate increased from 11.9 per cent of GDP in FY 1996 to 14.6 per cent in FY 1997 (the latter figure is suspect).

Fiscal Development: On the revenue side, Bangladesh's fiscal structure continues to suffer from a very narrow tax base. Introduction of VAT in 1991 raised the tax GDP ratio by about 2 per cent of GDP the revenue effort is still based heavily on imports. With liberalisation of trade drastic measures are needed to spread the tax net and lower the tax rate. Public expenditure and short-fall in revenue collection led to Government's borrowing from the banking system. By financial year 1996 the overall borrowing had increased upto 37 per cent. The net result of the higher government borrowing had been that the private sector was

being crowded out from the banking credit facilities. This had led to an 8 per cent fall in the country's overall imports. This means lower revenue collection by the government and also an overall vicious circle of economic recession or even contraction. Against the backdrop of higher government expenditure the revenue collection target had been missed by over Tk.650 crore upto November 1997. This had also aggravated the crowding out effect. Because government had to borrow more to meet the deficit amount which was supposed to be filled by the revenue collection.

In a later period the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has held responsible, the mid-1990's fiscal policies of the government for increasing fragility of the country's economy. The IMF said despite some achievements, the Bangladesh economy has become progressively more fragile after the 1990s due to pursuit of expansionary fiscal and monetary policies along with slow progress on needed structural reforms, especially in the banking and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).⁹

Private Investment: With the success in the domestic savings mobilisation in the early 1990s, the macroeconomy showed symptoms of aggregate demand deficiency arising from feeble investment demand such as a low rate of inflation, a huge build-up of reserves and excess liquidity in the banking system. However, most of these factors have been reversed in the last two years thereby posing a serious threat to the growth in private investment. The expansion of private sector activities is also adversely affected by the prevailing crisis in the banking sector. As defaulted loans are recovered more fresh ones increased the classified loans portfolio.

Foreign capital inflow: The foreign capital inflow both in the public and private sector will be a crucial factor for maintaining a viable balance of payments and financing investment

⁹ See Raihan M Chowdhury, "Economic trends worry IMF", in *Dhaka Courier*, 24 May 2002, p 16.

growth. In the near term with increasing amounts of FDI taking place in Energy sector there is unlikely to be significant positive effects on reserves. More importantly, as production of gas and electricity starts and foreign investors begin to repatriate their returns demand of foreign exchange will increase. Gas exports (not very desirable) is likely to give the country a temporary respite till this valuable resource is exhausted.

There are now considerable prospects for attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Bangladesh if only over warring politicians will give up their agitation on non-issues. Bangladesh has to put its act together. Instead of agitating over bridges and transit routes if the thrust is directed towards expediting infrastructural facilities so vital for growth foreign investors may start looking at Bangladesh.

Despite all the efforts being made by the government to attract FDI into the country through various incentives, concerned political uncertainty and deteriorating law and order situation are causing serious doubts in the minds of the prospective investors. Active trade unionism and politically-backed terrorism have been scaring the prospective investors away.

Privatisation: One of the requisites under structural adjustment programme-privatisation process had been progressing slowly during 1991-1996.¹⁰ The privatization process was vital for the government as the IMF and the World Bank had made it a condition for releasing funds. Even though the state owned enterprises (SOEs) had cost the government Tk.2000 crore annually, and successful implementation of the privatisation programme is vital to economic growth, however, the government had failed to hand over any of the 82 units earmarked for privatisation during 1991-1996. Out of this 82 enterprises the BNP government of 1991-1996 could sell 12 SOEs and also hand them over to the buyers.

¹⁰ Akbar Imam, 'Privatization process slows down', in Holiday (Weekly Newsmagazine. Dhaka) September 5, 1997, p.8.

Donors viewed that the privatisation process of SOEs had come to a virtual standstill as disputes between Privatisation Board (PB) and the bidders over numerous issues have bogged down all efforts by the PB to get rid of the losing concerns as fast as possible. The Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) had faced problems in off-loading shares in the capital market. ICB was reportedly shy in selling shares in the prevailing depressed market where prices were low. The share certificates were also of very big lots of 1000 to 5000 shares each, instead of the 20 to 50 share market lots. Added to that the problems of organised labour resistance, political pressure and bureaucratic tangles were barriers to the privatization process. Experts view that the Government, the Bureaucrats, the Opposition and the Trade Union Leaders all are responsible for the slow progress in disinvestment¹¹. On the other hand the international agencies in Dhaka said that there was an element of lack of government commitment and the enterprises on sale were also over priced during the valuation. The PB officials said, some of the tender offers were also facing legal injunctions. On the other hand some privatized factories also failed to run efficiently (Rehaman Sobhan 2001)¹².

It could be mentioned that Bangladesh have better prospects on three areas-agro-processing, information technologies (IT) and readymade garments (RMG). Eventhough the achievements of it are praiseworthy. The sustainable development of the RMG depends on the development of the backward linkage industry for survival in future. The worrisome factor is a low 20 per cent value addition in the RMG sector. Of the US \$ 5 billion export receipts from this sector, the country has to spend about 75 per cent of it to import raw

¹¹ Former Chairman of the Privatisation Board Kazi Zafarullah in an interview with *The Weekly Holiday* made this observation. See *Holiday (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka)* October 24, 1997, p. 1, 13.

¹² Rehaman Sobhan *Ibid*.

materials.¹³ On the other hand the export base of the country is also narrow. About 90 per cent of the export earnings are coming from only five items. Nevertheless, the two promising sectors-agroprocessing and IT can help diversify the export earnings from frozen fish could be tripled if the items were processed to get higher value.

Apart from encouraging private investment, liberalisation process also open the local market for foreign goods. The locally produced goods are not compatible with the foreign goods. And as such the new private investors are bound to die at their infant stage. Many authors argue that in the successful countries the trade liberalisation policy was adopted when their home industries could contribute about 15-20 per cent in GDP.¹⁴ In Bangladesh the contribution of industrial sector is only about 7-9.6 per cent. Thus without modification and reforming different policies, rules and laws to suit the new circumstances, expected result can not come from the sector. Nevertheless, based on the existing socio-economic religious and cultural environment prevailing in a country the method and speed of implementation of free market economy should differ from one country to another. In this regard a proverb of economies could be remembered, that is "nurse the baby, protect the child, free the adult". Though industrialisation can be a dynamic force capable of initiating a process of self-generating development in a developing country, industrial growth in Bangladesh could favour mainly urban population. And this has resulted in the creation of problems such as high rural unemployment, migration of rural population to major cities, lowering in the standard of health and sanitation service, traffic congestion, increasing trend of crime and pollution in urban areas.¹⁵

¹³ Dr. Mohammad Farashuddin while speaking on 'Problem and prospects of Bangladesh economy in the medium term', report in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 7, 2001, p.6.

¹⁴ India, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Mexico have this policy when their industrial sector could about 20 per cent in GDP. See M Aowarangazeb Chowdhury, 'Free market economy: Bangladesh perspective', in *Dhaka Courier* (Weekly English Newsmagazine, Dhaka) 31 July 1998, p.28.

¹⁵ A B M S Zahur, 'Rural Industrialisation, Removing disparities in development', in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) 12 June 1998, p.10.

However, even with much apprehension regarding adaptability of market economy in Bangladesh, certain changes in economic structure result is shift in profession of the people could be marked in recent times.

The salient features of the recent economic changes in Bangladesh in rapid commercialisation process, which opened up markets, have succeeded in replacing the traditional values observed in societal relationships. Thus affecting the traditional base of authority. The shift of labour force from agricultural to non-agricultural or manufacturing sector, increasing number of female labour force participation and many other changes have also a tremendous impact on the traditional base of authority. From the point of view of economic advancement although this is a salutary development its rapid march prevented social institutions in tandem with economic change. Consequently, once the full cycle of the commercialization process had run its course, the social institutions in the country found themselves indirect conflict not only retards the development process, but also prevents society from realising the full benefits of economic advancement. Overemphasis on market economy may destroy a nation's culture stressing efficiency.¹⁶ Amartya Sen shared this concern over profit-oriented free enterprise with no sense of social responsibility.¹⁷

The incapacity to realising social benefits of economic advancement or lack of "social responsibility" result into unequal distribution of resources. The unequal distribution of resources make a few people richer and the most poorer. Unequal wealth tends to undermine real political equality that is necessary for a healthy democracy¹⁸.

For enhancing the private investor's capacity in taking initiative for commerce and industry, commercial banks of the country provide loan. The scheduled Bank Statistics of Bangladesh Bank provide data on number of borrowers having loan over one crore take each.

¹⁶ Nakasone Yasuhiro, former Japanese Prime Minister made this remark while commenting on reform in a conference on 'Democracy and Crisis', in *Asia Week*, April 9, 1999, pp 52-54.

¹⁷ *Ibid* p.52

In 31 December 1974, each of the 163 loan accounts with Banks had more than one crore taka each outstanding loan. The amount of such loan was 383 crore taka, it had been about 44.71 per cent of total bank loan. Nationalised sector was dominant at that time. Different sector corporations had taken loan from the government controlled Banks. Even with in one year the number of borrowers in this category dramatically increased to 212. Out of these total 212 accounts, 9 were from private and rest 203 was from public sector.

The Bank loans to the private businesses have significantly increased due to large-scale private initiative. In most cases the private enterprises were hardly willing to refund the loans. The large amount borrowers, in many cases do not refund the loan amount in time; thus their outstanding amount of loan is gradually increasing.

However, in the following Table both the current loan account and accounts of loan defaulters have been included. In the politics of Bangladesh the influence of private businesspersons, who are actually large amount borrowers, has been increasing alarmingly. Law has been enacted to restrain loan defaulters from participating elections to Jatiya Sangsad, and other local government bodies but their implementations were in question.

Table-69

Number of accounts and amount of taka in the loan accounts having more than one crore taka each to government and private sectors. (Taka in crore)¹⁸

Year	Public Borrowing		Private Loan	
	Amount in crore	No. Accounts	Amount in crore	No. of account
31.12.1975	465	203	17	9
31.12.1981	1349	299	159	100
31.12.1985	2089	237	1428	646
31.12.1990	3114	345	3841	2536
31.12.1993	4642	416	7448	2801
31.12.1996	3427	392	14770	4419
30.06.1999	4727	482	22530	6201

Source: Scheduled Bank Statistics, Bangladesh Bank, see The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 11, 2000, p.17.

¹⁸ See Introduction of David Copp (et al), 'The idea of democracy', Cambridge University Press, UK, 1999, p.3.

There is a lot of debate regarding influence of 'black money' 'illegal money' in politics. Parliament had to define 'loan defaulters'. According to Bank Company Act, 1991 a person or institution will be considered a defaulter only if loans become overdue by six months.¹⁹ It is obvious that existence of a considerable number of loan defaulters and their influence in politics compelled the parliament to feel necessary definition of 'loan defaulters'. The newly emerged millionaires of Bangladesh always get preferential treatment in getting any loan from the Bank. It was revealed from the statistics that 31 March 1999, 77 per cent of Bank loan was more than one crore in each case. While most of the loan (in amount) goes to a few people. They get the scope to become richer. The sharp rise of millionaires' borrowers create a powerful class in the country. "The bank loan defaulters are destroying the financial system of the country (Former President Justice Shahabuddin Ahamed 2000)."²⁰ This gives rise to misuse and overuse of power and influence, which become a political culture of Bangladesh spreading the immoral practice to all concerns of the country. In a country where about 50 per cent population have been living under the poverty line, where 15 per cent²¹ of poorest of the poor in the total population are yet to get any loan from any banking system or from the channels of the NGOs, because they have no credit worthiness, they are out of process of institutionalization of democracy in the country. On the other hand this type of development create 'pyramid-shaped social stratification system. in which the majority of the population is lower class and poor'. This has a negative impact on democracy. Muller has shown that increasing size of the middle class and urban working class is congenial for democracy. The

¹⁹ Report title, 'New Jatiya Sangsad definition of loan defaulter worries banks' in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), April 13, 2001, p.1, 11.

²⁰ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 8, 2000, p 1.

²¹ Key Note presenter and discussants aired the data in a seminar on "Poverty alleviation in Bangladesh: Experience and Strategies", organised by Bangladesh Agricultural Economists Association (BAEA) on March 4, 2000, at Dhaka.

present situation of Bangladesh, as is evident from following Table-clearly indicates a gloomy picture in this regard.²²

Table-70

Number of accounts of private account holders having more than one crore Taka each

Year	Number of account	Deposited money(crore taka)
31.12.1975	5	12
31.12.1981	27	54
31.12.1985	150	327
31.12.1990	225	730
31.12.1996	1212	4455
30.6.1999	1804	5098

Source: Scheduled Bank Statistics of Bangladesh Bank in related dates.

Table-71

Number of private account holders having more than ten crore taka deposit

Year	Number of Account	Deposited money(in crore taka)
31.12.1984	2	101
31.12.1987	6	123
31.12.1990	13	209
30.06.1993	15	294
31.12.1996	62	1777
31.12.1998	58	1307
31.06.1999	54	1165

Source: Scheduled Bank statistics of Bangladesh Bank on related dates, cited in The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 4, 2000, p 17.

²²Edward N. Muller, "Economic determinants of democracy", in Manus I. Midlarsky, *Inequality, democracy, and economic development*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1997, pp 133-156.

Though it is very difficult to find out the number of millionaires from Bank accounts, yet without having any other option this would be the only source. On the other hand the number of private Account holders (in person or in the name of private owned company) who had just only one crore taka each, those were not considered in this respect. The number would be much higher if they are included. Nevertheless, it is strongly argued that in Bangladesh, “a privileged social minority has accumulated vast amounts of wealth at the expense of the large majority of the population (Chossudovsky 2000)²³. Chossudovsky argues that ‘this financial order feeds on human poverty and the destruction of natural environment.’²⁴

The trend has enhanced the rich-poor gap.

“...The gap between rich and poor becomes wider with every passing year. Normally the gap between rich and poor widens almost imperceptibly and can only be measured over decades. In Bangladesh, however, the growth in the incomes of the rich has been stratospheric.”²⁵

²³ See Michel Chossudovsky, “The Economic Medicine”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 29, 2000, p.4.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Chris Brazier, op cit, London, 9-12.

Poverty and landlessness: The key statistic to initiate an assessment here is the poverty situation in Bangladesh. The human development report (HDR) construct human poverty index (HPI). The HPI attracts the most attention for considering the economic challenges. The methodology for constructing HPI is done with the help of deprivation in longevity, deprivation in knowledge, and deprivation in economic provisioning. The HPI measures deprivation in longevity in term of the percentage of people expected to die before 40, for deprivation in knowledge the percentage of adults who are illiterate is considered, and for overall economic provisioning in terms of the percentage of people without access to health services and safe water and the percentage of underweight children under five.

According to HPI 2000²⁶ the poverty in Bangladesh declined from 61.3 in 1981-83 to 47.2 in 1993-94, declining further to 41.6 in 1996-97. According to HPI 1997²⁷ Bangladesh ranked last among the South Asian nations. Among 78 developing countries Bangladesh ranked 67th. According to the report, Sri Lanka ranked top among the SAARC countries occupying the 22nd position. India ranked 47th while Bhutan was 62nd and Pakistan 64th.

Table-72

Landlessness in Bangladesh in different years by category

Year	Percentage of landless people			
	I	II	III	IV
1992	8.7	19.6	28.2	12.3
1995	8.7	19.6	28.2	12.3
1997	8.7	19.6	28.2	12.3

Source: BBS 1995, BBS 1998.

While the landlessness situation from 1992 to 1997 had almost remains unchanged the poverty situation showed very negligible declining trend. The relevant

²⁶ Cited in Shah A M S Kibria, "Bangladesh Human Development Report 2000: A message of hope and confidence", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) January 23, 2002, p 4.

Bureau of Statistics figures for 1991-92 provides a picture of directionality of poverty trends for the entire decade of 1990s. In 1991-92, people under poverty constituted 49.7 per cent of the population, in 1995-96, the ratio came down to 47 per cent and in 1999 to 44.7 per cent. The striking feature, which emerges here, is that the rate of poverty reduction throughout the 90s has been virtually unchanged at around 0.7 per cent per annum. In other words, there has been no acceleration, what so ever in the pace of poverty reduction during the latter period also. While the poverty situation had been not pretty the rich had been growing richer. Nevertheless, five years ago the richest five per cent of people earned 18 times more.

It is no exaggeration to note that the emerging rich class or millionaires are 'enjoying the establishment's favour (Hafiz 2000)²⁸. Analysts argued that 'paralleling democracy's spread are continuous attempts to restrict people's freedom on choice. Nonetheless, time and again, the cost to mending the society of rich is borne by the poor.'²⁹ In this perspective, Bangladesh's image of 'disaster stakes' continued with the real picture of "one of the poorest, least developed countries in the world, a major recipient of overseas aid.' But the aid 'has hardly even come close to eradicating poverty and barely even tries to reduce the gap between rich and poor'. However, the country is regarded as an excellent place to consider bad or good utilisation of aids. It is very often argued that the aid has been utilised 'inefficiently or corruptly, often with the connivance of corporations or donors, and have furthered the interests of mainly urban based nouveau riche people rather than the rural poor. In this

²⁷ See Mir Lutful Kabir Saadi, "Poverty picture not a pretty one", in *Holiday* (Weekly newsmagazine, Dhaka) June 27, 1997.

²⁸ Brig (Rtd) M. Abdul Hafiz, "The poor Men's Burden" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 24, 2000, p.4.

²⁹ Barun S. Mitra, "Freedom of Choice", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), June 3, 2000, p.4.

backdrop the donors has become increasingly critical of poor countries performance and insisting on good governance.³⁰

Bangladesh are one of the heavily indebted poor countries (HDPC). Foreign aid and concessional lending to developing countries have failed to produce positive results and may even have been counter-productive, allowing government to divert scarce resources into unproductive areas. It is disclosed in a recent study that the share of directly unproductive sector in the total revenue expenditure has gone up from less than 50 per cent in 1990-1991 to more than 56 per cent by late nineties. At the same time infrastructure expenditure is also declining. The increasing trend expenditure on DUS is likely to be continued.³¹

Facts and figures have proved that foreign assistance has failed to alleviate poverty situation in Bangladesh. Despite heavy doses of loans and doles half of the population is living below poverty level while more than 30 per cent is in vulnerable condition. Unemployment is estimated at about 30 million. Disparity of the haves and have-nots has widened. Needless to say that the poor farmers have sustained the nation. They have produced food grains, about one million tons in surplus during 2001. The contribution of the agriculture scientists providing high breed seeds has been of great importance. The poor wage earners abroad who have gone out of the country in search of employment even by selling paternal property and contribute substantially to the needs of the country.

However, in recent times economists of the country expressed their concern over the widening gap between budgetary proposals on expenditures, revenue earnings

³⁰ Chris Brazier, "Building up the poor-or reinforcing inequality", in *New Internationalist* 332, London, March 2001, p.9.

³¹ Omar Haider Chowdhury in a Seminar on "Bangladesh economy 2000: Some Selected Issues" at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) on June 6, 2000, *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 6, 2000, p.1, 11.

and the realised figures with slow growth in manufacturing sector, export and decelerated due to slow growth and continued failure of the manufacturing sector.³²

The increasing tendency of the gap between the rich and the poor has become widest ever, the poor on a dollar or less per day had remained stubbornly high. Dependency on foreign aid, deplorable condition of industrial sector increasing of unemployment situation lead to a frustrated poverty situation, which in turn creates terrorism and corruption in the society.

Bangladesh are lagging far behind in achieving the ambitious poverty reduction targets that it had set back in 1993 in Dhaka Declaration (UNDP poverty report 2000).³³ Corruption and deterioration in law and order are detrimental to the endeavour to contain poverty. Without corruption the per capita income could have been double than what it is now.

The point here is that the process of institutionalising democracy is being hampered due to poverty, corruption and terrorism. As people's representative MPs or in that matter politicians are to come ahead with policy suggestions so that these vices could be wiped out. But in today's Bangladesh "Ghost is hidden in the mustard". Because 'politics is now being used as an instrument to promote private interests.'³⁴ Politics has been commercialised by a class of people who view politics as a business investment. They will spend large amount of money in the process, which needs to be recouped. The corrosive link between money and politics is too deep to be fully broken by innovative action. The emergence of the mastans (goons) as a political as well as governance variable has been accompanied by the growing presence of money as a factor in Bangladesh's politics. 'Mastan culture' has institutionalised itself over

³² Mustafa Kamal Ibid.

³³ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 14, 2000, p 1, 11

³⁴ See report in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 14, 2000, p 1, 11

successive regimes. Elections have over the years become a costly process and have, thus, become a rich man's game.

Such a commercial perspective on politics is encouraged by the lack of transparency in the system of electoral and political financing in Bangladesh. The increasing presence of politicians as indentors, traders, contractors and term loan borrowers from the banks to finance investment projects has already made its contribution to the perpetuation of the default culture.

The major political parties have tended to depend on such quasi-criminal political instruments, integral for realising their electoral ambitions.

“Opposition complaints of political victimisation are legitimate not because their own affected political workers are honest people dedicated to public service but because of the inequitable enforcement of the law against them. The process exposed ordinary citizens to a system of relief against the depredations of the mastaans.

Many politicians now increasingly use mastaans as a political resource in the contention for political office and state patronage to access public resources. The resultant nexus between politicians, business, the mastaans and the law enforcement agencies is now becoming embedded into the social structures of Bangladesh. Even syndication of the smuggling involving a section of political leaders belonging to both the ruling and opposition political parties along with members of law enforcing agencies, officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and under-cover traders have been revealed at a discussion meeting in presence of Finance Minister and other high officials of the ministry and NBR by the country's leading economists, business circle and journalists. Even the minister and the officials concerned freely admitted

that the syndication had assumed a dangerous proportion and was eating into the every vitals of the nation.³⁵

This nexus between money and politics in large measures derives from the murky nature of party finances. People without wealth, or the patronage of wealth or who do not aspire to wealth, have little prospect of surviving in politics.

Most party finances hoped to use their support to promote their business fortunes when the party came to power but there were always some party loyalists who invested their wealth in particular parties out of a sense of political commitment.

Since the very emergence of Bangladesh political leaders had an image problem for their corrupt and irregular practices. During the long spree of successive military and quasi-military governments horse-trading of political leaders from difficult shades of public opinion and lack of accountability and transparency alongside desperate bids for creating their support bases through state funding largely caused the criminalisation of politics. Its hangover not only continues unabated, but also has, in fact, increased in dimension and proportion, al beit the fact that elected democratic governments replaced the autocratic regimes of the past. Kleptomania appears to have gripped national politics largely due to the tendency of the major political parties to attract and induct in their fold smugglers, bank defaulters, extortionists and racketeers. Thus politics has turned out to be a big business and requires huge investments.

From the above analysis we can conclude at this point that the economic challenges of the country have been predominantly political in real sense. The fact is that the party into power initiates all sorts of measures that lead to their down-fall. The Government will have to think about the long-term welfare of the people and

³⁵ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 5, 2000, p4.

initiate painful and unpleasant measures for the greater good of the country and not worry about the next coming to power. However, the next section deals with the political challenges of the BNP regime during 1991-1996.

Chapter VIII.6

Political challenges

Towards the end of the government's term, the Opposition parties started serious political movements on the issue of by-election. The Opposition alleged that the armed hooligans and musclemen had turned the result of Magura by-election in favour of the ruling party candidate. Thus, the reality had become more complicated. The hope that ordinary citizens would be able to elect representatives was realized to an extent not matched (Hawthorn 1996).¹ The holding of parliamentary by-elections under the party in power showed the repetition of the past rigged elections in a modified manner. The controversial by-election (in Magura) during March 1994 deepened the intensity of mistrust among the political forces of the country. Thus as a best alternative to rigged elections under any party government, the opposition parties raised the demand for caretaker government. The opposition political parties' demand for free, fair and peaceful parliamentary elections under non-party caretaker government had its roots in the instance of holding the general elections for the 5th Parliament in 1991. However, the demand for non-party caretaker government (NPCTG) had revived again during 1994.

Demand for Caretaker government

Unlike 1990's, the forces of this movement had only a single demand—a constitutional amendment for the provision of non-party caretaker government. With the experience of the 1991 NPCTG and elections conducted by it a sizeable segment of the population came to believe that a non-partisan caretaker government was a necessary factor for ensuring free and fair elections in the country. Accordingly, the two main opposition

¹ Geoffrey Hawthorn, "Constitutional democracy in the South", in Robin Lukham and Gordon White (eds), *Democratization in the South, The jagged wave*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1996, pp.11-36 (25).

parties the Awami League and the Jamaat-e-Islami had tabled two separate constitution amendment bills to install a NPCTG. However, it is widely recognised that the concept of NPCTG was the brainchild of the then Aamir of Jamaat, Golam Azam. The demand for NPCTG was something for which there was no provision in the constitution. Nonetheless, the bills (of the two major opposition parties) envisaged that necessary constitutional amendments be made so that the next three parliamentary elections could be held under the NPCTG. According to these two bills, Prime Minister was to resign 90 days before the election date. S/he would hand over power to the members of the caretaker government. The ruling BNP was not interested to holding parliamentary debate on the opposition bills. Nevertheless, the leaders of the BNP argued that as an elected government it could not hand over power to an unelected government. The ruling BNP was in favour of strengthening the Election Commission. But the role of chief Election Commissioner M A Rouf during the Magura by-election helped opposition parties to estimate otherwise about the intention of the ruling party. Earlier the members of the opposition parties staged a walk-out on March 1, 1994 protesting the oblique hint of the BNP's Information Minister during a debate on the massacre by Israeli soldiers in a mosque of Hebron known as Hebron massacre.

Thus the boycott against an oblique hint was followed by the protest against the holding of the rigged by-election. That ultimately strengthened the demand for constitutional amendment for caretaker government. It may be mentioned that the by-election was won by ruling BNP's candidate with the help of wide spread rigging, violence and connivance of the local administration with the ruling party.

At the same time the role of EC became a subject of vehement criticism by all the major opposition parties. In the midst of the movement for CTG a heavy downpour, tidal surge and storm lashed the entire coastal belt of the country on May 16, 1995. All the offshore islands and chars of the coastal area had gone under 5 to 7 fetes tidal surge accompanied by torrential rains and stormy winds. It had been reported that more than 90 per cent of the inhabitants were evacuated, many people were died and wounded, hundreds of cattle were washed and almost all embankments were washed away by the tidal surge.

The political impasse accompanied by the natural disaster became a virtual curse for the country. However, failing to get rid of the impasse through dialogue the government had been going ahead with preparations for elections, the Election Commission

had been reorganized, the chief Election Commissioner had been replaced and there was steady progress towards preparing voter's list. The opposition however did not see any merit in this development.² They had insisted that the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner should have been by consensus.

Like almost 1990's democratic movement, the movement for constitutional amendment regarding NPCTG during 1994-1996 had turned into violent movement. Nevertheless, the political situation during 1995-96 could not be comparable with the situation of 1950s or 60s. The people were more conscious in 1995-96 than in 1950s or 60s.³ Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said, 'there is no political crisis in the country'. She also said that her government was a democratically elected government, no one would be able to depose it.⁴

The opposition political parties had been successful to instigate the people with the demand for CTG. Thus a substantial political agitation was observed in the country for the demand of CTG. The demand for CTG had successfully united ideologically inimical two major opposition political parties, the Awami League and the Jamaat-e-Islami for a common cause. Nevertheless, all other opposition political parties had also supported the movement for CTG. They had also thrown agitation programme to realise the demand. Ultimately the opposition political parties had jointly demanded the ruling party's consent to the holding of elections under a non-party caretaker government after the Prime Minister had resigned before 90 days of the elections for the 6th Jatiya Sangsad.

Different quarters had undertaken steps to resolve the political impasse. In June 1994 Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali invited all the political parties to a dialogue, but it went in vein. The Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku had sent a special envoy, former Governor General of Australia Sir Ninian Stephen to help resolve the crisis. The Ninian mission had also taken the fate of Speaker's initiative.

The ruling BNP on May 15, 1995 had formally proposed dialogue with the opposition to end the political impasse prevailing in the country. Latter on the Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahaman confirmed that BNP Secretary General Abdus Slam

² See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily newspaper, Dhaka) May 19, 1995, p.5.

³ See Farhad Mazhar, *Rajmudi '95 Part I* (Politics '95, January to June), Muktaadhara, Dhaka, 1996, p.117.

⁴ See Mahmudur Rahaman Manna, op cit.

Talukder had formally put the proposal over telephone.⁵ Meanwhile, the ruling BNP had appointed the Chief Election Commissioner. This step of the ruling party had fuelled anger in the opposition camp. However, to a question about the opposition's anguish over the "unilateral" appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner, BNP Secretary General said the appointment was given according to the constitutional provisions by the proper authority. The crisis deepened with the opposition MPs tendering resignation en bloc on December 28, 1994, after the Common Wealth dialogue with the government failed to resolve the dispute and the ruling party had not come up with an amendment fulfilling their demand.

Five prominent citizens of the country, who came to be popularly known as G-5, took a major initiative in search of a solution to the crisis. The conscious section of the citizens felt, *'It is easy to push the country towards burning and confrontation, but very hard and painful to create understanding and reconciliation.'*⁶ However, the attempt to settle the impasse through dialogue had been going on. The donor countries had also arranged a number of meetings for negotiated settlement to the deadlock between the ruling and the opposition parties. However, both the initiatives of the eminent citizens and the donor countries had failed to resolve the crisis.

In the last fortnight of May 1995 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had offered to resign 30 days before elections. Moreover, she had also offered a summit with the Leader of the Opposition to settle the remaining differences of opinion. Sheikh Hasina had also expressed her willingness to sit but sought a direct proposal from the Prime Minister accepting the concept of neutral caretaker government. However, with the pace of growing intensity of opposition movement the ministers and BNP leaders had also started abusing the opposition.⁷ Apart from the opposition demand for CTG the analysts and political opposition

⁵ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily newspaper, Dhaka) May 16, 1995, p. 1.

⁶ See Farhad Majhar, 1996 *op cit*, p. 116.

⁷ See Mahmudur Rahaman Manna *op cit* p. 54.

criticised the regime for some failures. The government became in question about its level of tolerance towards the opposition parties. Internally the ruling party had also faced difficulties. Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badrudozza Chowdhury had resigned from the post of education minister. A portion of the BNP's central leadership wanted change in the party's Secretary General post. Analysts argued that before institutionalising democracy in the country the political parties in the country should practice democracy within their own fold. The political parties of the country are bereft of democracy from within. They have not built up as 'institutions'. They are lagging minimum internal democracy. The leadership is imposed upon the organisation from the top. Many of the party members could not take it easily. However, they keep quiet for the time being. But some time they react seriously. Analysts questioned the nature of accountability that the ruling BNP held during the last part of 1991-1996. As a result expectations from the elected government had started to be frustrated.

The specific expectations that had loomed large during 1991-1996, were, autonomous status to state owned Radio and Television, annulling the special power act, improving the stagnated economic conditions, failed to check the famine like situation in the northern districts –Rangpur and Dinajpur. It may be mentioned that the BNP on November 19, 1991 the BNP government abolished the Upazilla system.

More number of general strikes:

Without any exception from the usual political instability the BNP regime during 1991-1996 had faced even more number of *hartals* (general strikes). A rigorous study conducted by Press Institute of Bangladesh had found that as many as 1153 hartals had been called by the opposition political parties and some other aggrieved groups from December 7, 1990 to December 31, 1999 (see Table 31).

However, the street agitation during the period became a regular scenario. Both the ruling and the opposition political parties seemed to be uncompromising. The Press Institute

of Bangladesh has collected the data on *hartals* since 1947 from the daily newspapers. They have collected the data from 1947 to 31 December 1999. However, for our present purpose we adopted the data from 1947 to March 30, 1996 as the period of our study has fallen within this time i.e. 1990-1996. Accordingly, from 1947 to March 1996 the country had witnessed a total of 909 *hartals*. From 1947 to March 1996, the total years have been divided into five periods. The first tenure of the total years has been taken from 1947 to 1971, the period of Pakistani internal colonial rule. During this time the country had witnessed as many as 84 *hartals* i.e. 9.24 per cent of 909 *hartals* from 1947 to 1996.

The country achieved independence from the clutches of internal colonial rule after a prolonged struggle and undoubtedly the *hartal* was one of the parts of this struggle. However, after became free from the Pakistani occupation forces in 16 December 1971, Bangladesh had become an independent country in the political map of the world. The next counting of *hartals* had been done from 1972 to 14 August 1975. During this time the country witnessed as many as 22 *hartals*. That means the aggrieved groups had observed only 2.42 per cent of *hartals* during this period. It may be mentioned that during this time the country had its first Parliamentary general elections in 1973 and virtually there was no existence of opposition political parties in the Parliament. The next term had been considered from 15 August 1975 to 23 March 1982. During this term the country witnessed as many as 59 *hartals*. Five point twelve per cent of the total 909 *hartals* had faced by the country during this time.

The country had fallen under the personal rule of H M Ershad in 24 March 1982. The two major political parties of the country, the Awami League and the BNP along with all other political parties had organised agitation programmes against the authoritarian regime of Ershad. As many as 328 *hartals* had been organised by the opposition and other aggrieved groups during this period. The three alliances of political parties had also prepared a Joint declaration on November 1990. Former President H M Ershad had been forced to hand over power to a non-party caretaker government on December 6, 1990. The process of democratic transition had found its reality with the success of anti-autocratic movement during this time. During this time the country had faced 36.08 per cent of total *hartals*.

After the democratic transition had taken place in 1991 and the country had been on the way for democratic consolidation or institutionalization of democracy the necessity of tough agitation programme like *hartal* was expected to be faded away.

Accordingly, the parliamentary general elections for the 5th JS had been held under the caretaker government, with the 12th amendment of the constitution the country had returned to parliamentary form of government. All political parties of the country had been agreed that hereinafter *Parliament* would be the centre of all political activities. However, it had been found that the situation was not advanced as per expectations. Accordingly, the opposition political parties had boycotted the parliament. Again they had preferred street than that of parliament to raise their voice. Thus since 1947 the country had witnessed highest number of *hartals* during the most cherished period of democratic consolidation during 1990-1996. Forty-five point seventy six (45.76%) per cent of the total 909 *hartals* had been observed by the aggrieved opposition parties during this period (1991-1996). Thus it had posed a big question, why even after returning to parliamentary democracy the political parties had chosen street instead of parliament as the centre of their political activities? In fact these are the constraints of institutionalizing democracy in the country. The next chapter would be devoted to our survey findings in this regard.

General elections for the 6th Parliament:

The year 1996 is unique from the previous years. As Bangladesh celebrated its silver jubilee victory in December 1996. However, during the year the nation experienced three governments; the governments of Begum Khaleda Zia (BNP), Justice Habibur Rahaman (Chief Adviser, Caretaker Government), and Sheikh Hasina (Awami League).

The year 1996 also witnessed two general elections. One in 15 February 1996 for the 6th Parliament, which was boycotted by all the political parties of the country except BNP. This election was held under BNP government. The other elections were held under the Caretaker Government led by Justice Habibur Rahaman. This election was participated by all the parties.

It will not be exaggeration to mention that the year 1996 had also witnessed two Jatiya Sangsad (National Assembly). The sixth Parliament, organised by the election of the 15th February 1996, was actually a one party parliament. Though all the political parties had condemned the constitution of the 6th parliament, and had denounced it in harshest language they ever use against. However, this Parliament passed the most expected Caretaker

Government bill of the country. The dilemma of the 13th amendment to the constitution was that it was passed in a hottest ever-political stigma in the country. The demand of the CTG was raised by the Awami League, Jatiya Party, and Jamaat-e-Islami and opposed by the BNP. This demand was met by the BNP in such a manner that the opposition parties severely denounced. In spite of this denouncement they had to swallow their own demanded and much expected CTG without further delay.

The settlement of caretaker government issue,

13th amendment to the constitution:

The opposition demand for election under non-party caretaker government was based on the popular slogan of 1990's, "*amar vote ami debo jakae khushee take debo*" ("I cast my vote by myself and for anyone of my choice"). Prior to 1990s without people's presence in the polling centre the election officials used to cast 70 to 80 per cent votes.⁸ The ruling party won these elections conducted by the indirectly controlled Election Commission and supervised by the directly controlled other government administrative machines. Thus a furse drama was played in the name of election, and democracy. However, on the eve of Ershad's removal from power the three political alliances had been searching for a neutral non-partisan person. It was expected that caretaker government under this non-partisan person would lay the foundation of a true democratic system.

The three alliances of political parties had found Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as a person of their choice in this regard. Analysts viewed that the non-party caretaker government under Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had been able in most part to fulfill the expectations of the political parties. However, Bangladesh's political parties hardly put any person or group of persons beyond doubt.

The 6th JS adopted the constitution (13th amendment) Bill 1996 after a marathon overnight session. The Bill provides for an 11-member non-party caretaker government headed by a chief adviser inter alia to aid and assist the Election Commission in holding free, fair and neutral general elections within 90 days after the Parliament is dissolved or stands

⁸ Nasir Ahmed, "Tattabadhayak Sarker" (Caretaker government), in *The Daily Janakantha* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), September 14, 2001, p.17.

dissolved. An ex-chief justice of the Supreme Court would preferably head the interim government. In its editorial, after passage of the 13th Amendment Bill, The Bangladesh Times said:⁹

“We should be happy if the provisions of the Bill lead the nation out of the present political impasse. But the wisdom of distrusting the elected representatives, who would of right run the administration for a stretch of 5 years, for the election period shall remain a big question. The bad precedence it sets would become more glaring when the dust raised by the on-going agitational politics settles down.” However, the subsequent events in Bangladesh politics bear the testimony to this observation.

In view of this observation it could be suggestive to note that there had been more scope to be utilised for settling down the issues. Instead of settling down the caretaker issue in this non-agreed process both the ruling and the opposition party leaders could be more meticulous, sincere, tolerant, and accommodative. The politicians of the ruling and the opposition benches could have met and sorted out the issues and worked out a chemistry between them to avoid future unpleasantness. The political circles believe that the initiative that was lastly taken by the then Prime Minister for meeting with the leader of the opposition could have been responded positively, in real sense. These were needed to set aside ideological differences so that issues of common concern relating to the economy and national interest could be effectively addressed. However, in its infant stage, the seeds of the future modalities regarding institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh were germinated in such a non-directional ground. It is in this sense that the installation of NPCTG reveals volumes of mistrust among the political parties. Even that arrangement was settled adhering the process of mistrust i.e. one party parliament.

Besides there was sufficient scope of controversy over the claimant of whom actually mattered the caretaker government. “Both Khaleda and Hasina tried to project the final outcome of the crisis as victories for their respective stands. Hasina argued that by forcing Khaleda Zia to accept the notion neutral caretaker government she strengthened the democratization process. Khaleda on the other hand posited that she saved democracy by amendment to provide for elections under a caretaker government¹⁰.”

⁹ *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 29, 1996, p.5

¹⁰ See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance*, The University Press Ltd., Dhaka, 2000, p.22.

On the other hand, the past evidence of “consent and debate” was utterly disregarded. Even the initiatives for negotiated settlements were ignored. The golden instance to adhere the process of “consent and debate” that was followed during the 12th amendment was totally forgotten during the 13th amendment. Analysts could find some similarities between the passing process of 4th amendment in 1975 and 13th amendment in 1996. This could be found if some one considers, (i) The party affiliation of the attending MPs in the parliament, i.e. only the ruling party members attended in the passing process of both the 4th and 13th amendment bills, (ii) Time needed to approve the amendment bill, both amendments were passed within a very short time after being presented in the parliament by the ruling party, (iii) Absence of any debate in the parliament, (iv) In both cases, the provision for further approving the amendments through referendum was not followed, even though both had impact on the basic character of the constitution, and lastly (v) Both the amendments were based on mistrust. While the 4th amendment was based on explicit mistrust, the mistrust during the 13th amendment was implicitly backgrounded. The major differences between these two amendments are, (i) The 4th amendment was meant for presidential form, one party state and parliament and government owned print media etc. Thirteenth amendment bill, on the other hand, was passed amidst multi-party parliamentary democracy and for installing an unprecedented system of caretaker government, (ii) None of the 4th Amendment’s remnants remains, still it is widely denounced in the political sphere while the 13th amendment is to be regularly followed. (iii) There was no bill from the opposition members during the 4th amendment; however, the opposition members tabled two bills in the multi-party 5th parliament before the endorsement of the 13th amendment in the single party 6th parliament. Mentionably, the party in power, BNP, ignored the opposition bills (in the 5th parliament).

However, in this chapter we have investigated into the governance and its challenges during the 1990-1996. We found some achievements and failure of the regime to govern the country. Since 1991 the performance of the governance could be viewed as a ‘mosaic of achievements and disappointments¹¹’. There were some encouraging elements about the macro-economic management and improvement in the social sectors during the last decade. But we also found that failure of government and politics to manage public sector and

¹¹ See report in this regard in *The Weekly Dhaka Courier* (Dhaka), 16 March 2001, p.13.

incapacity of the institutions like parliament, political parties and bureaucracy negate much of the positive observations.

However, the government during 1991-1996 has been successful to forming parliamentary committees and in the working of parliament. Nevertheless, some failure to contain democratically the higher rate of social mobilisation and political participation caused the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh during 1990-1996. In this chapter, we have produced two broad conclusions. First, higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation are important if not dominant source of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh during 1990-1996. Second, even though social mobilisation and political participation since 1990s have been expected to contain democratically, in most cases, if not all, it failed, hence instability and disorder persist. However, using our estimates and categories along with other evidences in the literature, we conclude that no single category receives strong and consistent support for institutionalization of democracy in the country. Instead, the institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh does decisively accept the hypothesis, along with the complex relations between different factors influencing institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh, for its complete explanation.

Parliamentary form of government, in place of presidential one, has also been regarded as a remarkable achievement during 1991-1996. This important institution of democracy, Parliament, however, contributing enormously to institutionalise democracy in the country. But it fails to function properly due to continued absence of the opposition parties in parliament. However, the JS, has become a strong symbol to institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh.

Compared to all these achievements, the great failure during 1990-1996 is that the country is yet to build-up any *democratic culture*. This constraint has become a threat to many expected goals. Due to lack of *democratic culture* the parliament has become moribund, and political parties have become the instruments of few personality cult. Only during election time people can feel empowered. Analysts argue that for Bangladeshi people, democracy starts and ends with an election in every five years. Nevertheless, the government of the people, thus become the government of political party. The reckless competition of the

power mongering political parties has become a considerable threat to institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh.

To re-examine our findings of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh we have conducted a sample opinion survey. The sample was taken mostly from middle class population both in urban as well as rural areas. The next chapter will be devoted to present and discuss the survey findings of the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

Chapter IX

Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)

The institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh, during 1990-1996, had been enduring "as under serious adversity".¹ Nevertheless, the beginning of the decade of 1990's witnessed major changes with far reaching consequences for the democratisation process in the country. The changes have brought about both opportunities and challenges for institutionalising democracy in the country. Since 1990's, even more than before, the changes in social mobilisation and political participation have possibly got the chance to be contained democratically.

The victory in the anti-autocracy movement created the opportunities, with the end of nine-year old autocratic rule of a military general. However, the movement was the outcome of Bengalee's long cherished goal for a democratic society. This was revealed in an important declaration of national consensus, made on 19 November 1990 at the height of the democracy movement. It was pledged that for institutionalising democracy concrete measures would be adopted. But the question that is in every one's mind is why even after the restoration of Parliamentary democracy, some of the basic pledges of the constitution which were reaffirmed in the course of the movement still remain unfulfilled, and indeed some continue to be utterly disregarded. The causes of unfulfillment of pledges correspond the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

Thus, it could discern that eventhough the country has been succeeded to over throw an autocratic government by dint of violent movement; the process of institutionalising democracy has been facing serious constraints. The situation reminds the observation of Zelman Cowen², which may be paraphrased as:

¹ Arun Kumar Goswami, "The Grits of Democratisation in Bangladesh" in *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Volume 1, Number 1, June 2001, pp. 133-150; Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka

² See Zelman Cowen, "The Way we Live now" in John H. Hallowell (ed), *Prospects for Constitutional Democracy*, Essays in Honor of R. Taylor Cole, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C. USA, 1976, p.7 and 12.

The theme of this period have been of crisis, tumult, violence, and uncertainty. The people, who cherish the values and the rules of a civil, liberal society, have got reasons for great concern, regarding "the way we live now".

Thus the real danger to the institutions was going to pose. Nonetheless, the period of 1990-1996 could be characterized, both by consensus and disagreement between the ruling and the opposition parties. The consensus brought a positive result, while the disagreement led to a moribund parliament and posed serious stumbling blocks for the institutionalisation of democracy in the country. The governance during the period faced 'the problems within democracy'. This made "difficult to handle, wrapped as they are in the mantle of legitimacy"³.

Since we have already found our hypothesis accepted in the preceding chapter, the present chapter would be devoted to unveil and specify the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh in a downright manner.

In this chapter, we re-examined the institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996) with two objectives in mind. The first is to provide an overview of the basic facts about the institutionalisation constraints of democracy, presenting categories of constraints. Existing literature provides categories of institutionalisation constraints for different countries, but not all, rather only some or most of them, are equally applicable for Bangladesh.

Here new categories of the institutionalisation constraints of democracy –socio-cultural, economic, political, global and periodic, in order to grasp major forms and unify existing estimates. Nevertheless, an exhaustive set of results is not provided. Instead, the basic facts about the institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996) are illustrated.

The second purpose of this chapter is to present the survey results which was conducted among a limited number of sample population from the middle class. And, finally to discuss the survey findings in line with the categories of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

Laurence Whitehead⁴notes those explicitly anti-democratic ideologies and systems of government are in retreat and seem 'unlikely to return'. Moreover, he contends that while 'consolidated' liberal democracies may well emerge, there will be many obstacles to overcome if

³ Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" in *The Foreign Affairs*, 1997 cited in *The Daily Ittefaq*, Dhaka 21 October 2000, p.4.

⁴ Laurence Whitehead, "The Alternatives to Liberal Democracy: A Latin American Perspectives" in David Held (ed), *Prospects for Democracy*, North South East West. Polity Press, UK, 1996, pp.291-311.

they are to be sustained. Whitehead's prediction seems to be conditionally applicable for Bangladesh. The country returned to the process of democratisation after a prolonged army rule. Whether the army again returns to power that entirely depends upon the intention and attitudes of political forces in the country. The three Alliances of Political Parties had agreed to end the possibilities of military intervention into politics in their Joint Declaration on November 1990. So far they have shown their ability to uphold the agreement at a lowest level. On the other hand, the country has to overcome many obstacles for consolidating democratic achievements. However, the intention and attitudes of the political forces are regarded as the matter of political culture. This may be grouped into socio-cultural constraints.

John A. Hall⁵ has rightly pointed out that during the period of 'transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, democracy must involve some uncertainty about outcomes' (p.288). For accepting rules of the game including market principle, according to Hall, 'acceptance of any particular division of property' is necessary. The author regards John Stuart Mill as considerable, on this point. According to him 'Mill was entirely consistent in seeking to have conflict and change within certain accepted rules of the game: if the laws of political economy had to be accepted, there remained much room for schemes of improvement which would raise the condition of workers so dramatically that the distribution of property and income would be revolutionized.' In other words 'capital should not be allowed to rest on some putative absolute right it needs instead constantly to justify its existence by efficient performance.' Hall believes that 'social democracy is both a just and an efficient option for a nation-state within capitalist society.' The author in this respect tends to refute Fukuyama because after the end of cold war 'consolidations of democracy open up rather than close down historical possibilities (p.288).

Hall's observation regarding 'property and income' seems to be realistic and justifiable for institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. At the same time, accepted rules of game are the pillar for institutionalization of democracy in any country vis-a-vis Bangladesh. Bangladesh's effort to institutionalization of democracy has been afflicted with non-adherence of rules of game by her political leaders. Consequently, a section of people have been accumulating 'property and income' in their hands. On the other hand, a vast majority is

⁵ John A. Hall, "Consolidations of Democracy" in David Held (ed), 1996, *Ibid*, pp 271-290.

becoming marginalised. The affluence of a few at the cost of marginalisation of many creates a huge gap between the rich and poor. Thus the economy of marginalisation leads to political instability. Nevertheless, Hall's remarks are made for economic and socio-cultural trends of the country.

Paul G. Lewis⁶ while examining the problems of state formation and territorial realignment problems being faced by former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, maintained that 'the obstacles to democratization are formidable. Lewis mentioned 'historical experience of democratic practices has been limited; civil society remains frail and fragile; tensions persist between social forces and movements (so effective in some respects against communism) and the establishment of a pluralist and 'civil' polity; political elites are often fragmented and charged with enormous tasks they are ill prepared for (the creation of political democracy and a market society); and democratic political institutions- legislatures, party structures and so on- are only in the earliest stages of their entrenchment. While the political situation remains 'an unstable one' and the process of democratisation "threatens to stall" are likely to vary, with some facing brighter prospects for a democratic transition-notably Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland-than others.

Most of 'the obstacles to democratisation' that Lewis has identified for former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, are present in Bangladesh. Of course, problems like tensions against communism and newly emerged problems with the introduction of market economy are specifically meant for those former Communist countries. Nevertheless, limited experience of democratic practices and fragmented political elites are also present in Bangladesh. These obstacles can be categorised into political constraints.

Samuel P. Huntington (1991)⁷ has delineated three types of problems confronted by the developing countries in consolidating their new democratic political systems. They are transition problems, contextual problems, and systemic problems.

Transition Problems: According to Huntington this types of problems stemmed directly from the regime change i.e. change from authoritarianism to democracy. They included the problems of establishing new constitutional and electoral systems, weeding out pro-authoritarian officials and replacing them with democratic ones, repealing or modifying laws that were

⁶ Paul G. Lewis, "Democracy and its Future in Eastern Europe" in David Held (ed), 1996, Ibid. pp.291-311.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, 1991, op cit.

unsuitable for democracy, abolishing or drastically changing authoritarian agencies such as the secret police, and, in former one-party systems, separating party and government property, functions, and personnel. In many countries concerned two key transition problems are observed: (i) how to treat authoritarian officials who had blatantly violated human rights, “the torture problem” and (ii) how to reduce military involvement in politics and establish a professional pattern of civil-military relations, “the praetorian problem”. In Bangladesh ‘the authoritarian officials who had blatantly violated human rights’ have been suitably coloured themselves with the pace of change. Nevertheless, the degree and sequence of *torture problem* is not same as in former communist countries. Rather it stems up from the authoritarian attitude of the democratic regime and existence of some rules, which are used to maintain this attitude. As for reducing the involvement of military in politics the process of transfer of power through election have been proved effective. But the election under non-party caretaker government proved the volume of mistrust among the political forces of the country. However, the sustainability of the process depends exclusively upon the actions and attitude of the political forces.

In Bangladesh context among the host of transition problems only ‘problems of establishing new constitutional and electoral systems have been addressed to some extent. The restoration of parliamentary system through 12th amendment and provision for caretaker government for general elections by the 13th amendment could be cited for example in this regard. Nevertheless, the passing process of the 13th amendment is hardly above controversy. At the same time, all other problems seem to be continuing even after the democratic transition of 1990s. The different aspects of democracy like parliament, achieved electoral norms and independence of judiciary remain to be practiced. The constraints of democracy in Bangladesh make the rule of law, the very essence of democracy, virtually inoperative.⁸

The bureaucracy of the country is flawed with frenzied customs and manners and formality. This bureaucracy is soft, complicated and slothful. The Weberian impersonality towards the relationship between person and community is not present in this bureaucracy. Endowed with overbearing attitude towards the people, the bureaucracy is excessively centralised and suzerained. Corruption and red-tapism are the essential characteristics of this bureaucracy. The bureaucracy which had been the close associate of autocracy the same became

⁸ See Arun Kumar Goswami, op cit.

the partner of pro-democracy movement. It could be apparently seen as to protect their self-interest. In fact the politicians and bureaucrats are doing 'whatever they could do' for themselves.

Contextual Problems: Irrespective of form of government, the contextual problem emerged from the nature of the society, its economy, culture, and history and were in some degree endemic to the country. Neither the authoritarian nor even the democratic rulers did resolve these problems. According to Huntington these problems were specific to individual countries and not to the common phenomenon of transition. Insurgencies, communal conflict, regional antagonisms, poverty, socioeconomic inequality, inflation, external debt, low rates of economic growth. In fact, however, apart from a low level of economic development, the number and severity of a country's contextual problems appeared to be only modestly related to its success or failure in consolidating democracy.

Huntington's 'contextual problems' is not above criticism, though in most cases it seems relevant. What he termed as 'specific to individual countries and not to the common phenomenon of transition,' can be treated with common view. Because democratic values can be transplanted in a previously authoritarian society through institutions. In the Asian values debate, Fukuyama reiterated the common position that these are different cultures in the region and no single continent-wide set of values to speak of. Moreover, he argued, values were manifested through institutions. For example, even if American forces imposed Western-style democracy on occupied Japan, the country did not evolve a political landscape with two or more parties frequently alternating in power. Instead, the Japanese tendency to strive for consensus helped elevate and keep a single party in power most of democracy's half century in Japan. The key point is, whatever a nation or regions values may be, they find well expression in institutions borrowed from very different cultures.¹⁰ For Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Prize winner, the need for democratic institutions must not be viewed as mechanical devices for development. Their use is conditioned by the values, priorities and sense of justice.¹¹

Systemic Problems: This problem stemmed up from the workings of a democratic system. Authoritarian political system, suffer from problems that derive from their particular nature, such as overly concentrated decision making, deficient feed backs, dependence on performance legitimacy. Other problems tend to be peculiarly characteristic of democratic

systems: stalemate, the inability to reach decisions, susceptibility to demagoguery, domination by vested economic interests. These problems have afflicted long-standing democracies, and new third wave democracies presumably would not be immune to them.

Most of the constraints of institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh could be grouped in line with Huntington's but there are some other specific problems, which could hardly be grasped by his categories. Rising terrorism, corruption, fundamentalism, violence, money and muscle based politics, problems posed by globalisation trend, hartal culture, and some other periodic problems could hardly be captured by his groupings. Nevertheless, the problems like 'specific to individual countries' have been termed by Huntington as not 'common phenomenon of transition, they obviously differed from country to country'. But it is not exaggeration to say that all the three types of problems categorised by Huntington necessarily vary from country to country. However, many of these problems have wide common character. Besides, in recent years, democracy itself has been manifested as common goal for many countries. "The most important thing that has happened in the 20th century is the rise of democracy⁹".

Robert Pinkney (1993)¹⁰ in his "Democracy in the Third World" focused on and termed the constraints of democracy as 'the undermining of democracy.' He said that there was never a total eclipse of democracy. There has been Third World countries with a record of continuous pluralist democracy.' However, 'the majority did not or could not build on these to establish durable forms of democracy.' The colonies, who achieved independence by negotiation after 1945, started life as democracies to the extent that they enjoyed universal suffrage and had had at least one free competitive election.' Pinkney argued that 'democracy might have flourished despite its shallow roots, as it did in a few countries. But for the most part worsening economic conditions, the indifference of politicians and their constituents alike to democratic values and procedures, and the growing confidence of armies in their ability to topple governments, whether out of moral indignation or a lust for fruits of office, ensured the eclipse of democracy,' in many third world countries. Pinkney explained the eclipse of democracy. His explanation for

⁹ This has been observed by 1998 Nobel Prize winner in economics Amartya Sen in a recent World Bank conference on Democracy at Seoul. See ASIaweek, April 9, 1999, p.52.

¹⁰ Robert Pinkney, *Democracy in the Third World*, Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia, 1993.

Bangladesh's military takeover that 'soldiers perceived threats to their immediate interests' seems to be partially justifiable. Because before the unconstitutional, bloody and tragic military takeover in 15 August 1975, the constitution was amended abruptly with the help of absolute majority of the ruling party. Democratic norms and in that case constitutional norms were hardly followed. Many political scientists while denounced the coup d' etat of 15 August 1975, also could not term constitutional the way of passing 4th amendment to Bangladesh constitution. Nevertheless, military rulers amended the constitution according to their will. Even some time suspended it. However, Pinkney delineated six variables, economic, social, institutional, behavioural, military and external, which undermines democracy in the Third World countries.

Deegan (1994) in discussing the impediments to democratisation in the Middle East, lists a number of constraints: 'weak institutionally'; 'divided ethnically'; 'tethered to authoritarian structures of government'; 'lacking in unity'; 'political legitimacy'; 'tolerance of opposition'; 'exploited by the external factor of the cold war', and recently in thrall to fundamental religion.'

Nevertheless, most of the constraints that have been delineated by Deegan for Middle East's democratisation are equally applicable for Bangladesh. Deegan's groupings on impediments to democratisation may be termed as socio-cultural, political, economic, global and periodic.

From the above reviews of different literature, on constraints of institutionalising democracy, by different authors we have an understanding in this regard. This understanding also leads us to categorise different types of institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. There is a direct relationship between the factors and constraints of institutionalising democracy. Accordingly, the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh can be grouped into socio-cultural, economic, political, global and periodic. These constraints are rested within the factors of democratisation. Because, there have been a wide range of anti-democratic elements, hidden within the factors of democratisation (Goswami 2001 op cit). Nonetheless, there is subtle inherent trend to thwart the democratisation process. Democracy has encountered obstacles, not merely imposed from without, but spontaneously surgent from within (Robert Michels 1958: 3)¹¹.

¹¹ Robert Michels. *Political Parties, a sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632, USA. 1977.

IX.1 About sample survey:

With the pace of change, social mobilization and participation in the political arena have been constantly increasing. The process has successfully produced, among others, a considerable number of middle class population. This middle class have successfully brought an end to the autocratic regime of former President Ershad. The role of middle class for the institutionalization of democracy is indispensable. Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact that without middle class no democracy could be institutionalised. Lynn Smith¹² in a 1950 study of Colombian social class asserted that the middle class could almost be considered as a marginal extension of the upper class. According to Robert C. Williamson, the middle class apparently has closer affinities with the upper than with the lower class. Nevertheless, the permeability of class boundaries varies by nation, region, and between urban and rural populations.

The increased rate of social mobilisation has been found with an upward tendency. Thus indicators of social mobilisation such as rate of literacy and urbanisation have also considerably increased. The process of increases in literacy and urbanisation 'account for expansion of middle class'. Implicit in these changes is the capacity of the self to assume new roles involvements.¹³ The detachment of the individual from the family and village setting and the acceptance of an urbanistic outlook are a concomitant of upward mobility. Following migration to the city the individual achieves literacy and vocational skills, is exposed to the mass media, and consequently acquires higher career aspirations and more sophisticated values and attitudes. Besides, both the rural and urban middle class is more perceptive of various sociopolitical events in the country. They are conscious and literate, exposed to media like listening radio, watching TV, reading newspapers, books, journals and magazines etc., interest in community activities for instance, attendance at movies and religious participation, sensitivity to the needs of the country, particularly educational expansion, prefer to solve the national problems, aware about the national problems and more informative.

Even though the urban centric middle class population was mainly involved with the pro-democratic movement in 1990s, their rural compatriots were well aware of the situation.

¹² T. Lynn Smith, "Observations on the Middle Classes in Colombia," in Theodore R. Crevanna (ed.), *Materiales para el Estudio de la clase Media en la America Latina* (Washington, D.C.: Publicaciones de la Oficina de ciencias sociales, Union Panamericana, 1950), Vol. 6, Cited in Robert C. Williamson, "Social Class and orientation to change: some relevant variables in a Bogota sample", in *Social Forces*, Vol. No. Pp.317-328 (318).

Compared to peasants, who are mainly illiterate and poor, the rural middle class are very much informative about the political events of the country. On the other hand, even though the peasants are more in number in Bangladesh context, but they have always borne the brunts of politics. However, getting any opinion from them about the pros and cons of democracy is very difficult. Not because they are ignorant, but their sincerity and devotion to works hardly allow them to seriously think over the matter. For various reasons, they are also under a patron-client relationship with the rural influential persons. Mainly it is the influential persons of the rural areas, who mobilise the poor villagers (including peasants) to participate in any rally or cast votes in favour of any candidate, being supported by the concerned influential persons.

The (poor) villagers have hardly any voluntary participation to these events. However, the democratization process, so far could have hardly changed the socio-cultural aspects of the society, rather it has only shifted the power from the earlier influential persons and families to the newly emerged rich class in the post-independent Bangladesh. Even in most cases the earlier influentials have successfully been survived within the constant flux of the society. However, we found that the people from (middle) middle class can hold and express their opinion independently. In our field survey, however, we found teachers and students (of upper grades) could express their views on the issues. Accordingly, mostly teachers and students have taken as target population for conducting sample survey. It seems that they are well informed about the events of politics vis-a-vis democratic transition. However, we have also collected opinion from other occupational groups. Thus we have conducted our survey among the middle class population with different features. Nevertheless, their opinion seems to reflect the views of the most conscious and knowledgeable sections of the society.

IX.2 About Sample Population:

The already tested and accepted hypothesis helps us to realize that there was a conscious effort to contain the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation. This had been reflected in the joint declaration of the three Alliances of political parties in 1990's pro-democratic movement. It is interesting to note that the political forces of the time used to refer this joint declaration frequently until the passage of 12th Amendment to the Constitution. They seemingly maintained to show this trend even up to the time of referendum for this Amendment.

¹³ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, (New York: The Free Press, 1958), pp.47-54.

Thereafter, the emerged political forces of the country became afflicted with severe animosity. Thus the institutionalisation process of democracy has been undergoing through severe stress and strains. We conducted a sample survey among the conscious section of the society with some questions regarding the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (see Appendix for Questionnaire). The survey was conducted among the 174-sample population. Nevertheless, other criteria we used to choose the survey population were occupation, education, and income. Generally the refusal rate was very few, only 5 i.e. 2.87 per cent. The respondents exhibited higher verbal ability but less ability in giving the answers of questions in written.

We present our survey findings in Table-73, Table-74 and Table-75. The basic informations of the respondents have been presented in the Table-73 and Table-74. In Table-73, social and demographic characteristics of the respondents have been presented as mean year (for age), percentage (for residence) and median (for income). On the other hand, in Table-74, the occupation of the survey population has been presented in percentage

Table-73

Social and demographic characteristics of the sample (means unless other wise indicated)

Serial No	Characteristics	Male (N=103)	Female (N=71)
1	<i>Age of interviewees</i>	36.59	33.37
2	<i>Residence of the interviewees</i>		
	Rural	39.06%	60.94%
	Urban	70.91%	29.09%
3	<i>Median monthly income</i>	Tk.3269.59	Tk.1581.42

Table-74

Occupation of interviewees

Categories of occupation	Number	Percentage (100)
Teacher	65	37.36
Students Business	42	24.14
Government Officials	21	12.07
Cultivation	13	8.05
Businessmen	17	9.77
Researcher/ NGO worker	12	6.90
Lawyer	3	1.72

In Table-73 we found that, of the total 174 respondents, 59.20 per cent (103) were male and 40.80 per cent (71) were female. The mean age of 103 male respondents was 36.59 years. On the other hand, the mean age of 71 female respondents was 33.37 years.

Of the total 103 male, 70.91% were from the urban areas, whereas 29.09% were from the rural areas. On the other hand, out of total 71 females, 60.94% were from rural areas and rest 29.09% was from the urban areas.

The income of the respondents have been calculated and presented in terms of median. The median monthly incomes of the 103 male respondents were Tk.3269.59. On the other hand, the median monthly incomes of the 71 female were Tk.1581.42.

The following points emerge from Table-74.

i) Among the total 174 respondents, 37.36 percent are currently engaged in "Teaching" occupation. They are employed in different educational institutions, ranging from primary level to university. For convenient of our presentation we have discarded the idea to present them according to their present place of employment. However, we recognise the fact that on the basis of each of the occupation category there is enough scope to modify the study. Nonetheless, we did not go into details of those areas.

ii) The highest number of teachers has been followed by the next occupation category "students". Of the total respondents 24.14 per cent were students.

iii) The percentage of survey population who has been employed in government offices was 12.07.

iv) We have also collected opinion from some solvent peasants. The percentage of this occupation category was 8.05 percent. Besides, there were 9.77 percent businessmen, 6.90 per cent researcher and NGO worker and 1.72 per cent lawyer.

IX.3 Findings:

Table-75
Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh
Constraints identified by
[Total number of Respondents 174(100)]

Sl/No.	Institutionalization Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh	Student N=42 (24.14%)	Businessmen N=17 (9.77%)	Government Services N=21 (12.07%)	Teachers N=65 (37.36%)	Lawyer N=3 (1.72%)	Cultivation N=14 (8.05%)	Researcher/NGO worker N=12 (6.90%)
1	Lack of internal democracy with in the political parties	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
2	Lack of consensus on basic national issues(program)	39 (92.86%) 30(71.86%)	8 (47.06%) 7(41.18%)	16 (76.19%) 18 (85.71%)	58 (89.23%) 56 (86.15%)	3 (100) 2 (66.67)	12 (85.71%) 11 (78.57%)	10 (83.33%) 11 (91.69%)
3	Huge gap between ownership of wealth by the poor people and the MPs	28 (66.67%)	-	11 (52.38%)	50 (76.92%)	2 (66.67%)	12 (85.71%)	-
4	Lack of tolerance(image problem)	25 (59.52%)	14 (82.38%)	20 (95.24%)	50 (76.92%)	3(100)	-	12 (83.33%)
5	Lack of democratic culture	39 (92.86%)	14 (82.38%)	20 (95.24%)	50 (76.92%)	2 (66.67%)	-	10 (83.33%)
6	Tendency to be elected through money and muscle power	35 (83.33%)	-	19 (90.48%)	48 (73.85%)	2 (66.67%)	-	10 (83.33%)
7	Political bickering	29 (69.05%)	16 (94.12%)	20 (95.24%)	48 (73.85%)	2 (66.67%)	-	-
8	Hereditary politics	28 (66.67%)	10 (58.82%)	-	47 (72.31%)	3 (100)	-	-
9	Impact of corruption	20(47.62%)	-	10(58.82%)	45(69.23%)	2(66.67%)	-	-
10	Activities of International vested quarter	40(95.24%)	11(64.71%)	9(42.86%)	44(67.69%)	1(33.33%)	-	11(91.67%)
11	Lack of education	34(80.95%)	-	18(85.71%)	42(64.62%)	3(100)	-	10(83.33%)
12	Lack of parliamentary knowledge	33(78.57%)	12(70.59%)	15(71.43%)	40(61.54%)	2(66.67%)	-	-
13	Problems created by the opposition	40(95.24%)	11(64.71%)	14(66.67%)	38(58.46%)	1(33.33%)	-	10(83.33%)
14	Terrorism/Violence/Deteriorating Law and Order Situation	35(83.33%)	10(58.83%)	13(61.90%)	38(58.46%)	1(33.33%)	-	-
15	Moral degradation	25(59.52%)	-	15(71.43%)	38(58.46%)	-	10	-
16	Parliamentary debates emphasise on trifle matter rather than national issues	28(66.67%)	-	-	37(56.92%)	-	-	11(91.67%)
17	Problems created by the ruling party	40(95.24%)	-	19(90.48%)	35(53.85%)	-	-	10(83.33%)
18	Political interference into administration	40(95.24%)	15(88.24%)	-	34(52.31%)	-	-	-
19	Power politics with the students	38(90.48%)	16(94.12%)	-	55(84.62%)	-	9 (64.29%)	-

		Constraints identified by							
	Institutionalisation Constraints of Democracy in Bangladesh	Students N=42 24.14%	Businessmen N=17 (9.77%)	Government Services N=21 (12.07%)	Teachers N=65 (37.36%)	Lawyer N=3 (1.72%)	Cultivation N=14 (8.05%)	Researcher/ NGO worker N=12 (6.90%)	
20	No or minimum representation from the major occupational group i.e. peasants	(100) 25(59.52%)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	
21	No or minimum representation from the women	15(35.71%)	-	-	31(47.69%)	-	10 (71.43%)	-	
22	Right step in proper time	25(59.52%)	15(88.26%)	10(47.62%)	30(46.15%)	-	-	-	
23	Instances of abrupt change in constitution	24(57.14%)	5(29.41%)	10(47.62%)	25(38.46%)	-	-	-	
24	Lack of Transparency and accountability	22(52.38%)	6(35.29%)	9(42.86%)	24(36.92%)	-	-	11(91.67%)	
25	Impact of Hartal (General Strike)	35(83.33%)	17(100)	-	50(76.92%)	-	-	10(83.33%)	
26	Boycott of Parliament by the opposition	23(54.76%)	12(70.58%)	15(71.43%)	57(87.69%)	-	-	11(91.67%)	
27	Inexperience political leadership	34(80.95%)	13(76.47%)	13(61.90%)	35(53.84%)	2(66.67%)	6(42.86%)	8(66.67%)	
28	Lack of good governance	32(76.19%)	11(64.71%)	13(61.90%)	37(59.92%)	1(33.33%)	7(50%)	12(100)	
29	Politicisation of administration	31(73.81%)	15(88.24%)	17(80.95%)	33(50.77%)	2(33.33%)	6(42.86%)	11(91.67%)	
30	Lack of neutral Speaker for Parliament	32(76.19%)	13(76.47%)	16(76.19%)	33(50.77%)	2(66.67%)	7(50%)	12(100)	
31	Growing irregularities of Parliament	32(76.19%)	12(70.58%)	15(71.43%)	28(43.08%)	2(66.67%)	8(57.14%)	11(91.67%)	
32	Non-implementation of ruling party's pledge	23(54.76%)	14(82.35%)	16(76.19%)	33(50.77%)	2(66.67%)	9(64.29%)	-	
33	Non-fulfilment of constitutional assurances	24	11	17	32	2	12	11	
		(57.14%)	(64.71%)	(80.95%)	(49.23%)	(66.67%)	(85.71%)	(91.67%)	
34	Non-cooperation between ruling and opposition parties	23	11	18	32	2	12	11	
		(54.76%)	(64.71%)	(85.71%)	(49.23%)	(66.67%)	(85.71%)	(91.67%)	
35	Non-implementation of the decisions taken by parliament	21(50%)	15(88.24%)	12(57.14%)	39(60%)	1(33.33%)	11(78.57%)	8(66.67%)	

The persons, who have been interviewed, seemed to be well aware about the political affairs of the country. Accordingly, it may be suggestive that all of the occupation categories were significantly informed about the institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. For all of them the constraints have been evolved from the impression he or she got in the life cycle and emerged from socio-cultural, economic, political, and global pressures of the environment. However, the respondents were apprehending about the solution of constraints. Of the total 174 respondents 24.14% were students, 37.36% teachers, 9.77% businessmen, 12.07% government officials, 1.72% lawyers, 8.55% peasants and rest 6.90% were researchers and NGO workers. Nevertheless, they were from the middle class.

Out of total 65 teacher, 89.23 per cent (58) have identified the lack of internal democracy within the political parties as one of the major problems for institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. As many as 92.86 per cent students, all lawyers, 85.71 per cent peasants, 83.33 per cent researchers and NGO workers, 76.19 per cent government officials and 47.06 per cent of the businessmen have also identified it as a major constraints for institutionalising democracy in the country.

Most of the NGO workers and researchers (91.67 per cent) have identified lack of consensus on basic national issues as most prominent institutionalisation constraints of democracy in the country. Some 86.15 per cent of teachers, 71.43 per cent students, 85.71 per cent government officials, 78.57 per cent peasants and 41.18 per cent of businessmen have also mentioned this problem of democracy in Bangladesh.

Huge gap between the ownership of wealth by the elected MPs and (poor) electorate is also a problem identified prominently by the government officials (82.38 per cent). Besides 76.92 percent of the respondent teachers, 85.71 per cent peasants and 66.67 per cent students and same per cent of lawyers have ascertained the same. None of the businessmen and researchers and NGO workers has mentioned this problem.

Most of the government officials i.e. 95.24 per cent seem to be aware about the lack of toleration in the political arena of the country. Thus they identified it as one of the major constraints for institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. All respondent lawyers and researchers and NGO workers have also ascertained it. However, 82.35 per

cent of the businessmen, 76.92 per cent of the teachers, and 59.52 per cent of the students have supported the same.

The tendency to be elected through money and muscle power has been termed as one of the major institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. As many as 90.48 per cent government officials, 83.33 per cent of students and researchers and NGO workers, 73.85 per cent of the teachers and 66.67 per cent lawyers have also maintained the similar view.

Ninety five point twenty four per cent of the respondent, who happen to be government officials, 94.12 per cent teachers, 66.67 per cent lawyers, 69.05 per cent students have recognised 'political bickering' as one of the major institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

All respondent lawyers have prominently poured on 'hereditary politics' as an institutionalisation constraint of democracy in Bangladesh. 72.31 per cent teachers, 66.67 per cent students and 58.82 per cent businessmen have also approved this.

All pervasive corruption has an adverse impact on institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. The entire respondent peasants, 69.23 per cent teachers, and 66.67 per cent lawyers, 47.62 per cent of students and government officials, have opined this.

Every one of the respondent peasants has the opinion that 'crisis of patriotic leadership' engrossely hinders the process of institutionalising democracy in the country. As many as 69.23 per cent teachers, 66.67 per cent lawyers, 95.24 per cent students, 70.59 per cent businessmen, and 52.38 per cent government officials have held the same opinion.

A good number of respondents held the opinion that 'activities of International vested quarter' make institutionalisation of democracy difficult. As many as 95.24 per cent students, 91.67% researchers and NGO workers, 67.69 per cent teachers, 64.71 per cent businessmen, 33.33 per cent lawyers and 42.86 per cent government officials have pointed out the problem.

Eventhough, more number of people are becoming literate and educated, still the country is said to be a place for majority illiterate people. Thus 'lack of education' has become a major constraint for institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. All

respondent lawyers maintain the impression. Alongside the lawyers, 85.71 per cent government officials, 80.95 per cent students and 64.62 per cent teachers have also borne the similar view.

A considerable number of students (78.57 per cent), government officials (71.43 per cent), businessmen (70.59 per cent), lawyers (66.67 per cent) and teachers (61.54 per cent) seemed to be conscious about the 'lack of parliamentary knowledge' that is hindering the institutionalisation process of democracy in the country.

Irresponsible behaviour of the opposition very often hinders the process of democratic consolidation in Bangladesh. Ninety five point twenty four per cent students, 66.67 per cent government officials, 64.71 per cent businessmen, 58.46 per cent teachers and 33.33 per cent lawyers have expressed the view in support of this problem.

A failed law and order situation revealed in the form of violence and terrorism has become a grave concern for institutionalisation process of democracy in the country. Among our respondents 83.33 per cent students, 61.90 per cent government officials, 58.83 per cent businessmen, 58.46 per cent teachers and 33.33 per cent lawyers held the opinion that the absence of rule of law is greatly responsible for fragile state of institutionalising democracy in the country.

All respondents those were peasants held the opinion that 'moral degradation' was one of the major institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. A good number of respondents from other occupation categories have also supported this view. As many as 71.43 per cent government officials, 59.52 per cent students and 58.46 per cent teachers have also expressed the similar view.

Instead of holding debate on national issues, parliamentary debates use to hold on trifle matters that hinder to find out the real problems of the country. This has an adverse effect on the process of institutionalising democracy in the country. As many as 91.67 per cent researchers and NGO workers, 66.67 per cent students and 56.92 per cent teachers have opined the view.

As the majority party, the behaviour of the party in power have a great connotation for the institutionalisation process of democracy in the country. Thus 'problems created by the ruling party' constrain the consolidation process of democracy. Ninety point forty eight per cent government officials, 83.33 per cent researchers and

NGO workers, 95.24 per cent students and 53.85 per cent teachers have supported this view.

As many as 95.24 per cent students, 88.24 per cent businessmen and 52.31 per cent teachers have viewed 'political interference into administration' as a major institutionalization constraint to democracy in Bangladesh.

Involvement of students into politics may not have a favourable impact on institutionalization process of democracy in the country. Ninety four point twelve per cent businessmen, 90.48 per cent students, 84.62 per cent teachers and 64.29 per cent peasants hold the view that 'power politics with the students' is a major constraint for institutionalization of democracy in the country.

Eventhough majority Bangladeshi people are related with agriculture, virtually they have no representation in the parliament. Seventy one point forty three per cent peasants, 59.52 per cent students and 53.84 per cent teachers have noted their concern over this issue. On the other hand representatives in sufficient number from women in the parliament have also felt necessary by many others. Thus 57.14 per cent peasants, 35.71 per cent students and 47.69 per cent teachers have expressed that 'no or minimal representation from the women' is a major institutionalization constraint of democracy.

Many argued that absence of 'right steps in proper time' is a major constraint to institutionalizing democracy in Bangladesh. As many as 88.25 per cent businessmen, 59.52 per cent students, 47.52 per cent government officials and 46.15 per cent teachers supported this view.

"Instances of abrupt changes in constitution" is a major institutionalization constraint of democracy in Bangladesh. A good number of our respondents have expressed their view in this regard. As many as 57.14 per cent of students, 47.62 per cent government officials, 38.46 per cent teachers and 29.41 per cent businessmen have supported this problem.

A major problem of institutionalizing democracy in the country lies within the fact that there is severe lack of transparency and accountability in the administration, political parties and in almost every strata of the society. Fifty two point thirty eight per cent students, 91.67 per cent researchers and NGO workers, 42.86 per cent government officials, 36.92 per cent teachers and 35.29 per cent businessmen hold this opinion.

Hartal has become a major concern for institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. Eighty-three point thirty three per cent respondents from both the students and researchers and NGO workers have found 'hartal' as a prominent constraint for institutionalising democracy. All businessmen, 76.92 per cent teachers and 66.67 per cent lawyers have supported this view.

Since the life term of the fifth parliament the members of the opposition bench have been boycotting the working sessions of the parliament, which has been a chronic problem. Ninety one point sixty seven per cent researchers and NGO workers, 87.69% teachers, 71.43 % government officials, 70.58% businessmen and 54.76% students have identified this problem.

It is widely recognised that Bangladesh has been suffering from the lack of experienced political leadership. As many as 80.95 per cent students, 76.47% businessmen, 66.67 per cent researchers and NGO workers and same percentage of lawyers, 61.90 per cent government officials and 53.84 per cent teachers have expressed their concern in this regard.

One of the major institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh is lack of good governance. Hundred per cent researchers and NGO workers have identified this problem. Besides 76.19 per cent student, 64.71 per cent businessmen, 61.90 per cent government officials, 59.92 per cent teachers, 50 per cent peasants and 33.33 per cent lawyers have supported this view.

Many respondents consider 'politicisation of administration' as one of the severe institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. Ninety one point sixty seven percent researchers and NGO workers, 88.24 per cent businessmen, eighty point ninety five percent government officials, 73.81% students, 50.77%, 42.86%peasants, and 33.33 per cent lawyers have expressed their concern regarding this constraint.

Speaker's role is vital to maintain neutrality in the working of the parliament. It has been observed by some respondents that lack of neutral Speaker for Parliament is a major institutionalisation constraint of democracy in Bangladesh. Hundred per cent researchers and NGO workers, 76.47%businessmen, 76.19% government officials, 76.19%students, 66.67%lawyers, 50.77%teachers and 50%peasants have emphasised on this issue.

Since the democratisation in 1990s the Parliament could not work regularly. Accordingly, the pledge to make a sovereign parliament remain a rhetoric. However, a good number of respondents have also expressed this opinion. As many as 91.67 per cent researchers and NGO workers, 76.19 % students, 70.58%businessmen, 66.67% lawyers, 57.14% peasants, 43.08% teachers, and 21.43 percent government officials have expressed this institutionalisation constraint of democracy in Bangladesh.

During the election campaign and in other time the political parties use to declare their commitment regarding their determination to implement many things. For example, they want to improve the law and order situation, take different development activities and uphold the democratic culture so on and so forth. But after coming into power they seem to forget their election pledges. Thus non-implementation of ruling party's pledge become one of the main hindrances to the institutionalisation process of democracy in the country. As many as 82.35% businessmen, 76.19% government officials, 66.67% lawyers, 64.29% peasants, 54.76% student, and 50.77% teachers have given their opinion in this regard.

Like the ruling party's pledge the non-fulfilment of constitutional assurances is also an institutional constraint of democracy in the country. Ninety one point sixty seven per cent researchers and NGO workers, 85.71% peasants, 80.95% government officials, 66.67% lawyers, 64.71%businessmen, 57.14%students, and 49.23% teachers have pointed out the constraint.

Ninety one point sixty seven per cent researchers and NGO workers, 85.71% peasants and same percentage of government officials, 66.67% lawyers, 64.71%businessmen, 57.76%students, and 49.23% teachers have found non-cooperation between ruling and opposition political parties as one of the most prominent obstacles to institutionalisation of democracy in the country.

It has been observed that the decisions taken by the parliament are not implemented. A good number of respondents have expressed their opinion in this regard that non-implementation of the decisions taken by the parliament are not implemented. This is a major constraint to the institutionalisation process of democracy in the country. Eighty eight point twenty four per cent businessmen, 78.57% peasants, 66.67%

researchers and NGO workers, 60% teachers, 57.14% government officials, and 50% students have expressed their concern in this regard.

IX.4 Discussion:

The institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh are almost endless. However, from our survey we found as many as 35 constraints. Each of the constraints needs special attention to address. Since our objective in this regard is to find out the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh, we feel it sufficient to have brief discussions on each of the constraint. The constraints to institutionalizing democracy that are prevalent have been emerged from the economic, social, political, psychological, mental, cultural and historical aspects. Besides, alien subjugation for thousand of years have ruined and shattered morally and culturally, pride and self-confidence of the people, which are essential qualities required of a people to contribute a nation, have been destroyed. Thus in the age of globalisation a cynical attitude have been on the rise in the country about the relation with other countries. However, there is no place to hide from the wave of globalisation. These are the constraints in their ugliest manifestations, which today encompasses the country as a whole. However, accordingly, for convenience of the discussion we tend to group these constraints into five major categories, socio-cultural, economic, political, global and periodic, which are not exhaustive. Nonetheless, the groupings are not compartmentalised, hence they are interchangeable. The categories are also interrelated.

IX.4.a. Socio-cultural Constraints: The increased rate of social mobilisation alongwith conscious political attempt had brought about the inevitable process of democratic transition. The subsequent need to consolidate or institutionlise democracy has been facing serious constraints. Nonetheless, the constraints under discussion have been emerged from the huge array of problems that accompanied the pace of change. The socio-cultural impediments are one of the major institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh as in else where.

Lack of education:

There is no denying the fact that education is central to the process of institutionalising democracy, whether in developed or developing. In the context of democratic consolidation, the definition, shape and content of education changes dramatically. The need for such a change arises from the historical role that education has played in reinforcing the social development.

In our part of the world-as in most others-'education' in the traditional sense was elitist and limited to the rich people. The process of learning also became more centred on memorisation and reproduction-particularly of religious texts-rather than on questioning, exploration, experimentation and analysis. The process of learning was increasingly focused on inculcating the values of obedience, the immutability of the social order, religious dogma and the unquestioning acceptance of existing knowledge, beliefs and practices as set in the out dated texts. Accordingly, even the educated people may have "obscurity and lack of transparency"¹.

Since the political parties of Bangladesh are trapped in bringing out procession in the street and making public speech, they do not have any specialist knowledge on state's economy, education, health, agriculture, industry, science-technology and such kinds of necessary subjects, only customary concepts on the subjects have developed by them the political parties expressed their reaction on the budget. The subject matter of their reactions is, it is a budget to kill the poor, budget for government party's election campaign, worthless budget etc. and lastly they rejected it. Why it is a budget to kill the poor, there is no hair-splitting analysis, in the statement. Even the parties do not arrange any separate seminar on the proposed budget.

The future of democracy depends upon Education. Democracy requires an educated people. It implies that men are in fact sufficiently reasonable and sufficiently sociable to settle the affairs of great states by these peaceful, reasonable, 'parliamentary methods. Because democracy trusts in reason as the best guide available, and at the same time is fully aware of its imperfections-the strengthening of men's reasoning powers by

¹ Talukder Maniruzzaman, (2001), *op cit.*, p 98.

education is an indispensable foundation stone of democratic policy. Education develops a man's capacity for understanding other men's point of view.²

Lack of democratic culture:

The principles of flexibility, adaptability, and coherence are regarded as the basis of democratic culture. Both the ruling and opposition parties have been claiming their actions being made to institutionalise democracy. The opposition parties made walkouts and boycott from the 5th parliament to realise their demand for caretaker government. They claimed that their movement was inspired by democratic goals and for people's betterment. In response to the opposition claim the ruling BNP strongly put forward the arguments to uphold the constitutional norms. Which was also claimed to be inspired to institutionalise democracy. But, at every step in the crisis created by the two sides, they proved their strategies and tactics had hardly any relationship to democratic idealism. The crisis could be ended if the two sides showed the minimum of flexibility, accommodation or reasonableness.

The two sides, if they were pulsated in the least by patriotism and not by a maniacal ambition for defending or gaining power whatever the costs to the country and its people, could come forward long ago in order to diffuse the crisis. (But they did not. Moreover, both the sides tried to sell their hard-boiled stand to the people as necessary in the better interests of the country. The crisis lasted for more than two years. Thus the attitudes and activities of these parties had set the country well on the path of disaster. At the end while the opposition parties had been demanding government's resignation, the ruling BNP held the election on February 15, 1996. Nevertheless, after holding election, forming cabinet and constituting 6th parliament, the ruling BNP had been claiming that they had created scope to end the crisis through dialogue and constitutional amendments. Even though boycotting parliament is part of parliamentary democracy, however, unfortunately it has become a part of Bangladesh's political culture to boycott continuously.³ Nonetheless, both the ruling and opposition parties are responsible for this culture as neither alone has been blamed for this practice.

²See Reginald Lennard, *Democracy, The threatened foundations*, Cambridge at the University press, London, 1941 p 66.

³ Barrister Moudud Ahmed told in the two-day annual conference of UNB District correspondents in Dhaka. Report in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 12, 2002, p.2.

(The style of enforcing one way of thinking, condemning other options seems to be undemocratic. Thus, there is confrontation all around, and the situation is going from bad to worse.)The continued misuse of power is oppressive. (A stable democratic polity can not be built in the absence of mutual trust and reasonable degree of understanding, accommodation and consensus emanating from deliberations and debates between the ruling party and the opposition.) What is, therefore, imperative is to promote democratic culture. A noted political scientist of Bangladesh has at least pointed out a single but important cause in this regard. He said, 'failure of political class in the country, to internalisation and materialisation of democratic values, is the major constraint to the triumph of democracy.'⁴

No democracy can survive, far less thrive, without building a tradition of the constitution. Lack of respects to the constitution lead to the feelings of mistrust, among the people, on the institutions of the country. Law and order situation and rampant terrorism, thus, lead to 'public confidence in the enforcement of law having touched a low'. Analysts viewed that the political use of the police is mostly responsible for the 'rag-tag conditions topped off by an acute state of democratisation.'⁵ With the pace of increasing political unrest, Bangladesh slowly slide into the gutter. Instead of looking after peoples' welfare all the politicians are interested in expressing hatred for each other. Since the independence of the country, all people have witnessed are the politicians' bitter stance against each other, use of filthy words both inside and outside the Parliament, self-aggrandisement and so on.⁶ In a recent study, the authors⁷ have found absence of democratic culture in the country.

"Around 80 percent of the leaders think regionalism and nepotism prevail in political parties. Again 89 percent of them admit the parties harbour or patronise musclemen and almost all of them think that the office holding politicians resort to extra-legal benefits. Thus it is not surprising that a little more than half of the leaders believe that the people have no confidence in political parties."

⁴ Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Introduction" in Muhammad Jahangir (ed.), *Ganatantra* (Democracy), A collection of articles on Democracy, Mowla Brothers, Dhaka, 1995, pp. 5-9 (7).

⁵ See the Editorial in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 12, 2000, p. 4.

⁶ Syed Waliullah (a letter writer To The Editor) in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 9, 2001, p. 4.

⁷ Shamsul I Khan, S. Aminul Islam and M. Imdadul Haque, *Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic Transition*, Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1997.

Self-centred politics:

There is growing demand for purposive and principled politics, a deep feeling of revulsion against the parties of self-aggrandisement and a mounting anger over the neglect of public interest by political parties and leaders. Limited struggles provide ample evidence of these changes at the grassroots of the polity. Yet, the leaders continue to indulge in the same old game of gaining ascendancy through the politics of manipulation.

Analysts view that in most cases a few privileged class have been getting benefit from the state machinery. The politicians are moved by their petty self interest and act for their benefit. The prevailing situation may be termed as a syndrome of Bangladesh that pervades the polity and society.⁸ The country is infested with the politicians dictated solely by their self-interest and rules by expediency. A man who lacks conviction and pursues the politics of convenience is, in fact, a dangerous man. Because it is difficult to identify his actual colour or intention. The direction in which he will lead the nation can not be predicted. By scarifying conviction at the alter of expediency, both on the parts of individual politicians and political party, a dangerous trend has been set in the society making the course of politics hazy and unpredictable.

Jealousy and threatening of obscurantism:

Time and again Bangladeshi culture comes under the threatening scrutiny of obscurantism. During the Pakistani era some people or a section of people considered Bengali-Muslims as lesser Muslims. Even after independence, a section of people like ignoramus cleric think that some well established cultural ethos of Bangladesh are not upto the tone of their religion. This sentiment seriously and fundamentally brings the major religion into a conflict with the indigenious culture. The sentiment, which is maintained to belittling the Bengali culture, obviously led to the political crisis. It allows religion to be pitted against culture when the two had co-existed nicely in the midst of Bangladeshi society for centuries. The section of this type of people has the bigoted eye, which has not changed even in the last fifty years.

⁸ See Brig (Retd) M Abdul Hafiz, "The Politics of convenience or conviction", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) September 3, 2001, p 4.

Even after the downfall of autocratic regime the people of Bangladesh can not engage in the freedom of communication. At some point a Bangladeshi citizen must face wrath of his family or his neighbours or his government. The political processions, mosques and parliament tell the people what they can read, write and say.

Democracy is not an end in itself. Civilised nations have opted for representative government after realising that this form of administration was the best possible approach to protecting individual liberties. A democracy, the rule of the people, can not be achieved without the people being able to rule their individual lives without hindrance from their neighbours and governments.

The erstwhile colonial rulers wanted to prove that the natives were indeed lesser human beings, than they were. It was the 'white man's burden', they said, to make the nations capable of being freeman. However, after a long ending of colonial rule, the people of Bangladesh are not even capable of tolerating and guaranteeing the freedom of many of their complaints. And in an independent country nobody is to blame for this than the people themselves.⁹

It is argued that religious communalism is not a major problem in Bangladesh. Because of the syncretistic nature of Islam in Bangladesh, fundamentalism will never get strong footing in the country as the people, particularly the women, are reluctant to adhere totally to the rigid social and cultural framework of a theocratic political order. The problem still face by the country in this regard is obscurantism.¹⁰ (Obscurantism always thwarts "spirit of free enquiry"¹¹). Fundamentalism is a theocratic political project where dissent is not allowed, whereas obscurantism feeds on ignorance. So far as communalism is concerned, violent killer riots, either driven by economic design or by fanaticism, have virtually become a thing of the past.

It is argued that in Bengal renaissance has transformed the general people of Bangladesh into a more tolerant and liberal lot and no incidents of real communal riot took place in Bengal (both in Bangladesh and in West Bengal State of India).

⁹ See Esam Sohail, "Children of a lesser God", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 19, 2001, p.5.

¹⁰ Enayetullah Khan in a lecture on "The recent communal unrest in South Asia and the role of the civil society", at Dhaka, see report in this regard in *The Holiday* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) April 26, 2002, p.3.s

¹¹ Talukder Maniruzzaman, (2001), *op cit.*, p 98

Moral degradation:

Morality is the only source through which a man can develop in himself the heavenly qualities like love, affection, human feelings, respect and appreciation for others in the society. Morality is one of the best factors in human civilisation in the real sense. It is the moral value and institutions, which ensure establishment of social peace, order and justice. There is no denying the fact that morality is the best virtue of mankind at any individual, social and global level. Nothing of human being is valuable without morality, which is fundamental to develop righteousness, responsibility and humanity in mankind for differentiating a man from an animal. It is universally true that without attaching the essence of morality, fruitful, honest and everlasting democratic, socio-economic, administrative and judicial institutions in any society can never be dreamt of.¹²

The all-pervasive moral degradation has about to ruin the social fabric of the country. The politicians of Bangladesh have become chameleons who keep changing colours and also loyalty to ensure their slots in the power enclave. The power, for them, is a heady breed and they want to drink deep at its root. They have neither a fixed set of ideals nor an ideology for these are considered anathema to the politics of expediency that they pursue. For them the ideals, if they can change but their goal of acquiring a position of power must remain unchanged.

The results are obvious. Even after traversing a longway in the democratic transition and having gone through as many as seven general elections there is neither a revitalisation nor consolidation of democracy in the country. The country is still stuck at its quicksand, which can give way at any time. The democracy has, on the contrary, gone downhill. The ugly, political horse trading that is witnessed both before and after the election is one of the many syndromes of the malaise.

In the elections, each political party wants a winnable candidate no matter the candidate is a rogue, the godfather of the criminals or a defaulter in paying back the borrowed public money. His ability to win, by hook or by crook, washes away any stigma that he may be smeared with. Similarly, all candidates want a winnable party no matter whether one believes in the stated party objectives given at least in its election

manifesto. The candidate is happy if the party has an organisation to campaign for him, financial power to back it up, and the muscle-power to make the votes flow in its favour and weapons to brandish as a show of strength.

The ugly political horse-trading has snowballed into a national crisis, the crisis of the poverty of political conviction. The spectacle of cross migration from party to party on the eve of parliamentary election points to the precipitation that has occurred to the political morality of the country. The phenomenon is nothing new in Bangladesh political culture but what has been alarming is its inexorable spread and pervasiveness in post-1975 Bangladesh, which witnessed the beginning of the politics of shifting loyalties on a mass scale. A huge chunk of Awami Leaguers was lured away by subsequent military and quasi-military regimes to co-operate with them in exchange of handsome largesse. The non-Awami Leaguers accomplices of those regimes that included the political opportunists and obscurantists as well as elements from extreme left and far right were intoxicated with General Zia's brand of 'nationalism' because it, after all, rehabilitated them in national politics. But many of them did not have any compunction in quitting Zia's BNP and paying fealty to Ershad who staged a coup in 1982 to become the country's next ruler. One of the best insiders in this process witnessed that 'Zia was then politically supported by three broad groups of people:

1. Freedom fighters and pro-independence forces;
2. Ultra-rightists and forces who opposed the independence;
3. Pro-Peking and revolutionary leftist forces. For nearly two years Zia had prepared himself for this new venture.'¹³

For about a decade these people enjoyed the perks and privileges associated with their new allegiance and participated in the newly formed coterie of Ershad. So irresistible were the lures of state-level corruption of Ershad regime that even the intellectuals, cultural activists, religious leaders and the teachers of the highest seat of learning lined up behind him for a share in the grab. Ershad was ousted from the office but those parasites remained. They have now taken shelter in two major political parties. Even if these

¹² See Dr. Abu Obaidul Haque, "Global Approach for Moral Development", in *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 5, 1997, p.5.

¹³ See Moudud Ahmed, *Democracy and the Challenges of Development, A study of Politics and Military Interventions in Bangladesh*, University Publishers Limited, Dhaka, 1995, p71.

parties condemned Ershad, they however, protected the people who got Ershad's privilege for nine years.

They are die hard and have surprising tenacity to survive, thanks to the relentless power struggle pursued by both Awami League and BNP who are ready to compromise their ideology, if they have any, to attract rich, corrupt and influential on their sides. (The crisis of conviction has come to such a head that the people have no calm in abandoning their belief, prediction, ideology and ideals as well as the association and comradeship just to seek a party ticket.) The behaviours of the parties are even more bizarre. The same party gave the man who has been bribed for breaking his party, had defaulted loan and had been declared bankrupt a welcome with the warmth generated only on the occasion of a 'return of the native'.

(Due to degradation of society the numbers of terrorists are increasing. Apparently the social edicts, humanity and even administrative rules and regulations could hardly cope with this degrading trend.) The terrorists very often have adorned with aristocratic look by the grace of politics. Actually terrorism is the result of social degradation. This has been shaped into an unwritten, unrecognized and ever increasing social force. Starting from the petty illegal works from the lowest rung of the society, this group of people has been getting political and social status. Thus they become elite of the society. It reveals volumes of inability of both ruling and opposition parties to adapt the increased rate of social mobilisation into political institutions. With the democratisation process and changing world scenario in 1990's the group of terrorists have been increasing at par the increment of problems. The steps of law enforcement often help to growing the ratio of terrorists. While one is abated, five is coming up. Like a demon, each drop of whose blood, as soon as fell to the ground, would instantly produce an identical demon. This new type of phenomenon has gripped the whole society.

Observers viewed that it was not there before. It accelerated since 1990's. It started with bad political culture, and the politicians know it, but evade the issue, and pass on the buck. Politicisation on large scale has spread political corruption to great depth and breadth. Now money is also tainted, and the motivation to make a hard living is gone. Thus the foundation of the new generation is frustrating. The consensus among the political parties on this and other national issues is showing to have none. They are

fighting on marginal non-issues and getting away with it. This has become possible because politics has become a lucrative source of business, without working too hard.

In view of this context vested groups are controlling the society. The leadership of the government is not people-oriented.¹⁴ If democracy is meant for the people to rule itself, then people's mobilisation and participation are indispensable. Without peoples support enforcement of law is not possible.

Politics without ideological conviction and political patronage of criminals have led to the rise in corruption and lawlessness. Observers view that corruption had already got social legitimacy in the country.¹⁵ Corruption, criminalisation and violence have become inter-linked and have been the key obstacles to sustainable development as well as institutionalisation of democracy. One experienced politician observed, 'frankly speaking, politics has become a profitable business. At present, the country's politics is not based on any ideology. In the past, politicians used to patronise terrorists. But now, terrorists control elections.' However, the deterioration in politics has been due to the absence of 'genuine politicians' in the parliament. Seventeen lawmakers in the 7th JS were accused in various cases. The youths have gradually gone on the wrong track largely due to failure of the post-liberation leadership, absence of democracy for long period, unemployment and absence of religious values.¹⁶

Politicians in the past were generally of good moral character and their aim was to satisfy people by their good deeds and hard work. After getting elected their main objective was to develop their constituency in all respects so that people would remember them even after their death. Those politicians had definite commitments; programmes and they used to obtain enormous pleasure at the happiness of the general public and in fulfilling promises given to the voters. Earning money illegally or illegal occupation of public property as a people's representative and legislator was considered a very heinous and abominable offence. But at present, it has become the very opposite. Most of the

¹⁴ A letter writer in "To The Editor", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 13, 2002, p.5.

¹⁵ Speakers in a workshop titled "Corruption, Criminalisation and Violence in Bangladesh", organised by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) at Dhaka on March 16, 2002, report in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 17, 2002, p.12, 11.

¹⁶ Speakers in a roundtable dialogue on "Bangladesh Samajik O Naitik Mulayabodher Abokhaya: Utsa, Karon O Prakriti"(Social and moral degradation in Bangladesh: Source, Cause and Nature), organised by

MPs after getting elected forget about their promises and remain busy enhancing their wealth and power. Particularly the ministers misuse their power and position to earn money through bribery. There are examples galore of such cases during democratic regime of the country. Most of the ministers and MP's have no moral character. Then how can they expect honesty from their subordinate officers? They are experts in demagoguery and pretension and do little for economic or social uplift of the people.

At present good, honest and efficient people do not like to contest in the elections because they neither have the money or the muscle power. Those who are dishonest are more interested in contesting the elections because they have ill-gotten money and consider it a business investment, which will be recovered manifold, if they get elected. It appears that most of the people in the society are oblivious of the supreme doctrine of Islam.

The middle class who was the potential forces of the pro-democratic movement became cynical to the state of politics, which have been prevailing since 1990's democratic transition. Some one may argue that 'cynicism keeps democracy healthy'¹⁷, however, with the downsliding moral edge of the politicians the middle class feel better to remain apathetic about politics. As the middle class is the main component of civil society. So this sentiment of the middle class restrain the civil society to play a vibrant role for institutionalising democracy in the country. However, with the unrestrained flows of moral degradation their inspiration to work as watchdog has become grim.

Samajik Bigayan Gabeshana Parishad at Dhaka on August 6, 1992 report in *The Ajker Kagoj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 7, 1992, p.5.

¹⁷ Shamsad Mortuza, "Coming polls and MCQ Test", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 23, 2001, p.5.

IX.4.b Political constraints:

In Bangladesh the increased rate of political participation, happened to be seen mostly in the agitation of different types. However, our consideration of political participation as has been viewed through the rate of cast votes in different general elections could have only found periodically. The division between political leadership, bureaucracy, new-rich businessmen and powerful groups have seriously enhanced the erosion of moral value of the society. This has also hampered the functioning of political institutions. Actually, the increased rate of social mobilisation and political participation "are directly responsible for the deterioration of political institutions."¹ But for containing the instability government has to manage the democratisation process. So that 'the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.'² However, apart from the participation aspect of democratic politics; there are different types of political constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country. We discuss below our survey findings, which have been categorised as political constraints for institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh.

✓ *Lack of internal democracy within the political parties:*

In a democratic polity party exists at the operational end. Therefore, political parties are institution of paramount importance. The role of political parties is indispensable for institutionalizing democracy. Hence, whether the political parties of the country carry out their activities in democratic legal and lawful way that is to be considered. The point here is whether the political parties are practicing democracy internally. Despite their widely publicised commitment to democracy, the political

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay", in Harvey G. Kebschull (ed), *Politics in Transitional Societies, The Challenge of change in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Corporation, New York, 1968, p.290.

² De Tocqueville, "Democracy in America", Phillips Brandy edn. New York, 1995, II, 118, cited by Samuel P Huntington, in Ibid p 288-289.

parties in Bangladesh display the tendency of being “authoritarian within”. In fact, the absence of intra-party democracy is often reflected in monolithic party structure, absolute authority of the leaders and personality cult built around them, indefinite tenure of high ranking functionaries, intolerance of diverse opinion, irregularity in holding general meetings and lack of public exposure to public accounts. Such a discrepancy between pronouncements and practice on the part of political parties is not at all conducive to democratic dispensation. We discuss below the situation within the major political parties. As has been mentioned earlier that in 1991 parliamentary election as many as 81 political parties participated and only 2 main along with 6 political parties had their representatives got elected. Accordingly, the situation of four major political parties or alliances of political parties have been discussed to assess one of our survey findings, *lack of internal democracy within the political parties*.

BANGLADESH NATIONALIST PARTY (BNP): The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is one of the two broad based major political parties in the country. Former President Ziaur Rahman established the BNP. With a view to civilianise his regime, Zia had founded the party. Zia had held dialogue with the people from all walks of life to reintroduce multi-party democracy in the country. In course of the dialogue he found that different quarters had been aggrieved with the past Awami League rule.³ (This observation of the founder helped determine the political line of BNP in the latter period. However, Zia had also found that in absence of any virtual opposition in the first Jatiya Sangsad, the dissenter politicians became inoperative and some of them even had gone into underground and took up the path of armed struggle. The fourth amendment of the constitution had further consolidated the one party rule. However, to revive multiparty system Ziaur Rahman had declared Political Party Regulation, 1976.⁴ Through this process the Awami League was revived in 1976. Besides Jatiya Ganatantrik Dal (JAGODAL) was established in 1977 with Justice Abdus Sattar as its

³ Mahmud Shafique, *Zia O Bahudalya Ganatantra* (Zia and multi-party democracy) in *Weekly Bichitra* (National Bengali Weekly of Bangladesh, Dhaka) Year 22, No.3, June 11, 1993, pp.19-21.

⁴ See *Weekly Bichitra* (National Bengali Weekly of Bangladesh, Dhaka) Year 22, No.3, June 11, 1993, pp.19-21.

convenor. Zia was the main architect of this party; however, he did not formally join in this party. In a latter period Ziaur Rahaman established a political front, Nationalist Front in 1 May 1978. Political parties like Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal, NAP (Moshiur), and UPP, BANGLADESH Muslim League (Shah Azia), Labour Party and Bangladesh Tafshil Jati Federation had joined in this front.

The first direct presidential election of independent Bangladesh was held in 3 June 1978.⁵ Ziaur Rahaman was nominated as the President candidate of Nationalist Front. He won in this election. It may be mentioned that this President election was the outcome of Fourth Amendment to the constitution of Bangladesh. Ziaur Rahaman had changed all other aspects of the 4th amendment except the 'form of government' that was shifted from parliamentary to presidential one. However, after got elected as the legitimate President of the country Ziaur Rahaman had found it suitable to head the newly formed party. The Nationalist Front had turned into Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in August 1978 and Ziaur Rahaman was selected as its founder Chairman. The newly formed BNP in its proclamation pledged for multi-party democracy. But, whether the party nourishes and practices democracy within its own fold that remains a source of great curiosity.

Ziaur Rahaman was a soldier and turned into a successful political leader. His ascendancy to the top position was not the outcome of any family tree.⁶ President Ziaur had been assassinated by a group of derailed army personnel on May 30, 1981. Latter on his widow Begum Khaleda Zia had entered into politics, taking BNP's primary membership on January 3, 1982. During this interim period Justice Sattar had been the acting Chairman of BNP. In 10 May 1984 after three years of Ziaur Rahaman's assassination and at her 39 years age Begum Khaleda Zia was elected unopposed as the Chairperson of BNP. The main basis of this election was her matrimonial relationship with the former president Ziaur Rahaman. Since her assumption to the post of party chief her power within the party has been reeling in an uninterrupted sequence.

⁵ Hedayet Hossain Morshed, *Ekjan Zia* (One Zia), Afsar Brothers, Dhaka, 1990, p.125.

⁶ Iftekhar Rasul George, Ziaur Rahaman, *Janagany Sakal Khamater Utsa* (Ziaur Rahaman, People is the source of all power), Ananya, Dhaka, 1995, p.107.

However, except the short break of acting period by Justice Abdus Sattar, the position of party chief has been reeling around kinship i.e. from husband to wife.

With the pace of change, Bangladesh have returned to parliamentary democracy in 1991. Accordingly, in the fourth party council of 1993, the BNP has attuned its party constitution with the parliamentary form of government get in and presidential form get out.⁷ Thus Section (g) and (h) of Article 2 of BNP's constitution maintains that the objectives of the party are, to establish stable democracy through a parliamentary form of government elected by the direct vote of people on the basis of multi-party politics and to firmly establish the basis of popularly elected national parliament as the safeguard of democratic way of life and democratic rule and system.

However, contrary to its objectives there are some undemocratic elements in the party constitution. According to Article 8 (a) of party constitution the chairman would be elected through the votes of the members in the National Council for two years. However, so far none of the party chiefs i.e. General Ziaur Rahaman, Justice Abdus Sattar and Begum Khaleda Zia has been elected through direct vote. Analysts view BNP constitution as one centric and hardly fit for a democratic party.⁸ The duty, power and responsibility of the party chairperson have been mentioned in Section 8 (b) of party constitution. It says, (i) as the head of the party the chairperson will control, supervise and coordinate all party activities and for this purpose exercise supreme authority over national council, national standing committee and other committees nominated by chairperson and control, supervise and coordinate their activities, (ii) the chairperson, if necessary, can take disciplinary actions against the members of above mentioned committees, (iii) as the head of national executive committee, the chairperson will determine the responsibilities, power and duties of those committees; (iv) chairperson can, if feels necessary, dissolve the national executive committee, national standing committee, subject committees and other committees nominated by the chairperson; (v) chairperson will preside over the meetings of national council,

⁷ See report on BNP's fourth council by Asif Nazrul in Weekly Bichitra (National Bengali Weekly, Dhaka) Year 22, Number 10, 1993, p.26.

national executive committee and national standing committee, however if necessary, the chairperson can authorise any other member in this regard.

Thus the chairperson holds absolute power in the party structure of BNP, which is uneven for a party that is pledge bound for democracy. Even though, the rule for holding meeting, quorum, majority opinion including dismissal of chairperson are mentioned in the constitution of BNP, however, these rules become ineffective due to paramount predominance of party chairperson. And in reality, it is non-existent.

BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE (AL): Bangladesh Awami League (AL) is a party of more than half-a-century old. The party was established in 1949 as Awami Muslim League. Later on, in 1955 it revised its name and took the present name, Awami League. During its long history of more than fifty years, the party had held only 15 annual councils. (On the other hand within these 50 years, the party had splitted 17 times. Analysts argue, breaking of party for internal schism indicates AL's lagging behind of democracy.)

At present the eldest daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, Sheikh Hasina, leads the party. She had been elected as the party chief in 1981, amidst multi-farious schism, that emerged after the death of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman.* Sheikh Hasina was the president of Eden College unit of Chatra League, the student front of the AL in 1966. She was also the General Secretary of Chatra League's Rokeya Hall unit of Dhaka University in 1969. In this context of political experience at the age of 34 years Sheikh Hasina had been elected as AL chief. While she was elected as AL chief, at that time she had been staying at India. After being returned to Dhaka in 17 May 1981, she sat on the steering of the party (However, according to its constitution, the party is said to be conducted democratically but in practice the party is conducted keeping constitution aside. After taking over the charge of party leadership, Sheikh Hasina has been discharging the responsibility for long 21 years. Within this twenty-one-year there were only four councils. On the other hand, within 50-year of its existence there were

* See Janakantha Pakkhik (Fortnightly issue of Bengali Daily NewsPaper JANAKANTHA, Dhaka) August 7-21, 2001, p.7.

only 15 councils. In recent years the provision for bi-annual council has been transformed into triennial. However, the last council was held in 1997. In all the councils the business-as usual was that the councillors authorised party chief Sheikh Hasina to select members of the central secretariat and central committee members⁹. Since then five years have been lapsed but no council has held as yet. Besides, there is a provision for special council in every year but that was also not followed. According to Article 22 of AL constitution all the office bearers of the party including party chief are to be elected by the councillors in the council session. (Nonetheless, from 1981 to 1997 there have been four councils and in every council Sheikh Hasina has been elected unopposed and on approval of all. Besides, Sheikh Hasina was empowered to nominate rest of the office bearers. This is merely a breach of party constitution. As a result the scope has been allegedly created to include underqualified, sycophants or turn the party into a kinship structure. Observers view the flow of democracy has been grievously hampered as a result of such acts.

Article 74(b) of AL's constitution says, "one councilor is to be elected from every metropolitan area and district for every 25000 people for the Council of Bangladesh Awami League." Section (c) of the said article states, if any metropolitan or district unit of the party fails to elect councilors and office bearers for representing any of their local unit (s), a particular number of councilors would be nominated by the central committee.

According to Section (d) of the above Article in AL constitution, in the first session of triennial council, councilors will co-opt 50 persons from the primary members of any unit of the party as members of the Council. Analysts find the elements of non-transparent and self-willed motive of the main leaders. This could be found in the explanation of Article 9 of the constitution. It says, "no allegation can be made regarding nomination, co-option or defective elections in any unit. Awami League council can not be termed as improperly constituted. For that reason none of the above mentioned actions or decisions would be considered as suspended, cancelled,

⁹ See The Bangladesh Times (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 6, 1997, p.1,8.

illegal or malafied to party constitution.” As a consequence of change in the party constitution, political analysts’ view, party structure has been opened for undemocratic exercise and practice.

A special Article had been added with the AL constitution in 1974’s council. It said, “none of the central, district or Thana level office bearers of the organisation can take cabinet membership or any other post in the government. However, if anyone is given such a post, s/he must resign from his/her position in the party within one month. Otherwise the post will be fallen vacant automatically, after one month.” As soon as this rule was added the then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman had given up the post of AL’s Presidency. Accordingly, A H M Kamruzzaman renounced from the post in the cabinet and took up the charge of party President through election. However, this article was omitted in 1992’s council. According to well-versed quarter this article was very much important for the sake of healthy democratic politics and to make the party strong and dynamic. Article 12 of the AL constitution says, “Bangladesh Awami League will maintain coordination between executive committee and council and will meet at least twice a year.”

According to section 24(c) of the AL constitution general secretary will convene the meeting of the secretariat at least once in every month. Every department of the secretariat is said to be met once in every three months according to section (f) of this article. It is known that none of these rules and regulations is compiled. Article 26(a) of Awami League constitution says, “those members of the Awami League who are elected as the members of *Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad*, they are bound to constitute *Awami League Parliamentary Party* and elect its own office bearers. Every member of the parliamentary party will be obliged to honour the party decision. The decision of the majority members in the Parliamentary Party will be considered as the party decision. However, this parliamentary party can not take any decision against the basic principles or any section of the party constitution.

Article 26 (c) says of the party constitution, “the members of the Awami League Parliamentary Party are obliged to act according to the advice and instructions of the

party executive committee.” Article 26 (a) and (c) are considered as contradictory and undemocratic. Mentionably, powers and functions of the party president have been further enhanced by another article of the party constitution. Article 24(a) says, “President will be regarded as party chief. She can give ruling regarding explanation of any section of the party constitution. The Members of the secretariat will be accountable to the President for their activities. President will constitute department (secretariat department) sub-committees. President will take necessary measures and present it in the next meeting of the executive committee in case of failure of any members of the executive committee to discharge his/her responsibilities.”

But what is to be done in case of any differences of opinion being maintained by any office bearer against the party president’s explanation about any section of the constitution and on any ruling by the president, those are not mentioned in the constitution. Besides, what can be done, in case of any of the president’s ruling resulting into despotism, that is not also mentioned in the party constitution. Accountability of the secretariat members to the president and proviso to take necessary measures by the president against any office bearer for being failed to discharge responsibilities (though there is rule to present it in the meeting of the executive committee) consolidate and strengthen one person’s power in the party and encourage personal veneration in the party structure. The powers of the president provided by the constitution, such as nomination of 21 members national committee, 29 members executive committee, members of the subject committee, and constituting different sub-committees, are hardly conducive for practicing democracy within the party. Even in some cases though the members of the presidium are said to be consulted, this is not followed in most part.

Article 12 (f) of the AL constitution says, “the national committee of Bangladesh Awami League will consider the appeal and take final decision regarding punishment to any member by the executive committee.”

But there is hardly any instance regarding effective implementation of this section or consideration of any appeal of punishment against any member. There is

provision to constitute parliamentary Board, as per Article 25 of party constitution, for nominating party candidates to all national level elections including parliamentary elections. In three sections of the party constitution, the rules and regulations for nomination of the party candidates for parliamentary elections have been mentioned in details, but for all nominations the decision of the party chief is final. Everything depends upon her liking or disliking. There is no specific procedure mentioned in the party constitution to remove president, any member of the presidium and general secretary of the party. As a result, position and power of some of the party high-ups in the party structure have become permanent and unchallenged.

Even though, constitution and decision making process of the Awami League have been claimed to be democratic by its leaders of different level including party chief Sheikh Hasina, the practical situation is quite different. Whatever may be mentioned in the constitution, the decision of the party chief is final.

Jatiya Party: In 24 March 1982 after removing President Justice Abdus Sattar, General Ershad captured the state power. General Ershad established 'JANADAL' in 1984 and later on Jatiya Party in 1986. Thus discarding the army uniform he dressed up with democracy. The Jatiya party is being conducted under the sole leadership of Ershad since its inception. However, due to growing internal schism, the party has been splitted into three. Apart from Ershad's own faction, Sheikh Shahidul Islam and Anwar Hossain Manju, and Dr. Abdul Matin and Naziur Rahaman Manjur are leading the two other factions of the Jatiya Party. The constitution of the Jatiya Party is also one-centric and un-democratic. Section 21 of the party constitution narrates the power of the party chairman. Some important aspects of this section are 1. Party Chairman will be regarded as the chief of the party. He is the symbol of unity, solidarity and status of party, 2. As the chief, the chairman will control, supervise and coordinate, all party activities and for this purpose the activities of national council, presidium, central working committee, special committee, parliamentary Board, parliamentary party and other committees nominated by the chairman, will be controlled, supervised and coordinated by chairman, 3. If deems necessary the chairman can suspend the activities of presidium, central working committee and other committees nominated by the chairman, or instruct for reelection after dissolving them.

Section 23 of the JP constitution says that a parliamentary Board will be constituted with 11 members. Party chairman and Secretary General will be ex-officio chairman and member-secretary of the Board. The remaining 9 members of the board will be nominated by the chairman and if parliamentary board fails to finalise the nomination of any candidate, decision of the chairman will be final in that case.' Section 43 has mentioned about the implementation of chairman special power. It says that if chairman feels necessary, he can constitute, re-constitute, dismiss and abolish the committees of every level. According to the power rendered by this section he can discharge and use the responsibility of parliamentary board. To exercise his power in this regard he will take advice from the presidium.

Even though some of the sections in party constitution have mentioned about accepting majority opinion, but amidst power of the chairman the effectiveness of democratic rules remains a far cry.

Leftist Parties: Once the younger generation of the country had involved with the left parties. The main attraction was the ideology and programme of these parties that trend is dead or very meager. All left parties of the country are based on different persons rather than on ideology or party. For example Workers Party means Rashed Khan Menon, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) means Khalequzzaman and A F M Mahabubul Haque, GONO FORUM means Dr. Kamal Hossain. On the other hand Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) is conducted in the name of Mujahidul Islam and Manzurul Ahsan Khan.

Islamic Parties: There are as many as 30 *Islam Pachand* (pro-Islamic) political parties in the country. They conduct their party activities in the name of Islam. Their main capital is the religious beliefs of majority people. Analysts are yet to find out the relevance of democracy in the religion based politics. However, the prominent among these religion based parties, Jamaat-e-Islami had got 18 seats in the 5th JS but in the later elections (i.e. in 7th and 8th Parliamentary general elections) a declining trend could be observed in the rate of votes received by the JIB.

These Islamist Parties want to establish Islamic rule, so apparently their situation is not nearer to democracy. Democracy is the rule by the people. The people are considered as the source of all power. On the other hand the beliefs, ideologies and functioning of the Islamist parties are based on the holy Quran and Sunnah. In this sense, observers' view, "conflict between democracy and Islamic way of rule is sharp."¹⁰

Article 5 of section 2 of the party constitution says, "the party will not accept any one as Badsha (emperor), king of the kings and holder of the sovereign power. The party will not accept none, from its own, as the competent authority to order and to prohibit, will not recognise anyone as the self-sufficient legislator and regulator and disagree to recognise all such obligations which are not based on the loyalty to Allah and are not created on the basis of abiding of the law of Allah. Because in real sense, none except the Allah has the absolute ownership, of thy whole empire and the right of Sovereignty over the universe."

Even though the leaders of the Jamaat talk about democracy in different times but according to its party constitution there is hardly any scope to practice democracy in the party. However the party constitution also speaks for making and implementing decisions through central *Rukan* (members) conference, central *Majlish-e-Sura*, central working council and executive council etc., however, the real situation is quiet different. Until very recent past controversial politician Golam Azam had grappled the post of the party chief, Amir. Due to his age he has been replaced by Matiur Rahaman Nizami. The supremacy of a particular person concerned has also got paramount importance in other Islamist parties. Accordingly, *Islamic Shashantantra Andolan* is conducted according to wish of the Peer of Charmonai, *Islami Ain Bastobayan Andolan* in the name Shayekhul Hadith Azizul Haque and *Islami Oikya Jote* in the name of Mufti Fazlul Haque Aminee. The conditions of other parties are also same. Nonetheless, the role and activities of most of the Islami Parties in 1971 are criticised because they had played a very controversial role during the war of liberation in 1971.

¹⁰ Kanak Sarwar, "*Ganatantra charcha, deshe o dale*". (The practice of democracy in the country and in

In a recent study researchers¹¹ found no internal democracy in the political parties of Bangladesh. The findings of the study are also similar with our findings. Based on interviews the said study found,

“A large majority of the leaders firmly uphold the view that the political parties lack internal democracy. Almost half of them admit that this condition exists even in their own parties. Nearly half of the party leaders attribute this lack to personalism, the excessive domination over the parties by the individual leaders. This indirectly confirms the widespread prevalence of patron-clientalism within the political parties.”

It is clear as daylight that a principal cause, perhaps even the most important cause, of the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh is the moribund political leadership. The main cause of such leadership could also be found in the absence of democracy within the political parties of the country.

The lack of internal democracy within the political parties very often lead to internal feud.¹² The internal feud in the party and its student's front is nothing new. Moreover, the internal feud further aggravated with the feud over the money and power between the activists. The internecine feud between the party activists lead to murder. As the standard practice the party leadership disown them as party men because the victims were also involved such crimes, mentionably, for the sake of the party. However, rivalry and gangsterism by the party men-of rising crimes in the capital and across the country.

Lack of tolerance: The relationship between democracy and tolerance is a fundamental indicator of the dynamics of a democratic society. Democracy does not mean tyranny of the majority, though the political leaders of Bangladesh seem to interpret democracy as such. Democracy is rule of people which comprises views of both majority and minority section of people. Although rulers elected democratically had the support of majority people behind them but this entitlement does not allow them to ignore the views of minority who were and are part of that very people. A

the party), in *The Pakkik Janakantha* 28 (The fortnightly Janakantha, Dhaka), August 7-21, pp 8-9.

¹¹ Shamsul I Khan, S. Aminul Islam and M. Imdadul Haque, *Political Culture...* op cit

¹² See for instances of such event's report in any daily newspapers of the country. A report in this respect can be seen in *The New Nation*, Dhaka, May 13, 2002, p.1, 11

democratic society must be a tolerant society. But why the society must tolerate? Voltaire, father of modern enlightened rationalism said, "Toleration is the necessary consequence of realising our human fallibility: to err is human, and we do it all the time. So let us pardon each other's follies. This is the first principle of natural right." It is because of human foibles and limitations of man made institutions we must practice tolerance. Ensuring individual human dignity is the most sacrosanct deal of a democracy, not social harmony, not material progress, not glory of the state etc.

The right to express and the right to do politics are some of the basic principles upon which a democratic society stands. It is because of individual dignity that humanity has rejected other forms of intolerant systems and time and again fought for a democracy. Which as Churchill had famously said, is not the perfect system but is the best form of government and society we have found yet.

But democracy is not just a matter of systems; mostly it is a matter of culture. Democratic institutions become useless monuments when there is no democratic culture present in the society.

In Bangladesh democratic values have still not taken roots despite more than a quarter century of, on and off democratic process. The voters and leaders of Bangladesh portray democracy as some kind of symbolic process that depends upon smooth functioning of perennial pageants of mass democracy. They have not yet realised that it is the democratic values that institutionalise democracy, not vice versa. Analysts termed the behaviour of politicians of Bangladesh as 'hypocritical'¹³. They argued that the prospects of democracy in the country have become grim in the hands of persons and organisations upon whom the people have time and again entrusted the responsibility to institutionalise democracy. If the spirit of the religious intolerant parties lies in the medieval age of clerical theocracy, then the spirit of other major parties belong to the ancient age of divine kings and emperors. It is principally the fault of these political organisations that a democratic culture and mindset are yet to get a firm foothold in the country.

Lack of patriotic and experienced Leadership: The key to success of democracy is the patriotic, experienced and appropriate leadership. In case of present form of democracy in Bangladesh, the main leadership of the country rests upon Prime Minister and leader of the opposition. Jennings (1961:203) said,

‘The Prime Minister’s power in office depends in part on his personality in part on his personal prestige and in part upon his party support.’

On the other hand, ‘the Prime Minister meets the convenience of the leader of the opposition and the leader of the opposition meets the convenience of the government.’ The political quagmire in Bangladesh is impeding political leadership. Leaders’ energies are expended on survival and consolidation exercise. There is no time or energy left for public services to the nation.

The basic conditions for the success of parliamentary democracy are the qualities of the head and heart of the members of the parliament. In a parliamentary democracy, an MP should be ideally elected not for how much he or she has been able to spend for his or her election purpose or the ability to provide generously to party funds. He or she should be really elected for how much sincerity and devotion he or she brings in promoting and taking case of the all round interests constituencies and the nation as a whole.

The political leaders of Bangladesh possess inflexible attitude and uncompromising behaviour. They have taken a toll of the country, causing gridlock in the parliament and making mockery of democracy. (Both the leaders of two main political parties of the country have taken to the streets to resolve their differences on issues of crucial national interest rather than addressing and resolving those in the parliament in democratic and civilised manne.) Compromise, reconciliation and mutual respect for all should replace their position of “my way or no way”.

The political leaders seem to be impervious to contemporary criticism, because the layers of the society in under-developed countries have not the elasticity to outlast political stubbornness.

¹³ See Shafiqur Rahaman, “Tolerating the intolerant”, in Dhaka Courier (Weekly English newsmagazine, Dhaka) November 5, 1999, pp.30-31.

Bangladesh have carried the burden of the leadership of LDC's for too long. There is nothing to bask or feel good about it. Ironically, despite frequency of electoral competition political leaders have not been successful in promoting an environment that would encourage the growth of democratic norms and civility. Political aspiration for democracy has not received a corresponding support from the elected political leadership. Therefore, a strong tendency towards illiberal usage of democracy continues to threaten prospects of democratic consolidation. These contradictory processes are transforming the political landscape.

Although the constitution of 1972 embodied the core of aspirations of a new nation had plenty of vision in it. It has been a leadership problem amidst plenty of leaders around. Leaders in the country have but a statesman has been missing in the procession of leaders. Charles Peter O'Donnell (1984)¹⁴ said,

"Limited experience with the complexities of the modern world 'makes the tasks of the Bangalis and their modernising governments vastly more difficult than those faced by older democratic nations. And like many peoples before, they also have encountered the age-old political problem of translating their aspirations into workable policies and programmes."

A seasoned analyst in Bangladesh politics opined that the first debacle of the country was an underutilisation of the spirit of national independence at its peak-time. The second failure was the virtual inability to put the national homogeneity to an effective use.¹⁵ Seldom has there been a nation, demographically, ethnically and socially so homogenous as Bangladesh and yet politically so riven and divisive as she happened to be. However, the country can not produce good, honest and educated politicians. They do not take lessons from history and this ignorance finally puts them into a controversial position in the history. For example, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman moved from a very prominently start to end in a mess. His whole life was an endless struggle for democracy but ended up in BKSAL. Ziaur Rahaman had personal honesty but was not farsighted. Ershad turned out to be an autocratic. Justice Sattar knew no politics and ended in failure. Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina led a bunch of weird

¹⁴ See Charles Peter O'Donnell, *Bangladesh Biography of a Muslim Nation*, Westview Press/Boulder and London, 1984.

¹⁵ See Editorial, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 15, 2001, p.4.

politicians. They only excelled in Hartals. They hardly treat the people with due honour and dignity.

Bad leadership is and has been a chronic disease in Bangladesh and sadly will remain to be so until the people refuse to support those who fail in proper leadership. The plight of Bangladesh owes its origin to the political legacy, to start with, ruled by a set of leaders who were largely the product of pre-independence dynamics of our politics. With their mindset attuned only to agitational politics, these leaders could not prove themselves equal to hard tasks Bangladesh, as a free nation was to undertake. They seldom showed a responsible conduct of their leadership and took this country more as an inheritance of a real state. To make things worse their politics soon aberrated paving the path of an extra-constitutional take-over of the country. The changed dispensation was equally bad. Two military rulers of the country bred a new brand of politicians who were essentially opportunists and sycophants. They climbed up the ladder of their political career only by paying fealty to their military master.

But nothing could be worse than what was being witnessed after 1990 when the country was put back on constitutional track. It was like a covenant broken a covenant to restore an order in the country and ensure a rule of law. But both were ruined. Together the politicians under the labels of the Awami League, the BNP, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islam etc. sheltered the prospects of those objectives. While the country bleeds in the grip of ever escalating violence, lawlessness, and routine murders the BNP complacently presided over its government and the opposition Awami League scores political mileage at the cost of human miseries. The political unrest since 1990's democratic transition had been fomented by the ruling party and the opposition parties violate all norms of human dignity. The violence abetted by the two major political parties never has been and is still not in the interest of the people and the country. Many people have questioned on the qualifications of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition along with the majority of the MPs to govern the country. Prior to their current positions, they were only either housewives (the two top leaders) or businessmen. Without belittling their previous positions it has been observed that 'governing a country is much more complicated' as for the people's expectation from

the government are security, economic and political stability, and a sense of national identity. However, the government has hardly addressed these complex problems.¹⁶

The consequences of their politics either in the government or in the opposition were writ large on the face of the nation. Anyone trying to sum up the problems of Bangladesh objectively, can not fail to come to the conclusion that it is the poverty of the country's political leadership which is posing the greatest obstacle to the forward march of the country.¹⁷

Only in 1991, Bangladesh has got rid of an autocratic government, for holding a free and fair election and putting into power a duly elected government which derived its powers fully from the consent of the people, a strong opposition, a lively parliament and a remarkably free press. The country's political system appeared revamped. Political stability so long has been elusive, appeared to be a reality. The positive developments during this period have been widely recognised. Accordingly, the foreign investors have been coming forward to invest in the country. The country was bounced for a newfound confidence about herself along with its politics and economy. The cumulative results of all these factors was a newfound confidence about the country and its politics and economics. However, the country seemed ready to take off for a better future. But by their utter lack of vision and ability, a section of politicians who helped to rouse hopes about Bangladesh only some years ago, are now pushing the country irreversibly towards a hopeless and ruinous future. The failings of this section of political leaders are indeed too great. They are proud that they adorn the positions of a national leadership. But they do not realise that by their actions they are losing claims to such eminence in people's eyes.

Hartal: It is argued that during the Pakistan period *hartal* was called for the greater cause of the country. People spontaneously observed it. But in independent Bangladesh *hartal* is being enforced on people through threats and intimidation. If anyone defies it then he is most likely to be sent to hospital dead or injured. Vehicles are damaged or burnt to

¹⁶ See Mojjamal Hossein in "To The Editor" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), April 9, 2001, p.4.

¹⁷ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 8, 1994, p.5.

ashes. Frequent hartals cripple the economy of the country, which is already in a shambles. As the political leaders call hartal for their own interest or for silly matter, the hartal has lost its importance.

Bangladesh is a hartal prone country. Opposition parties of the country frequently call hartal to exhibit their democratic right. They never think about the fate of the poor people and those who live on their daily earnings. These unfortunate people are the real victims of *hartal*.

Unquestionably, the industrial revolution provided the basis of modern democracy. Nations, which have not yet been able to welfare and education, are no fertile grounds for democracy. They lack the critical mass of educated voters to firmly uphold democratic principles and, thus, provide the essential intellectual kernel around which appropriate social mobilisation could take place to permit a natural growth of democratic institutions, without which the system of government by public opinion, what democracy is, difficult to be solidly rooted. The weak national economy of Bangladesh must be allowed to grow and prosper unhindered in the interest of democracy as well. Frequent hartals, in whatever pretext, is a negation of that important national cause.

The chief of the World Bank's Resident Mission in Dhaka had warned that the country's export performance in the six months from July 1994 to December 1994 had plummeted and been running only two per cent above that of the corresponding period of 1993.¹⁸ The adverse impact of frequent hartals on the poor national economy can be measured in quantitative terms. The Statistics of the Export Promotion Bureau confirms that the export earning in July-August 1994 had been down by 5.77 per cent compared to that in the same period of 1993-1994 financial year. Reportedly, the downturn in earning had prompted the authorities to reduce the estimate of export earning of the 1994-1995 fiscal year from 3.5 billion dollars to 3.01 billion dollars. The businessmen concerned borne the brunt individually and the nation collectively even though the poor suffered most because of a reduction of the purchasing power of their money on account of an adverse exchange rate, made inevitable by an aggravated import-export imbalance.

¹⁸ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 14, 1994, p.5.

Economy does not abide by politics in the sense that it is not unresponsive to political manipulation. Production losses and inability to despatch consignments of goods for export on time on account of hartals may cause shipment problems to frustrate the commitment to foreign buyers on shipment schedule. It may result in a substantial loss of foreign markets for raw materials and primary products whose exports globally are more numerous in these days of stiff competition. The nation will suffer on a permanent basis if the markets are captured by rival producing nations taking the advantage of possible irregularity in supply of the export products. The entire period since the restoration of democracy has been marked by one movement after another led or aided by the principal opposition. Industrial production and other economic activities suffered for these movements.¹⁹ Hartals, work stoppages and demonstrations are counted as major impediments to the country's economic development. The World Bank (WB) in its April 2001 periodic economic update²⁰ said,

“...Disruption caused by repeated political agitation has been a serious constraint to productivity in Bangladesh.”

The WB has also come up with revelation that the days lost due to *hartals* every year have more than doubled in the 1990s compared to the number of such days in the 1980s.

“In the 1980s, Bangladesh annually lost an equivalent of 21 full working days to hartals. This increased to as many as 47 full equivalent working days in the 1990s.”

The World Bank estimate says the country bleeds US \$ 50 million due to *hartal* a day. “This implies a loss of an approximately 5 per cent of GDP if, on an average, 45 equivalent working days are shed a year.”

There is a strong and clear public opinion against shutdowns and other forms of strike as means of showing dissatisfaction against any decision of the government, which according

¹⁹ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 1, 1994, p. 5.

²⁰ See *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 3, 2001, p. 6.

to the oppositions views detrimental to public interest.²¹ Despite the public outcry against “hartal” the opposition enforced “workstoppages”.

Shortage in rule of law: Without rule of law democracy can not be flourished. The basic implied meaning of rule of law is that both the rulers and the ruled will abide by law. Accordingly, the rule of law has two aspects:

- (i) The people or the ruled will only comply the dictates of law, and not that of any person, whenever he/she might be, in the system of government.
- (ii) The government itself will be conducted in accordance with law, and will be subjected to the legal system in all its dimensions.

According to Farid Zakaria, democracy marries two closely related ideas. “It is liberal because it draws on philosophic strain, beginning with the Greeks, that emphasizes individual liberty. It is constitutional because it rests on the tradition, beginning with the Romans, of the rule of law.”²²

However, in Bangladesh instead of adhering to the rule of law the ruling and opposition parties have been indulging in terrorism, violence and *hartals*. Analysts argued that adherence to the rule of law separates society from the jungle. The eroding law and order in the country has enough indications of a catastrophic scene. The mere failures arouse suspicion in the minds of people generating a deep sense of dismay for the mockery of the systems of governance. While pondering over the issue it raises the very basic questions as to what went wrong in the political process. Absence of rule of law is the key reason behind the disorder. The slow progress of implementation of law hinders the process of rule of law. Analysts argued that the law enforcement agencies would never be able to discharge their duties properly unless political interference stops. According to a report by Transparency International Bangladesh, the anti-corruption bureau had received 4535 complaints between 1994 and 2000 and only 9.2 per cent of them finally land in courts. On the other hand 59 per cent of the complaints had been pending.

²¹ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 11, 1997, p.5.

²² Farid Zakaria in *Foreign Affairs*, November 1997, p.26, quoted in Emajuddin Ahamed, “Government by law and not by men”, in *Dhaka Courier*, 10 November 2000, pp.128-130.

The rule of law in the country is tampered by the corrupt practices of the administration, law enforcement agencies, and the court system. Corruption limits country's ability to deliver justice. It favours the rich and the party or people in power. There have been no instances of corruption case against any sitting minister/MP or party in power. At present the rule of law in the country simply does not work. Usually, people who are corrupt are also powerful. Many governments of the third world countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America demonstrate this. Bangladesh is no exception. The powerful made their fortune through corruption. The system benefits them. They will resist any change that affects the status quo. Thus the issue of Separation of Judiciary from the Executive is being thwarted in every step to implement.

There is a broad based consensus that many of the existing laws have become archaic and in effective in the modern age when aspects of life, economy and the society have undergone breathtaking changes. These laws need to be replaced and fresh code adopted speeding up the process of justice. More importantly, these are required to tackle the changing lifestyle of people and the nature of crime. The British colonial rulers originally drafted many of these laws before 1947 obviously to deny proper justice to the people they had ruled with an iron hand. During the neo-colonial exploitation under the Pakistani regime the people of the formerly East Pakistan were repressed politically and economically with the help of the same laws which the then Pakistani rulers had used for realising their goals of subjugating the Bengalis. The country's Constitution had been framed by the first post independence government. It guaranteed equal rights and opportunities to all citizens irrespective of social and economic status and creed. But successive regimes introduced such acts of law, which had violated some of the very basic rights of the people.²³ Besides the question for separation of judiciary, appointment of ombudsman are pending. The appointment of ombudsman will be a step towards enhancing the accountability and transparency of the government.

The rule of law is not only a safeguard to democracy, but can also ensure stability of democracy, development and prosperity. There is no denying the fact that rule of law and independence of judiciary are the pre-conditions for institutionalizing democracy.

²³ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 10, 1997, p.5.

The struggle for independence has been a long and arduous one. The democratically elected parliamentary form of government is a product of that struggle. The need of the time is to face the formidable challenge of making the hard-earned independence meaningful to the common people. In the interest of rule of law, there is also urgent need to reform and update many of the existing laws, some of which are there since the Mughal era. These might have been useful in the past, but need to be reformed to suit the changing needs of the laws to make them operational and effective under existing circumstances are taken the better. Reforms have always been key to development and progress. Unfortunately, reforms have been slow to come in developing countries like Bangladesh, which needs them most to speed up progress. There are serious flaws with the judicial system of Bangladesh. The lower judiciary suffers from lack of logistical support to professional competence to absence of high moral conduct. The issue of personal integrity of the judges is no longer beyond public scrutiny. Then there is the question of mountain high backlog of cases in all the Courts. The judicial process appears like an endless dark tunnel, which prevents people from coming to its door. All this necessitates a through reform of the judicial system. To bring that about the executive and the judicial branches of the state must work together and not against each other. The state of affairs in the judicial functions is very deplorable. Lacs of cases are pending in trial, appeal and other stages in Courts and tribunals and the backlogs are almost impossible to clear in foreseeable future.²⁴ Law has time and again been amended to fix time for trial, appeal and revision but with no effect so far. Trend of ruling the people by the law to deal with political adversaries has caused to add to the existing load on the judiciary in subordinates and superior Courts.

Compared to development in different social development indicators, the overall law and order situation could not keep in pace. Day-by-day, law and order situation has been deteriorating. The pages of newspapers were covered with a number of news on terrorism. The people were passing their days, with deep anxiety as incidents of extortion, snatching, toll collection, dacoities have been increasing alarmingly. The police is mainly responsible to maintain law and order situation. With the trend of this deteriorating law and order situation, the police is also finding it difficult to bring the situation under its full

²⁴ See Wg. Cdr. M. A. Aziz Khan (Rtd), "We and Our Rule of Law-XIV", *Observer Magazine*, July 13,

control. Whenever police achieve some success in bringing the situation under its control, one/two incident done by few of its disruptive element and corrupt staff shades off its image and put the entire department into a big embarrassment. It's very pity to learn that the occasional involvement of few police personnel in committing crimes and terrorist activities are also appearing in the newspaper.

Day-by-day the magnitude of these anti-social and terrorist activities had been increasing. Because of their anti-social activities people virtually became vexed with their activities.²⁵

Judicial redress is limited and influence of the executive on the subordinate judiciary, which most people access, is expected. The legal procedure is so lengthy and expensive that seeking justice is beyond the means of most except the wealthy.

Violence has become extreme and organised. At every level, whether in conducting business, personal matters or politics, violence is a necessary if not sufficient condition. It's so accepted that it's barely discussed. *Mastans* are no longer a social deviant but a professional category in a state where violence is openly used to manage various contentious issues at the public and personal level. These divisions between those in control and those who are not appear to be irreversible. Till evidence is provided it will remain as the dominant thought of the ruled.

Non-implementation of ruling party's pledge: The ruling BNP during its tenure from 1991-1996, scarcely could take decisions on various important issues and commitments given to the people even in nearly five years since its take over in 1991, which had created resentment also in its rank and file. Resolution of these issues (as has been mentioned in Chapter VIII) had remained to be accomplished. Sources said that each ministry had been facing shortage of officials. Law and order problem, load shedding of electricity, growing incidents of corruption and extortion etc. had also made the party men and people in general frustrated. However, the government had been suffering from indecision and making unnecessary delay in resolving vital issues although it had absolute majority.

2001, pp.29-30.

²⁵ See S.M.Khalequezzaman, "Local Initiatives to Prevent Terrorism", in *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 14, 2001, p.5

Some observers found²⁶ that there was 'no dynamism' in the government due to lack of coordination, indecision, differences of opinion and undue interference by some influential persons from behind the scene. It was also alleged that the ministers could not infuse dynamism in their respective ministries because of stagnation in the functioning of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and government's dependence on a few top bureaucrats. The ministers were not getting timely decision, support and cooperation because most of the officials of the PMO are inefficient. Even the urgent files did not get clearance instantly and used to take at least a week. It was also alleged that the political appointees had become more powerful than bureaucrats had. As a result frustration loomed large in every nook and corner of the country. Accordingly, political instability found a strong source to be manifested.

Non-implementation of government orders and parliamentary decisions, non-adherence of resolutions taken in the parliamentary committee meetings:

Immediate after the collapse of Ershad regime and under the auspices of Justice Shahabuddin led caretaker government in 1990s a task force prepared a document, for the nation to consider an alternative way of governance. The suggestions were never implemented. The constitution of Bangladesh has assured the social and economic rights of the citizens. These social and economic rights of the citizens can help reducing much of the constraints of institutionalizing democracy in Bangladesh. But the perennial question is "Has the state fulfilled the constitutional obligation to assure every citizen a life of dignity?" The impunity of the social and political climate and its decaying effect on the creativity of the people present a depressing thought. Much has been done and achieved but in the area of fulfilling the government's declared decisions, performance falls greatly short of expectations. The crisis of Bangladesh politics is widening gap between the base of the polity and its structures. Both political and economic processes have brought section of the peripheral and deprived social strata into the active political community. But they have garnered very little in terms of benefits.

²⁶ See report titled "Rancour in BNP over promises not kept", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 1, 2002, p.1, 11.

Observers very often express their utter frustration over the non-compliance with the law enforcers of the country. The observation of a noted Barrister, a cabinet member of the BNP cabinet during 1991-1996 is worth mentioning,

“We speak a lot about different theories and measures to solve some problems. We are framing various laws for solving different problems including the traffic congestion, but those were not implemented as the law enforcing agencies were not implementing it properly. The sense of accountability has completely gone away from all sectors of the country from administration to law enforcers. Violation of law had obsessed the minds of the citizens of all walks.

The political commitment for establishment of the rule of law or implementing any law and building a political consensus on different national issues, would surely fail.²⁷”

A news item of national English Daily Newspaper *The Daily Star* (May 9,2002), can be mentioned in this regard. The news titled “non-implementation of decisions irks cabinet body on law and order” reads as,

“The cabinet committee in a meeting at the secretariat was frustrated at the performance of the law enforcing agencies. While reviewing its previous decisions to curb crime, the committee regretted that most of its 100 decisions are yet to be executed.²⁸”

Thus the *non-implementation of government orders and parliamentary decisions, non-adherence of resolutions taken in the parliamentary committee meeting* signifies the institutional weaknesses of the country as a whole. Accordingly, this has become a major source of institutionalisation constraints of democracy in Bangladesh.

Power politics involving students: In different crisis moments the student community came forward and played major and leading roles in the past. The language movement of 1952, six point’s movement in 1966, 11-point and mass movement in 1969,

²⁷ Former Information Minister (1991-1996) and present (2002) Communication Minister (2002...) Barrister Nazmul Huda told a seminar on “Problems of traffic congestion and their solution: the context of Metropolitan Dhaka” on May 7, 2002, see *The Independent* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 8, 2002, p.16.

²⁸ See *The Daily Star*, May 9, 2002, p 1, 11.

they have destroyed the honour of the university which is no longer the centre-point of knowledge and glory. It is no longer the epicentre of the nations hopes and aspirations.²⁹

On the other hand if student politics mean might is right, becoming lackeys of the political parties, doing anti-social activities and destroying educational atmosphere, these negative aspects of student politics are harmful for institutionalizing democracy in the country.

Student politics may be a different kettle of fish but it has same deleterious effects as hartal and perhaps in a more lasting sense. Student politics has long degenerated into violence and terror vitiating the educational atmosphere in campuses. Very often the nexus between student politics and national politics aggravates law and order situation beyond control. Teachers wittingly or unwittingly, align themselves with particular groups of students and thereby compromise their academic neutrality and even serious commitment.

Violence, terrorism, deteriorating law and order situation: Since 1990's transition to democracy terrorism and violence of harder stuff have erupted in quick succession across the country. It is an anguish to wake up every morning with the ghastly news of double or triple murder. One is in perpetual anxiety for his security in a state of lawlessness. The traders as well as ordinary citizens were unsafe with the extortionists stalking in their midst. Worse still, most of these crimes was committed with the knowledge, acquiescence, and patronisation of the politicians and often as a part of their party strategy. As a result, there is virtually none to turn to for Justice, protection and safety. The megalomaniac politicians blast each other with their frenzied diatribes. But while politicians vent their primordial hate against each other through bloody means, there are countless innocent victims who get caught in the crossfire. These victims are the ordinary people, the desperate rickshapuller who has no choice but to take his rickshaw out on a hartal day or the little girl whose curiosity about an interesting looking tin on the street, results in her limbs blowing up into pieces.

Beside the young man or teenager who is lured into the deadly web of political parties, who help to carry out their evil plans for a few bucks or just to feel 'important' in a

²⁹ See Md. Shah Alam, "Banning student politics". in Dhaka Courier (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) January 4, 2002, p 15.

they have destroyed the honour of the university which is no longer the centre-point of knowledge and glory. It is no longer the epicentre of the nations hopes and aspirations.²⁹

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²⁹ See Md. Shah Alam, "Banning student politics", in Dhaka Courier (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) January 4, 2002, p.15.

mismanagement and dubious practices. Then the government reacts. But a reactive government can not perform efficiently and this issue is not even discussed publicly.

The stance of the ministers gives a free reign to the bureaucrats, some of whom do not work in the public interest. Thus the breeding ground for sycophancy and nepotism is encouraged. The civil service will take the initiative for processing the proposed administrative reforms, because the current statusquo, a legacy from the colonial past, would be disturbed. It is a fight between political will and bureaucratic red-tapism.

The ministers have to be critical in a constructive way, and should by the problems before public for information, awareness and understanding. This aspect of review is being generally avoided. What we hear is praise for policies, without statistical backup and support. The teething troubles are hardly mentioned. The positive side is well publicised and the weakness is not exposed. Such exercises generally take place in the parliament, but in Bangladesh Parliament has become the weakest point in governance, due to political immaturity. The right political culture is yet to root in Bangladesh.

The whole vicious environment of government has to be replaced. But there is no initiative in this direction. What is seen and heard are acerbic attacks on the opposition and past regimes, transforming the buck.³¹

Problems created by ruling party as well as opposition parties: The role of opposition is not to oppose every move of the government irrespective of merit. There has to be bipartisan agreement on matters of overriding national interest. Whatever may be the motive, the government's loud thinking. Indeed, the glorious celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of Bangladesh is a bit muted by the fact that even after a success in democratic transition in 1990's, democracy is held hostage to irreconcilable differences between the ruling and opposition parties. No signs of political reconciliation are to be seen any where, and as if that's not enough, the ambience of positive expectations generated by the general elections in June 1996 looked marred by an impatient recourse to reprisals to settle old scores. The country is in a tit-for-tat zone that grows all the time.

The democratic government consists of ruling and opposition parties. But the ruling party by dint of its majority have the scope to do whatever they like, ignoring the opinion of

³¹ See The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 13,2001, p.4

the opposition. The ruling party could have done it more tyrannically if they have absolute majority. The fourth, fifth and thirteenth amendment bills of the Bangladesh constitution were passed in the parliament amidst absolute majority of the ruling party. While the fourth and fifth amendments had created controversies, the 13th amendment of the constitution was passed amidst only BNP with 268 MPs. These MPs were elected in the controversial 6th parliament. However, this controversial 6th parliament passed the much-wanted bill for the non-party caretaker government (NPCTG). Immediate after the passing of the 13th amendment this 6th JS was dissolved. However, apart from these exceptional events, analysts fear about the tyrannical behaviour of the majority party. "Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill alike expressed the concern about the tyranny of the majority."³² Mill understands that class legislation (whatever by majority or institutionally entrenched minority) was one of the major defects of government. In envisaging it as a majority abuse he echoed James Madison's diagnosis of 'the violence' or 'the mischiefs of faction', faction meaning 'a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse...adverse to the right of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.'³³

A strong and organised opposition political party is regarded as the inseparable part for effective functioning of the parliament. Political scientists argued that parliamentary government works best when opposition is able to take concerted action. Sir Ivor Jennings in his *Cabinet Government* said,

"Attacks upon the government and upon individual ministers are the function of the opposition, is to oppose. That duty is the major check which the constitution provides upon corruption and defective administration."³⁴

Harold Laski (1932) said,

"The opposition spends its time in revealing the defects of the government programme."³⁵

³² Charles S. Maier, 'Democracy Since French Revolution', in John Dunn (ed.), *Democracy, The Unfinished Journey 508 BC to A D 1993*, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 125-153(129)

³³ James Madison (1788), *The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, written in Favour of the New Constitution...* (New York) cited by Charles S. Maier, *ibid* p. 131

³⁴ Sir Ivor Jennings, *Cabinet Government* (Cambridge University Press, 1961) p. 499

³⁵ Harold Laski, *Democracy in Crisis* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1932) p. 32.

However, opposition parties in Bangladesh during 1990-1996, frequently walked out from the Parliament. At the same time they boycotted the JS for a long time. They also called frequently hartal to exhibit their democratic right. They never think about the fate of the poor people and those who live on their daily earnings. These unfortunate people are the real victims of hartal. But neither the government nor the opposition parties care about these people and their rights.

The political parties are routinely claim that they are struggling for the welfare of the poor. But in reality, they are only using them to cling to power.

The democratically elected government of 1991-1996 has made a lot of mistakes. They did not treat the opposition with deference, attached no importance to public opinion. They controlled the mass media, used history for their own interest, vitiated the history, inclined with unbridled corruption and nepotism.³⁶ They contemplated to win in the election by using the administration, capture the polling centre with the help of terrorists. They did not comply with the demands for fertilizers of the farmers; the farmers in turn had been killed by bullets during their era. But the democratically elected government has also been defeated and thus overthrown democratically. The BNP government has been replaced in a highly civilised and universally accepted way. During the democratic regime of 1991-1996 the ruling party has 'developed a culture to ignore the opposition'.³⁷ This defiant attitude did not, however, pay off on final count. The ruling and the opposition have viewed from their typical angle and ego. It is alleged that both of them suffer from a false sense of complacency and conceit. However, in fact for a healthy democratic environment a more consummate and pragmatic out look from both the ruling and opposition is needed. There is a historic need for two major parties to see through the menace of the situation obtaining in the society chiefly because of their suicidal stubbornness.

During 1991-1996 the nation has faced many problems, which did not occur during the tenure of other regimes. The ruling party's stands seem, irritating and patronizing. They are the fault finders and are nagging all the time. What they forgot was

³⁶ Syed Monzurul Islam, *Bhuter Mato Amader Pa, Ulto Dige...* (Our leg is on the opposite side like the ghost...), in *Bhorer Kagoj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), April 7, 1999, p.5

³⁷ See A R Shamsul Islam, 'AL-BNP Stand off, How long should people bear the brunt?' in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 23, 1999, p 4.

that it was not possible for all citizens to become the members of ruling party. They did not believe in give and, take, and compromise.

Lack of consensus on basic national issues: Democracy is more than elected government. The principle of democratic governance is to reconciling the conflicting demands of various interest groups. The sine quo non of democracy is a balance between conflict and consensus (Daler and Zeigler 1977; Holden 1974). and agreement to disagree. However, consensus in the sense of 'agreement on fundamentals' would seem to be very important (Holden 1974:188).³⁸ Most analysts would nonetheless assert that the disagreement must not be too deep. Thus most analysts would assert that at last some degree of consensus is a necessary condition for democracy. Ilter Turan (1997)³⁹ tried to equalize the consensus with the theme of political community. By political community he means a group of people who feel and /or accept that they should be living under the same community.

"...Some general acceptance of the social order and the rules necessary to maintain its integrity and coherence...Today consensus appears to be threaten"⁴⁰.

The political foundation of Bangladesh is worse, as this homogenous and compact nation cannot come to a political consensus, internal political strife has been going on for generation. The greatest weakness of Bangladesh politics is egoistic opportunism. Consensus in politics is important. It is regrettable that even after 30 years after independence the country is lacking consensus on basic national issues. The politicians are divided. So are the intellectuals, bureaucrats, doctors and engineers. All including the business community greatly smeared by the default culture. In most fields professionalism has been replaced by cronyism. 'Fundamental areas like quality education, dependable public health system, acceptable nutrition level of the kids and adequate jobs for the educated youth skill remain largely unattained'.⁴¹ The pugnacious sort of political party that exists in Bangladesh could hardly reach in any consensus. Pugnacious posturing by the

³⁸ Barry Holden, *The nature of democracy*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1974, p.188.

³⁹ Tatu Vanhanen p.289.

⁴⁰ Zelmen Cowen, 'The way we live now', in John H. Hallowell (Ed), 'Prospects for Constitutional Democracy, Essays in Honor of R.Taylor Cole, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C. 1976, p.12.

⁴¹ See Editorial in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 14, 2001, p.4.

central leadership has sent wrong signals down to the grassroots.⁴² For explaining the lack of consensus in Bangladesh a noted Bangladeshi economist postulated that ‘the inability of the bourgeois political system to find suitable compromises which would satisfy competitors for scarce resources within the national bourgeoisie leads to a breakdown of political consensus, which in turn threaten the stability of the bourgeois order.’⁴³ The politicians are evading one hot issue: political consensus at the national level. Some observers have termed it as a ‘moral crime to divide the nation and the society on the basis of party philosophies’⁴⁴. The tone of political scenario in Bangladesh is not to agree but to disagree with the political opposition. According to a Bangladeshi political analyst⁴⁵,

“In Bangladesh’s unique form of confrontational political culture, the opposition political party being the minority party faces ruling party’s oppression and discriminatory behaviour. Unfortunately, whoever won in the election s/he found the country as his or her or their own “private property”. The victorious party immediately seemed to get the license of oppression on the defeated minority. Even the whip of law often changes its course according to the wish of the majority. The ruling majority simultaneously becomes the source, interpreter and executive authority of law.

The defeated minority or the opposition political party, on the other hand, is also lagging significant gesture of magnanimity to congratulate the winning party in the election.”

Confrontational nature of politics or political bickering: The politicians of the country very often pursue politics of confrontation. This type of confrontation politics would only bring more miseries for the people. Analysts view that with such types of politics Bangladesh would never be able to bail itself out from the poverty cycle. The politicians are indulging in mudslinging on matters, which have no relevance. However, the highest concentration of self-serving politicians has made a mockery of democracy through the politics of intimidation, vendetta, plunder and crimes of bewildering varieties. Steeped in incessant internal squabbles they have seldom been able to address the hard issues of the

⁴² See The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) August 14, 2001, p 4

⁴³ Rehaman Sobhan, ‘The Crisis of the Bourgeois order and the Growth of Authoritarian Political Trends in Bangladesh’, in Gopal Krishna (ed). ‘Contributions to South Asian Studies 2’. Oxford University Press, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1982, pp 164-213

⁴⁴ A citizen wrote from Dhaka in To The Editor in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 25, 2001, p 4

⁴⁵ Ferdous Ahmed Quareshi, “Sampradaikata: Preshkhit Bangladesh” (Communality: Bangladesh Perspectives) in *The Daily Jugantar* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), 2 January 2001, p.4.

polity like healthcare, drinking water, housing and so on for their country's teeming millions.

(To secure political goals the political parties of the country have been obstinately inciting and resorting confrontation. The political class had hardly showed any sensibility that political confrontation for a longer period could cripple the nation economically and make life for the poor millions increasingly unbearable.)

Political differences, troubles etc. all should normally have limits; political differences are there and will also arise in the future. However, in Bangladesh the differences between the political parties very often lead to intemperance and vendettas. While the ruling party is coming under criticism by the opposition, the government in response resorting repressive steps and cracking down on the opposition.

(The political parties of Bangladesh are fond of washing dirty linen in public while speaking in any gathering; such as scathing criticism of the opposition, without maintaining discretion. It strange to find that there is hardly any mental make-up, there is no place for neutral observers (except in general elections) and the political personalities are stooping down too low while criticising the opponents. Such intolerance at the highest level of public leadership trickles down to the lower levels and makes life miserable in the distorted society. The society has lost the appreciation of a normal life, due to greed and super ambition. There is hardly any way to get rid of paranoid politics. It is argued that the political hate campaign, based on charismatic leadership is partly responsible for this negative attitude. The politicians are hardly doing anything or cannot do anything to get the society out of this rut.

As for the two major parties-Awami League and BNP, political assassinations had taken place in both the camps, but no consideration is being shown for the opposite loss by either party. It is also noticed that the ruling politicians pay scant attention to public or voters feedback in the media, and hardly respond to it but promptly jump at any criticism by the opponents. It is like ultra-sensitiveness on the one side and stone deaf on the other. The politicians talk down to the masses, and do not entertain the citizens at par level to criticism, however naive.

Leading intellectuals⁴⁶ believe that confrontation between the mainstream political parties has retarded the growth of democracy and stood in the way of national interest. The Jatiya Sangsad remains practically 'inoperative' due to combative stance of the political parties.

In a recent study the researchers have found confrontational nature of Bangladesh politics disclose negative of Bengali personality. The study found⁴⁷,

"Nearly all of the leaders are proud of the nation yet 18 per cent of them believe that quarrelsomeness and factionalism constitute a negative trait of Bengali personality".

Under or no representation from the women: Even though two women lead the two major political parties of the country, it does not reveal the actual status of women in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the presence of this two-women in the national politics is viewed by some as the dominance by petulance-with a feminine touch.

Women's place in political decision making is fraught with prejudice. The initial constitutional guarantee of 15 reserved seats has become a milestone to ensure those women never progress beyond a back water vote bank for male members of Parliament. In spite of an active women's movement that had worked out different proportions for women's representation through direct elections to Parliament, and to which the political parties had conceded in their manifestos. The number of reserved seats for women in Parliament to be selected by the members of the Parliament, only bring bigger majority for the ruling party. This process is very much unlikely to facilitate any entry into the legislative process of women who have been active participants in the women's movement for change. This is used as a vote bank, which may be created by recruiting family members. Sisters, mothers, wives of the ruling party's MPs suppose to be the chief beneficiaries.⁴⁸

The gender balance of public power is totally skewed, notwithstanding political tokenism of representation in state institutions and rhetoric borrowed from international

⁴⁶ Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury in an interview with The Daily Star (English daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 29, 2002, p.1, 11.

⁴⁷ See Shamsul I Khan, S. Aminul Islam and M. Imdadul Islam, 'Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic Transition', Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1997.

declarations. Women's personal lives are increasingly becoming subject to political controls and politically instigated violence. Accounts by victims and witness to the post election violence have illustrated the fragility of the lives of Hindu women who became targets or had to take cover in paddy fields to avoid rape. "If gender consensus is not adequately and meaningfully incorporated in all national-level policies, the output is bound to flounder."⁴⁹ Analysts argued that "patriarchy is endemic in almost all policies and mechanism" in the country. Political aspirants cannot disregard the growing negotiating capacity of women voters. For their own political endurance and greater national interest, political leaders must realistically address the needs of women.

Prolonged boycott of Parliament by the opposition: Since the parliament system of government was reintroduced in the country in 1991, the parliament has not been even functioning properly. And parliamentarians, of both the ruling and the opposition, do not disagree, The country has "achieved very little progress in democracy over the last decade," said Advocate Abdul Hamid, Speaker of 7th JS. A BNP parliamentarian in the 5th JS said, that the country has parliamentary democracy only in theory, not in practice. Both the intellectuals and lawmakers maintain that mistrust has overshadowed democracy, with ineffective parliament making the government disproportionately powerful.

There have been regular elections all right; however, people's representation has never been ensured. Opposition lawmakers have shrunk away from their prime duties to debate the legislative on national issues in the 5th, 6th and 7th as well as in the 8th parliament. The main opposition parties were not in the parliament to debate issues and question government actions to ensure accountability and transparency of the executive. Even the parliamentary committees were and still are, non-functional.'

In a democratic system the opposition should be an inseparable part of the government. 'The opposition have to debate the issues raised, form shadow cabinet and question the government.' Both the BNP and AL, while in opposition in the 5th and 7th JS,

⁴⁸ See Hameeda Begum, 'Independence, yes! But liberation? A women's view', in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 25, 2002, p. 18.

⁴⁹Dr. Kaniz Fatima in a speech on "Women and National Development", at a roundtable dialogue in Dhaka on July 21, See report in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 22, 2001, p. 1, 11.

had boycotted the parliamentary proceedings for substantial periods of time. Both had the same excuse-“absence of conducive environment” in the House.

In the 5th parliament the AL started boycotting parliamentary proceedings on March 1, 1994 and stayed away until President Abdur Rahaman Biswas dissolved the Jatiya Sangsad on November 24, 1995.

At one stage, the AL lawmakers, 145 of them resigned en masse, demanding resignation of the government and introduction of non-party caretaker government to conduct elections. The 6th parliament, which was elected through a controversial election and lasted only for 11 days with three working days, passed the 13th amendment to the constitution providing for a non-party caretaker government.

After their electoral debacle in June 1996, the BNP walked out from the very first sitting of the 7th JS without citing any reason. Within 15 months, it started abstaining from the parliamentary proceedings on August 30, 1997 when the House was progressing into its sixth session, and stayed away until March 8, 1998. The BNP placed a 14-point demand before the government to resolve. Eventually, a ruling party initiative, mediated by the Speaker, brought the BNP lawmakers back to the House after 190 days of continuous abstention. “As the opposition themselves were staying away, the parliamentary democracy has become a one-party rule,” said Professor Sirajul Islam Choudhury.⁵⁰

The dysfunction of Parliament is due to the entrenched notion that it does not pay to remain in the Opposition. The regulatory discipline, which comes from the normal functioning of the Opposition, is missing. There is also a lack of political experience of the political infrastructure. The background for political activity in an underdeveloped country is formidable: over-population, concentration at and below the poverty, huge illiteracy, and absence of sustainability in the allied fields. The support system is hollow. The long boycott of parliament by the opposition parties has definitely gone against the interest of institutionalizing the nascent democracy in Bangladesh. The scurrilous attacks and accusations to the opposition are only weaken, frustrate and sabotage, if unwittingly, the prospects of institutionalizing democracy in the country.

Lack of Parliamentary knowledge, behaviour and attitude: The tragedy of Bangladesh political history since the restoration of democracy in 1990s has been a nearly wholesale boycott of the JS by the opposition. Analysts viewed if the JS were allowed to function during these completely unhindered by opposition abstentions, the country would have a vast reservoir of parliamentary experience with a robustly positive political culture in place. Even though the colonial experience helps pursuing democratic form of governance in the country, government had hardly any experience to deal with political violence, partisanship, an erratic economy, a traditional society, over population.

Indeed in Parliament there is no scope of rhetorical out bursts and political flippancy because such a practice will waste valuable time of the House and also public money.⁵¹ The membership of parliament is a great honour but it also reposes on the shoulders of the public representatives immense responsibilities and these include giving a proper sense of direction to the nation. And this is possible through strict adherence to democratic norms and the rules of business. There is scope for evading these norms in a parliamentary democratic system. However, in Bangladesh instead of ventilating their views inside the parliament through orderly debates obeying Rules of Procedure of the House, the opposition political parties' members use to drag their protests against the government to the streets. Street demonstration creates great hardships for the ordinary people because such kind of protests disrupts normal life and business by blocking road transports threatening security and creating social chaos.

Lack of Speaker's Neutrality: The role of Speaker in the Parliament is very important. It is he who conducts the business of the house. Therefore, his role should be neutral in the conduct of the businesses of the Parliament. Although he is elected Speaker from the party, which enjoys majority in the Parliament, the Speaker ceases to be a party man to maintain neutrality in the conduct of businesses. He should not be partisan under any circumstance in spite of the fact that he is elected by the ruling party. The Speaker should allow proportionately all members of the Parliament to speak on vital national and

⁵⁰ See interview of Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury, in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 29, 2002, p 1, 11.

⁵¹ See The Bangladesh Times (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 11, 1997, p.5

international issues⁵². It is on record that members of the opposition parties criticised the Speaker for his partisan role. Since the return of parliamentary democracy in 1991 the Speaker's role ought to be a vital one. However, the Speaker used to be elected from the majority party. The ruling and opposition parties are lagging behind consensus to elect a common candidate to the office of the Speaker who would be neutral. The person who is elected from the majority party and had been elected as a member of the parliament from a party ticket could hardly be neutral. On the other hand in the predominant position of the leader of the House i.e. the Prime Minister none among the ruling party could dare to raise any voice of neutrality or dissent against the will of the prime minister. Thus the neutrality of the Speaker seems to remain in theory rather than in practice. Evidently, the major concern of the opposition lies in lack of neutrality on the part of the Speaker. It should be possible to tackle the issue if the Speaker, a) is required to resign from his party position immediately on assumption of office in the parliament, b) is not expected to take part in functions of any political party, c) is not nominated for a position in any international or inter-governmental organisations during his tenure and d) can get elected automatically in the next election. The same conditions could be made applicable to the Deputy Speaker who plays an important role in the parliament.

Instances of abrupt constitutional amendments: In order to suit the interests of individuals, groups of individuals or political parties, Bangladesh constitution has been mauled and mutilated too many times in the past. In democracy no individual or institution should not be permitted to impose their will on others. The need of the hour is not confrontation but compromise in a spirit of mutual understanding and give and take in the overall interest of the country and not of political.⁵³

The fourth amendment to the constitution was passed on January 25, 1975 amidst only one party Awami League dominance. It was reported that the two dissenter MPs walked out from the JS at that time. But the ruling AL did not give more than 30 minutes time to discuss about the amendment. Nevertheless, there was no referendum on the

37 See Mohammed Amjad Hossain, 'Conduct and misconduct of parliamentarians', in The Daily Star (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 31, 2001, p 5.

4th amendment of the constitution. After the tragic political change of 15th August 1975, General Ziaur Rahman as the Chief Martial Law Administrator corrected a portion of the 4th amendment. But upheld the major portion regarding form of government. Besides 5th amendment of the constitution was passed abruptly. General Zia ordered the 5th amendment, which abandoned some basic principles of the constitution with out taking public opinion.

Lack of transparency and accountability: Lack of political transparency has been bugging the country since independence, and at present it is one of the greatest enemies. The leadership has not yet been able to lick it. Institutionalization of democracy is not possible without good governance. Accountability and transparency are the two pillars of good governance, which is a precondition for sustained social and economic development of a country.

Politics in Bangladesh has been murkey, muddled, obscure and indistinct. It has been shorn on transparency. Faced with a grim reality relating to deteriorating law and order, rape, repression, plunder, murder, hijacking, toll collection, forcible occupation of private and public property have become order of the day making life of ordinary citizens miserable.

The spirit of democracy was not yet firmly woven in the fabric of Bangladesh society. The processes of governance and development have always been difficult. This is mainly due to the systematic weakness. The autocratic regimes in Bangladesh have progressively plunged the country into abyss of miserable. The people of Bangladesh have experienced how autocracy and misgovernance can affect the body politic and the society at large. The well-being of the common people have been overlooked all these long years and the civil society became alienated from the process of governance and autocracy because entrenched in the country.

Hereditary politics: two controversial aspects rule Politics of Bangladesh. The first one is 'family tree' or dynastic leadership. Hereditary politics of the country leads to hunch feeling. This type of political leadership produced, from the source of charismatic leadership. The leader of this quality used to surround by sycophants of various vintages,

⁵³ See A. Qayyum, 'Form of Government' in The Bangladesh Observer (English Daily Newspaper,

with their myopic, subjective visions. This rule-of-the-thumb politics is not good for the country. The political leaders appear to be morally scared of change.

The two major political parties, BNP and AL can not think of a leader outside the two ruling families. However, the main reason of the two ladies' (Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina) ascension to political leadership was not due to their vision or political capabilities; they came to power because they either carried the name of husband or father. However, inheritance of the two top leaders was not achieved really through democratic election in the accepted sense of the word. They did not rise through the ranks, putting in hard labour and competing against rivals. Leadership was handed to them on a golden platter, a platter that seemed rich, tempting and irresistible. They went straight to the top of their respective party leadership painlessly, effortlessly, and simply because of their family ties riding on a wave of popular sympathy following the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and General Zia. Analysts⁵⁴ term two most influential political families (of Mujib and Zia), that have become the source of hereditary leadership in Bangladesh, as "two Royal Houses". It is argued that this thing can only happen in a country, "where 'blood ties' are deemed to be a legitimate source of power⁵⁵." This source of hereditary leadership has its own trappings such as courtiers, sycophants, followers-on, court-jesters, knights, hatchet-men and kitchen-cabinets. However, the primary concern of each House is to ensure succession along the bloodline and to retain continuity of rule (their rule). This has led to the over-use of debased symbols and derelict ideologies in an effort to press out the few last drops of utility that may still exist there.

Dissension is an accepted democratic attitude. The major political parties of the country never had the aptitude to accept changes. The political parties had fought for democracy on the street, but still they could not develop enough democratic sophistication to shed the streetfighter mentality and move on to the Parliament.

Hereditary leadership is perennial truth. Everything including, council or executive committee is overflowed by the sole directives or decisions of the party chief, which are mandatory for party members. Without any word that directive is to be followed by all

Dhaka) April 9, 1991, p.5.

⁵⁴ See K. A. S. Murshid, "So, what now?" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 1, 2002, p.4.

whether it is right or wrong. In the previous years a good number of such occurrences have happened. Kader Siddiki of Awami League, Major (retd.) Akhtaruzzaman of BNP and Anwar Hossain Manju of JP had been expelled from their parties due to their dissent over the opinion of the party chief. The then information minister Barrister Nazmul Huda lost his ministership due to his favourable sentiment to the opposition demand-caretaker government during BNP regime (1991-1996). This type of undemocratic matter is hindering the advancement of democracy in every step at the same no alternate leaders are being emerged. The crisis of leadership, after some time, may create a clear vacuum of leadership. Both the country and political parties are still suffering from the absence of healthy and democratic political culture. After the death of the main leader the conflict over leadership and domination hinders the normal activities of the political parties. In turn some leaders join other parties or float new party after breaking the old one or create a coterie/sub-group within the party.

After the assassination of Banglabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman at the stage of organising Awami League a new there were several Awami League and other political parties under the leadership of deferent leaders.

Likewise after the death of Ziaur Rahaman in 1981 the BNP was being led by Sattar-Badrudozza and latter on by Khaleda Zia and Badrudozza. Besides several other factions emerged within the BNP. When Ershad captured power in 1982 many leaders and workers of BNP and AL had joined with him. Thus the number of opportunist political leaders are on rise.

In November 1993 the BNP high command suspended one of its party MPs, Nurul Islam Moni for issuing a statement contradicting party position on the question of general election under caretaker government.⁵⁶

Some critics observed that the governance of Bangladesh is moved around two families. The whole country seems to be their personal property. Except some 1 or 2 percentage of

⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) December 2, 1994, p.1.

country's population (who are politicians) along with the members of these two families, all people are like slave of Greek City States.⁵⁷

Lack of good governance: Without good governance the process of democracy is very hard to institutionalize. Good governance, on the other hand, depends in large measure on the public servants. A committed, disciplined, dignified, efficient and motivated civil service is a *sine qua non* for good governance. The public officials are expected to be fearless, honest and impartial in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Likewise, they are duty-bound to uphold the supremacy of law and refrain from carrying out any unlawful instruction from their superiors in hierarchy or political leadership. Evidently, the concept of bureaucratic neutrality has remained largely illusive in many developing countries, including Bangladesh. This is due to the fact that unholy alliances between politicians and civil servants are mutually advantageous in terms of powers and privileges. All successive regimes of Bangladesh, especially the immediate past government, have covertly or/and overtly politicised the bureaucracy in varying degrees for advancing their partisan agenda. They have often applied the carrot and stick policy to coax the arms of useful sections of public officials. This has been reflected in, among other things, allurements of high profile and lucrative postings, post-retirement appointments on contract and protection from disciplinary actions and forced retirement. These have been enough to extract either genuine or tactical loyalty from many civil servants.

Even so, the politicians should not be squarely responsible for politicisation of the bureaucracy. They would certainly not have succeeded in their design if a powerful section of the civil servants had not willingly, if not enthusiastically, opted for becoming a handy tool of an amoral political system for reasons of career advancement and/or material benefit. Unfortunately, some of these public officials have, for all practical purposes, acted as errand boys of their political masters of the day with subservience and pliability. In carrying out partisan tasks and politically motivated decisions, they have allowed the administration to be used as a handy tool of the party in power. Interestingly but not surprisingly, some bureaucrats have proved themselves to be consummate survivalists.

⁵⁷ See Golam Mortuza. 'Hay '71 Hay gamatantra Hay Swadesh', (Alas '71. Alas Democracy Alas the

Without slightest hesitation or remorse, they have routinely changed colour and shifted “loyalty” with the change of guards at the national political level.⁵⁸

Homeland), in *Ei Shatabdeer 2000*, 29 March 2002, Year 4, Number 45, pp 23-28.

⁵⁸ See M Anwar Hashem, “Depoliticisation of bureaucracy for good governance”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 22, 2001, p.4.

IX.4.c. Economic constraints:

The respondents of the sample survey have mentioned some constraints, which could be categorised as economic. These economic constraints have different forms and shapes. Nevertheless, the economic constraints to institutionalization of democracy are well linked with all other constraints, which are not in economic category. We discuss below the economic constraints to institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh.

Non-implementation of development programmes: The central to the process of development is the realisation of rights through decentralisation and institutionalization of democracy not centralization and authoritarianism. What needs to be done is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development. How and to what end? The pace is too slow. Even the semblance of development seems lost in the laws and rules, which the government frames. The state machinery, whatever its declarations, has a selected few in view. They are the ones who mean to an end, not the end itself. But the selected few are not the society.

There should be concentration on is to help the entire nation grow not a selected group. The criterion has to be how far any political line or thought enables the people to rise above their petty selves and act for the good of all.

A scientific approach is required to find out solution of the social and economic problems. However, in Bangladesh the recommendations, decisions and commitments of different decision making bodies are hardly implemented.

The expected pace of implementation of reforms was not achieved and actions on specific issues had been only partial. The donors are often critical of the slow implementation capability of the government.¹ They are apprehensive of the bureaucracy's attitude towards the slow process of decision making and there is still a shared sense of concern. There are crucial issues like acceleration of the reforms process, removal of obstacles to the implementation of public investment programmes and further improvement in understanding and confidence between the public sector and other major categories of economic agents. The donors have apparently taken note

¹ See The Bangladesh Times (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) June 11, 1997, p.5.

of these issues and keep on stressing the qualitative improvement of project implementation. To improve the implementation capability, analysts argue, Bangladesh has to drastically reform the country's administration into a market-oriented one. The implementation gap may emerge as long as the Bangladesh remain 'control oriented' while the economy is being gradually decontrolled. If the administration system and implementation culture are not recast to close, the implementation gap then country's move towards institutionalising democracy will be even more difficult. The process of accountability has to be vigorously pursued. The process also needs to be monitored constantly. Without improving the efficiency of the bureaucracy and radical changes in attitudes, development programmes will not reach their goals in time delivering the maximum benefits to the people.

Since independence the government has been undertaking various development projects. One of the main objectives of these development projects is poverty alleviation. As a result the number of poor people has come down. However, a considerable number of people are still living below poverty line. Non-implementation of government development projects or its misuse might have a variety of effects.

(i) The institutionalization process of democracy in the country is adversely affected by people's prolonged deprivation and hardships. The poor are losers in the realm of necessity, who are also the underdogs in the realm of freedom, and they end up working as much as possible to make the ends meet. In so much as poverty is destiny, it is also a devious device of the rich. The poor deserve so much as they are also its victims. Different society has recognised this truth from time to time.

One of the predominant characteristics of Bangladesh is inequality in distribution of wealth and income. The average income of the urban population was about two-thirds higher than their rural counter parts. So that urban rich are more affluent than the rural rich and the rural poor is more impoverished than the urban poor. The skewed distribution of wealth and income in rural areas is caused by inequitable land distribution, while the income differential between the modern sector including the large and medium scale industry, trading and intermediary, foreign trade

and services and the informal sector including the petty traders and manufacturers, self-employed and unemployed as well as under-employed labour force are responsible for inequality in urban areas. Within these two sectors themselves there are further inequalities, for example, between the wage earners and the rest. However, economists suggest that income inequality help increasing social unrest. The growing inequality in income between the rural and urban population is present in terms of access to resources, income and power sharing.

Even though, the basis of Bangladesh's GDP growth is agriculture; donors always suggest curtailing subsidy to it.²The per capita income and living standard of people of Bangladesh have increased but 68 per cent of those living in rural areas are still landless.³Infrastructure of the country has improved from the 1960s. Electricity coverage has increased to 59 per cent, number of vehicle increased to 25 per cent and road coverage increased to 18 per cent from 1960s. However, around one million people enter into labour market every year. The huge unemployment and new entry in comparison to slow expansion of labour market is breaking the social serenity. It is estimated that around three million people out of nine million in Dhaka city alone live in slums. Malnutrition and inhuman living conditions of slum dwellers have put pressure on civic amenities.

On the other hand agriculture production is not at par with the population growth. Nevertheless, the populace of the country who face economic hardship are mostly from agrarian or were from this class in the near past. They have no representatives in the parliament. This non-represented poor people are the instrument of the rich people. Beetham and Boyle⁴ argues,

Experience of economic hardship intensifies social antagonisms of all kinds, by making the struggle for economic opportunities more intense and the cost of losing out more insupportable. It encourages economic opportunities more in turn generates hostility to immigrants and demands for a fortress state among the more developed countries. Conditions of economic depression make it much more difficult to realize the ideal of equal citizenship

² Dr. Kazi Kholiquzzaman in a seminar held in Dhaka organized by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), report published in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 30, 2000, and p.11

³ Professor Mosharraf Hossain Ibid.

⁴ See David Beetham and Kevin Boyle, *Introducing Democracy 80 Questions and Answers*, Polity Press UNESCO Publishing, Cambridge, 1995, p 122.

and lead to a loss of confidence in the capacity of democratic government to provide solutions to society's problems.

They pointed out that the democratic system with larger economy may be able to withstand these shocks, these are much more damaging to fledging democracies, which need relatively favourable circumstances in which to become securely established. Due to severe inequality in the distribution of wealth and income the disadvantaged section of the populace is worse off. It is argued that in case of less inequitable distribution the hardship of the masses would be reduced. The worse off populace naturally has less access to income, education, health and other areas. All these result into 'almost total absence of the masses not only from the corridors of policy and decision-making but also from the process of participation in the political, administrative and economic activities.'⁵

Whatever might be the cause of democratisation in 1990s, the economic hardships of the people persist even during the post 1990s. The country faced economic hardship, as usual during 1990-1996. Being among the poorest in the world, unemployment and a very low rate of literacy. All these elements contributed to the introduction of a large number of Bangladeshi youth to the black market, the criminal underworld and the realm of corrupt politics.

Democracy has proved to be a misnomer, as the prime purpose of the major political parties in the country is how to crawl to power and not welfare of the masses. This is how money has become a big factor in politics. Politics is fast turning out to be a big business. A fabulous amount of money is required to spent for business concerns get in the scene with their bags and doles out subscription and donation so that after the election their interest remain well protected. Hence after the MP naturally tries to get back the return of what s/he has invested and serve his mentor in the business community. Thus lust and muscle to grab power have replaced competence and merit. Innovative and creative efforts to rebuilding an economy are

⁵Iftekharuzzaman and Mahburur Rahaman, "Nation Building in Bangladesh: Perceptions, Problems and an Approach", in M Abdul Hafiz and Abdur Rob Khan (Eds.), *Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect*, Bangladesh Institute on International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, 1985, pp.8-39 (28).

overtaken by the art of trickery and disintegrity of people in power to deceive hardworking poor not in power.

(ii) With the help of state largess a considerable number of people have become rich. They have the ability to spend money for politics. In present days wording of political analysis they are termed as *nouveau riche*.

Since 1990s more and more people who are not politician and belong to this new rich class are increasingly involved with politics. Due to their involvement politics has become commercial, corrupt, criminalised and violent institution. Money and muscle have become the key words of success in politics. On opening the daily newspapers one must have to face to face with assassinations and murders almost on a daily basis. The situation was such that it was becoming increasingly hard to distinguish between political motive and criminal intent. Arms were not only used by hired goons and musclemen and by the activists of student and labour wings of political parties.

For obvious reasons the major parties consider 'money' as the key controller of parliamentary general or by-elections. Without money even dedicated workers are very much unlikely to win the election. The major political parties prefer business tycoons and wealthier persons to nominate in the elections.

The wealthy people in turn got involved into party to get benefit for their self-interests and businesses. In Bangladesh, once the dedicated workers and leaders of the locality used to get nominations from their party. Their contributions and sacrifice, rather than win or loss was honoured. Gone are those days. Since February 1991 general elections the major parties in Bangladesh have been nominating the industrialists, businessmen and retired civil or army officials. Many of them also won.⁶ But, where money exerts excessive influence on the behaviour of politicians of the voters, their democracy is undermined. (Burnell 1998:1-21)⁷ The politicians sometimes do not have a second thought before indulging in corruption, and how their

⁶ See report in The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 28, 2001, p 1, 2.

⁷ See Peter Burnell, "Introduction: money and politics in emerging democracies", in Peter Burnell and Alan Wane (et al.), *Funding democratization*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1998, p.6.

faulty actions going to affect the people. Their actions let loose a wave of negative repercussion, which is so very harmful for the peoples.

Impact of corruption: The growing concern over the impact of corruption is being noticed around the globe. Recently it has acquired central focus in Bangladesh vis-a-vis South Asia as a serious impediment to democracy and development. Corruption negates transparency and accountability, which are indispensable elements in the working of democracy and democratic institutions as well as an indispensable condition of sustainable development.

Bangladesh's efforts for institutionalisation of democracy have been taking place amidst her 'transition towards a market economy from an economy subject to control by the state.' State functionaries have long exercised wide discretionary powers in relation to the economy, enabling arbitrary interventions to be made and favours to be granted. However, the process of state intervention would be reduced and eliminated through promotion of liberalization. It is observed that liberalization often ignores the need for law and social policies to regulate the operation of the market. Burgeoning corruption, fraudulent financial transactions involving banks and stock exchanges, the emergence of powerful Mafia-type criminal syndicate and growing violence paralleled by ruthless and lawless law enforcement are some of the described as 'crony capitalism' or 'casino capitalism'. Experience shows that there is an increase opportunities of corruption during the process of transition. The necessity to privatization and deregulation appears to increase the chance of corrupt practices. Opportunities to grant favours abound involving grants of licences, grants of valuable public land, and rights for exploration and development of oil and gas and mineral resources, and the award of mega-projects to private investors, domestic and foreign, in areas previously reserved to the public sector e.g. power, telecommunications, transportation and physical infrastructure. These affairs involve many things that have a synonym with corruption in absence of set rules. The increasing cost of elections and politics devoid of idols leads to the criminalisation and commercialisation of politics. The ever-increasing funds sought to be mobilised by political parties have meant that the opportunities for abuse of power during the economic transition are

increasingly being used for political fund raising. In Bangladesh, the change through the democratic movement in 1990 led to the incumbent being tried and convicted on serious charges of corruption and subsequently being disqualified from holding political office.

The economic cost of corruption has been documented in a recent study⁸: (i) bribery raises transaction costs and uncertainty in the economy, (ii) bribery usually leads to inefficient economic outcomes. It impedes long-term foreign investment. Due to corrupt practices of the officials and consumers good portions of Bangladesh's resources are eaten up by 'system-loss'. Analysts found a system loss of 40 per cent in the energy sector, 25-30 per cent in the water sector (WASA), and another 15-20 per cent in other sectors. This happens due to the absence of accountability. Donors also feel shy to pump money knowing fully well all these facts. However, as consequences of wastage in the form of an unending 'system-loss' the government has to continuously raise the electricity, water, gas and telephone charges at regular intervals, much to the chagrin of common people. There is a growing concern among the electorate regarding this state of affair. Because people expects good governance from their elected representatives. As former US President Thomas Jefferson said, "the whole art of government consists in the art of being honest". The public may legitimately demand severe punishment for the defaulters. However, the sheer absence of accountability breeds the all-pervasive corruption. Observers found, in Bangladesh, any one can literally do any wrong and get away with quickly, because there is no accountability at any stage. For the cumulative sin committed by the politicians and bureaucrats the poor public is most unfairly and unjustly made to pay through their threats.

One of the major economic dimension of corruption could be seen in income and inequality⁹. Countries that are equal exhibit less corruption. For example, Austria, Japan and Finland have an inequality ratio (income of top 20% over bottom 20%) close to 3 and corruption index close to 9(10 being the lowest). These countries are

⁸Gray and Kaufman, *Corruption and Development*, "Finance and Development", March 1998. Cited in Dr. Kamal Hossain, "Fighting corruption through greater", in *Dhaka Courier* (English Weekly magazine, Dhaka) March 22, 2002, pp.20-22.

very flat with respect to income; they just have a very large middle class. On the contrary, Brazil, the most unequal country in the world has an inequality ration of 25 with a corruption and achieved equally through their tax system, social entitlement programmes, and distributive justice. Some newly industrialised countries like Taiwan, Korea and Singapore also show some success in this regard.

Some analysts argue that without proper tax-regime and distributive justice it is not possible to root out corruption. "Lack of a decent income (an outcome of distributive justice) and inequality will haunt corruption."¹⁰

There is a psychological dimension of corruption.¹¹ It is in this sense that corruption brings economic reward. An individual is likely to engage in corruption as long as he finds the economic reward of corruption greater than punishment and the probability of its occurrence. Punishment works as a deterrent in behaviour. So far, the system in Bangladesh has failed to punish the wrongdoers at large.

A negative impact of corruption on democracy is the advent of a new breed of candidates with no political experience or standing. They buy nominations by making large payments to the parties or highly-placed party ticket. They are "paradropped" into constituencies where they spend millions to have themselves elected, violating provisions of the electoral law, which sets limits on election expenses, and resort to bribery of voters and election officials. The "black" money breed of candidates view election to Parliament as an investment for access to patronage and the means of earning more "black" money. Thus, they resort to deployment of armed squads for obtaining votes and for resorting to bribery of voters, election officials and polling agents and for procuring votes through unscrupulous middlemen Parties thus become captive to black money and arms, and inner-party democracy is subverted.

No governments since independence have taken serious corrective measures to the widespread corruption and in some cases have in fact, covertly or overtly, encouraged

The people presents and embodies a disproportionately high degree of tolerance while dealing with corruption, irregularities, embezzlement of state funds

⁹ A.N.M.Wahiduzzaman, "Combating Corruption", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) February 8, 2002, p.9.

¹⁰ Ibid p.9

¹¹ Ibid.

and malpractice by the top-ranking leaders. In Bangladesh, deposed President H M Ershad has been convicted by the High Court in the corruption case and some other similar cases were pending against him. He is believed to have siphoned out huge state funds. A court on a corruption case convicted former Prime Kazi Zafar Ahmed. However, despite corruption charges against Ershad he was elected from 5 seats in the general elections for the 5th and 7th parliaments. It seems that despite corruption charges Ershad continued to enjoy extensive popular support. The supporters are prone to believe that the political rivals and opponents have resorted to frame up charges of corruption to belittle Ershad before the public eye. This proves that they do not have trust and faith in judiciary. The toleration of corruption in its turn breeds more corruption and vitiates the atmosphere. These "grand corruption", a hydra headed monster, have detrimental effect and trickle down to lower rungs of the administration.

Corruption has many accompanying vices: patronisation of violence and terrorism, amassing of huge black money which remain unaccounted for, tax evasion etc. It also corrupts the investigating authority with the lure of palm greasing. It has been estimated that due to corruption and toleration of corruption on a wider scale national exchequer is being drained out and wider vital development activities are being stunt. A World Bank estimate said that if corruption could have been effectively contained, Bangladesh could have very well expected a two- percent more growth rate over the years.

Corruption among bureaucrats is proverbial. Corruption is causing enormous drainage of resources. The money siphoned out in this way could have been better utilised if it could be invested in vital national uplift activities. Lack of transparency and absence of effective mechanism of accountability are the root causes of rampant corruption.

Tendency to be elected through money and muscle: Analysts viewed that the post-1990's democratisation process has been vitiating the meaning of government in Bangladesh as the government of political parties, by the fawners and for the leaders. Instead of government of the people, by the people and for the people. For the

populace, democracy started and end with an election in every five-year.¹² *In election, who could use how much money, how many cadres he has, these are the main things to consider.* The corrupt politicians can not but impatient. The corrupt and impatient political culture drives out civic culture, which ultimately hampering the emergence of democratic culture in Bangladesh.¹³ The on going process benefits a small group of people. They have hardly any continuous relation with the majority (silent) people. The majority poor, unemployed, landless, illiterate people who are engaged in life struggle have no connection with the conflict of power, crisis, domination or high level economic or political corruption. The poor people are goaded by the vote seekers, pushed out from the rural areas for economic cause and rushed into the urban centres for livelihood. Even in the urban areas they do not get rid of the paws of the musclemen. As slum dwellers they have to pay toll to the terrorists' godfathers. These people have no idea about the crisis of the state or nation. At the same time they have no capability to initiate struggle by themselves to restore their rights. However, it is expected that the democratisation process would bring about a change in the poverty situation of the populace by empowering them.

The society became a hostage to armed brigade of rent seekers and toll collectors. This culture is being increased alarmingly. The short cut to easy earning means that one gets money without labouring for it and earning it without the sweat of the brow. It runs the character of new generation (copying and cheating in examinations is one example). The quality of work and service, in the public sectors, is going down. There is no respect for professionalism and excellence. Quality means nothing. The democratic regime since 1990's was saddled with national problems. The tackling of economic and day to day problems were visible activities, but there were back ground and invisible hardcore areas for eradication. It is very much unlikely to break the core with marginal measures.

Due to underutilisation of the spirit of national independence at its peak time Bangladesh could not reach the point of equanimity as some other countries have.

¹² See Mahfuz Anam, "Ganatantrik Sangskriti Nirman Ekhono Baki" (Democratic Culture is yet to build) in *The Prothom Alo* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) November 4, 2000, p.32.

Analysts viewed that Bangladesh have largely squandered her time since its independence.

The trend of vote rigging, violating election rules and code of conduct and displaying muscle power has become almost common in the country. The general elections for the 5th and 7th parliament were recognised as free, fair and neutral. However, the number of blackmoney holders and terrorists has now increased manifold and values in the society are eroding rapidly. Due to mainly non-implementation of laws, influence of muscle power and black money and terrorist activities tend to frustrate the peaceful atmosphere for free, fair and peaceful election. Analysts often criticise the role of law enforcing agencies, security forces, the administration and election commission in this regard. They also blamed the political parties for nominating the persons who have enough black money, local influence and capacity to control terrorists, police and the administration during election.

Political analysts remark the lapses in Bangladesh's democratic endeavour. They are disturbed by the way, in which some of the political parties of the country tend to nominate their candidates for elections, particularly parliamentary ones. In many cases nominations are won by individual on the basis of their financial strengths. In the process many competent and well-qualified people who ruled otherwise make good MPs from the standpoint of the public interest, were culminated.

Criminalisation of politics: The criminalisation of politics has rendered the society as one riddled with corruption, extortion, terror and a pervasive social insecurity. The democratic transformation of the society is a long arduous path but in Bangladesh even that process still seems to be non-starter. The political space and the criminal space have begun to resemble each other increasingly. Politics and crime have become almost impossibly deep linked. This type of scenario is inevitable when crime is allowed inside the corridors of politics. It is now accepted that the extortion will be here as long as the system of present politics continues. Violence has replaced ideology in Bangladesh politics. In many cases, this has been legitimized as a new

¹³ Barrister Mainul Hossein, "Durnitee Mukta Hoile Rajnitee Sahansheel O Udar Hoito" (Politics might have been tolerant if it would free from corruption), in *The Weekly Robbar* (Bengali Weekly Magazine, Dhaka) November 14, 1999, pp.15-16.

profession. 'The political leaders and police have admitted that the management of the state is now closely linked to politico-criminal culture.'¹⁴

'Crime and crime related political violence is on the increase in Bangladesh. Actually, the criminalization of politics has become a new phenomenon in the body politic. At present in Bangladesh criminalization of politics has reached such proportions that worries not only politicians, but also others in trade, business and other professionals.'¹⁵

The criminalisation process has bedevilled the politics in recent times. The criminals are now not only the master of the situation, as in some time seen in the press reports on such incidents, but they are now up in the ladder of political leadership. This is particularly true about the student leadership. And this criminalisation process goes on while the political leadership is keeping their eyes shut, because they need them to bolster their own political prospects. The most disturbing thing in this criminalisation of the political process is their forced entry in the elected bodies. Even the JS is not immune from that. Though Article 66 of the constitution disqualifies offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release, this provision of the constitution is being bypassed easily, because of a ruling of a high court during Pakistan days. A statistics recently published in newspapers has shown that a fair number of members of the parliament are convicted in cases, more than the time stipulated in the constitution for being disqualified for election but are on bail on appeal to the higher court and those appeals are not being heard, though long time has elapsed and in all probability, would not come up for hearing during their tenure. One renowned politician of the country observed that even it comes up, the privilege of a Member of Parliament would be invoked or the law offices of the government would not proceed with the case if the ruling party does not wish so. This has been seen in some recent cases where the government law officers either remained absent or preferred silence, when cases against such persons came for hearing¹⁶.

An international watchdog on corruption 'Transparency International' has documented the state of corruption in the country. The politicisation of corruption

¹⁴ See The editorial in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 24, 2002, p.4.

¹⁵ See Rashed Khan Menon, "Criminalisation of politics", in *Holiday* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) September 5, 1997, p.9.

hinders the process of settlement of any allegations. Trial of any corruption case is finished with a very nominal or no punishment.¹⁷

No government since independence has taken serious corrective measures to the widespread corruption and in some cases have in fact, covertly or overtly, encouraged the spread of corruption. The political economy aspect of the failure of successive governments in combating corruption is an important aspect in itself. Thus it may become increasingly difficult to reverse the process.¹⁸

Bangladesh is perhaps among the few countries literally ruled by godfathers and mafia who dictate the politics, economy and law and order. And among these godfathers there are even politicians and business tycoons. Extortion and corruption are the 'easy methods' for minting money overnight. Manipulations in the share market and default loan are the easiest way not only to turn rich but also emerge as business leaders. Postings in police, customs, taxation, excise etc. are allegedly 'bought' corrupt elements go scot-free.

Though there was seemingly an elected Parliament on multi-party basis, politics had remained in the street perhaps with the joy of the ruling party that the opposition was out of the House while the opposition was foolhardy in assuming that this way it was exposing the autocratic nature of the government.

"There is no transparency and accountability at any tier of the government and the society. The dictum is being practiced is 'might is right' which resembles the jungle law."¹⁹

One of the reasons for the degeneration is that the basic tenets and values which go into the making of such a system workable, namely tolerance, self-restraint, an attitude of give-and-take, have been conspicuous by their absence in the political climate. The political vocabulary in contemporary writings, including newspaper writings, consists mainly of expressions like 'criminalisation of politics', 'unprincipled and diabolical scramble for power', 'corruption in electoral politics', 'lumpenisation', and so on –

¹⁶ See Rashed Khan Menon, *Ibid* 1997, p.9.

¹⁷ A B M Musa, "Kotipoy Sat Manusher Sandhane" (In quest of some honest person) in *The Daily Prothom Alo* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) January 2, 2001, p.8.

¹⁸ See Wahiduddin Mahmud, "Spread of Corruption, Cultural Trait, Institutional Failure or Irreversible Trend", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) January 11, 2001, p.5

¹⁹ Mansur Mamoon, "UNDP's HDI Report Why is Bangladesh placed so low?" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 5, 2000, p.4. s

which are indicative of an impending collapse of the system of government based on political parties.²⁰

Huge gap between the ownership of wealth by the elected representatives and the poor electorate: In Bangladesh most of the elected representatives are considered, as people from rich class while most of the electorate are poor. In the 5th Jatiya Sangsad about 58 per cent of the MPs were from the business class. Whereas 67 per cent of the country's population are landless. Landlessness in the country has increased from 30 to 60 per cent during the last twenty-two years.²¹ Landlessness practically means destitution or complete pauperization in the context of rural Bangladesh where the majority of the people of the country are located.

Rural Bangladeshis are overwhelmingly engaged in agriculture and related activities and lands are the basic and in many cases their most valued immovable assets. People in the rural areas preponderantly depend because they hardly have cash incomes from other sources to be able to overcome their difficulties. Dispossessed from the lands, they decide in many cases to travel to the cities-specially to Dhaka-in desperation to find employment, income and shelter. They end up in the fringes of city life adding to scenes of urban squalor and deprivation. The hundreds of slums in Dhaka city are but grim reminders of rural poverty shifting to urban areas and adding to urban poverty.

Marxian view²² on 'alienation' suggests that one of the ways capitalist production exploits workers is that it makes them feel estranged from the products of their own hands. Capitalism's negative effects go well beyond the workplace. They pervade money markets, politics, and even household relationships, when the systems of social relationships created by a system out of our control dominate us, this is referred to as alienation. Bangladesh's present situation can not be exactly present in this way, but it is suggestive. The independence of Bangladesh has been earned by the people from all walks of life. They were from all religion, occupation, gender,

²⁰ Mr. R M Pal, "The Myth of Party System", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 27, 1999, p.4.

²¹ See *The Bangladesh Times* (now defunct English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) May 11, 1997, p.5.

²² See for details on Marxian theory of alienation see Bertell Ollman, *Alienation, Marx's conception of man in capitalist society*, Second edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney, 1988, pp.131-233.

locality, income group, all classes of landowners and even land less people. However, most of the Bangladesh's population live in rural area and hold agriculture as their occupation. Accordingly, it is a common perception son and people from the rural and agrarian class had sacrificed their lives more in number than any other specific class that could be mentioned in this respect. But after independence this rural and agrarian population has not justly treated by the state. With the help of state largesse a privileged class have been emerged. Most of the MPs, estimated 75 per cent belong to this privileged class, who has been elected, mostly through 'money and muscle'.

The gap between the rich and poor with in a country could be visualised globally between the rich and the poor countries. However, the main divide in the world today is not between socialism and capitalism but between the rich and the poor. It is a divide defined not by ideology but by the access and ability to use technology. Today the countries that are rich and prospering are at the cutting edge of technology while those that are poor and struggling are in the backwaters-far removed from the technological frontier.²³ For viability of institutionalizing democracy according to S.N.Eisenstadt²⁴,

"No social group, category or institution should effectively monopolize the bases of power and resources in the society, excluding the possibilities of other groups having access to power".

The ownership of excessive wealth in the hands of people's representatives is no less than harmful in this regard. However, most of the MPs afford pomp and show, opulence and affluence in a poor country like Bangladesh. One conscious citizen²⁵ observed that the residence of the MPs or political leaders is full dumb-founded with the luxury and decoration, costly furniture and equipment. On the other hand, residences of the leaders, who have become immortal in the Bangladeshi society, Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Haque, H.S.Suhrawardhy and Moulana Bashani, were decorated with ordinary furnitures. These leaders in the past used to mix with the common people freely and addressed mammoth public meetings without any fear

²³ M G Quibria, "New economy and poor countries", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) March 5, 2001, p.5.

²⁴ S.N.Eisenstadt, "Introduction" in S.N.Eisenstadt (ed), *Democracy and Modernity*, International Colloquium on the Country of David Ben-Gurion J.Brill. Leiden. New York, The Israel,

and special security. The time and situation have changed. Now-a-days it appears that the biggest is the size of the drawing room and the more is it decorated and furnished the more is the importance of a political leader.

These days meetings and dinners at 5-star hotels, discussion at drawing rooms in isolation of the people for safety, security and prestigious reasons have become common phenomenon for the leaders to capture power and success in politics. Thus “democracy has become a trap to divert attention from feudalism; otherwise one per cent of the population can not control 80 per cent of the money in circulation”.²⁶

Extreme poverty along with concentration of wealth are even creating a harmful situation. Fifty per cent now live below poverty line. Although poverty shows an annual decrease of around half per cent this isn't enough. The dominant priority is not poverty reduction, according to some critics²⁷, rather wealth accumulation. This is significant because wealth accumulation by the Pakistani elite was the backbone of the nationalist argument and everything constructed was in counter to that.

Some critics observed that the governing constructs have become exclusive and entry process to them is restricted. For example, the legislature is a virtual club of millionaires where only the richest of society can meet, legislate and manage the state. To be member one needs to spend millions for being elected which effectively limits membership to the wealthy.

No or minimum representation from the agrarian class: Sixty-eight percent of country's population has agriculture-related works as their occupation yet they have no representation in the JS. The elected representatives in the Parliament hardly deal with the problems of the peasants. The peasants are deprived of the just price of their produced goods. They produce jute, but they do not get the just price of the jute. Some middlemen purchase their goods. These middlemen are none but the close persons of the so-called elected representatives or the influential personalities of the

²⁵ See O.H.Kabir, “Politics of Pomp and opulence” in the Letter in *The Bangladesh Observer* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 14, 2001, p.5.

²⁶ See Letter in “To The Editor”, in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) July 16, 2001, p.4.

²⁷ See Afsan Chowdhury, “Bangladesh in March 1971, Imagined realities, multiple nations”, in *PROBE* (Fortnightly English Newsmagazine, Dhaka) March 16-31, Vol.1, Issue 9, 2002, pp.23-25.

country.²⁸ During the independence existence the country had experienced many work stoppages but the peasants did never stopped their works. Nevertheless, the peasants did never find their elected representatives beside them.

²⁸ See Golam Mortuza, "Hay '71, Hay ganatantra, Hay Swadesh", (Alas '71, Alas democracy, Alas homeland), *Saptahik 2000*(Bengali Weekly 2000, Dhaka) March 29, 2002, Year 4, Number 45, pp.23-28.

IX.4.d Institutionalization constraints and globalisation:

↑ Since 1990's democratisation, Bangladesh's economy has been characterised by greater openness through accelerated trade liberalisation, extensive financial and fiscal reforms. We found various aspects of globalisation factor influencing the institutionalization (see Chapter V) process of democracy in Bangladesh. However, one of our survey findings is *activities of international vested quarter*. According to a considerable number of respondents, this is a major institutionalization constraint of democracy in Bangladesh. However, we count it as constraints from the process of globalisation. The respondents' expression in this language might be their inherent notion regarding any sorts of foreign relation. The view of a Bangladeshi political analyst may be taken into consideration in this respect:

"A people ruled by others for thousands of years have been ruined and shattered morally and culturally, their pride and self-confidence, which are essential qualities required of a people to constitute a nation, have been destroyed by alien subjugation for centuries. Thus any sorts of influx from the outside is viewed with suspicion. The globalisation process is thus under serious scrutiny by the society."¹

In this discussion we pin point the real challenges, posed by globalisation, to the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. While the International Community has been interested enough with the democratisation process of the country, there has been also the chances of most potent challenges come from the gradual erosion of the nation state under an inexorable force of globalisation which has already crashed across national frontiers. Democratic politics comes into play on the turf of nation state and some of its institutions are synonymous, overlapping and interrelated with those of the state. Once the state is diluted or weakened in its power and composition the democracy is deprived of the base of which it rests.

Although modern democracy is the political offspring of technology and capitalism, symbolised by industrial revolution, both are going to pose strange new challenge to democracy. The industrial revolution extended over generations and allowed time for human and institutional adjustment. The computer revolution does not allow that time and therefore the transition from one Factory Age to Computer Age is far

¹ See Moudud Ahmed, Crisis of democracy in Bangladesh, in Holiday, October 18, 1991, p.3, 23.

more traumatic than one from farmland to factory. The computerised world has already posed problems by straining the bond of social control and political sovereignty with a tremendous acceleration of technology.

(It is certainly a fact of life, under the evolving world order and economic and financial globalisation, that the old, earlier concept of state sovereignty has also been undergoing radical transformation. The reality is that this modification in the concept of sovereignty has come to stay. This impact of this alteration, naturally, is more pronounced in so-called, "client states" which are, for various causes, more dependent on other countries and entities.)

Bangladesh is grossly dependent on foreign aid for carrying out development works and sometimes continuing some administrative functions even. Recently the donors are increasingly growing strict and unenterprising. (For sanction of aids they are in the habit of imposing tougher and tougher preconditions prominent among them being good governance and satisfactory law and order situation. The donors view 'in both the fields Bangladesh figures precariously low. International exposure of a situation testifying to the bars of receiving aids from donor bodies poses a bone stuck in the throat of the government.)

Analysts view it as more than proved that the political parties of the country are interested in capturing power². In Bangladesh power means money, control of police, a prerogative to oppress the opposition and immunity from accountability. Constructive politics prizing country's interest over anything else seems wholly alien to the political parties of the country. Whenever there is a condemnation of the government by any quarters, golden if that be from an international arena, it is most welcome to the opposition to swoop on it to discredit the government and pave way for its own ascendancy.

Moreover, because of the perceived and inherent weaknesses in the political processes, others can not be blamed if they appear because the political leaders of the country, in different spheres, have given others more than enough scope to proffer advice, suggestions and more. In short, the politicians of the country have asked for it, and

² See A R Shamsul Islam, "How to brighten our image abroad?" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), May 18, 2002, p.4.

consequently the country is getting it, too. It is, on the whole, a tragic-comic phenomenon; but it's the reality. All this demonstrates, in addition to making us look fawning and feeble, is that "power demeans even more than it corrupts".³

The globalisation has an over all effect on the conscious or unconscious mind of the communists of Bangladesh. In an intensely self-critical reflection the report⁴ of the General Secretary of one of the major Left parties of the country not only acknowledges the severe ideological crisis of the party, but declared that it is imperative to reassess the classical principles of Marxism-Leninism in the context of the present situation of the world. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union most of the large Left Parties of the world either declared their own dissolution or "transformed" into something else. It is hard to remain attached to the principles of Marx, Lenin, Mao and the revolutionary tradition. The report frankly admits, "in the changed world, we do not have a model". However, there was no sign of any creative manifestation in the political arena, nor even in the cultural spheres which is more or less always the centre stage of Left activities in the past.⁵ The Human Development Report 1997 published by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) mentioned that the globalisation was largely benefiting the more dynamic and powerful countries of the world in the north and the south. It further said annual losses to developing countries from unequal access to trade, labour and finance had been estimated at \$500 billion-10 times what they receive in foreign aid. However, in its path breaking 2002 study on *Globalisation, Growth and Poverty*, the World Bank⁶ said:

"Between countries globalisation is now mostly reducing inequality. About three billion people live in new globalising developing countries. During the 1990s, this group grew at 5 per cent per capita compared with 2 per cent for the rich countries. The number of extreme poor (living on less than a dollar a day) in the new globalisers declined by 120 millions between 1993 and 1998."

There is an interesting reading on Bangladesh envisaged in the World Bank report. The good news for Bangladesh is that it has been identified by the Bank among

³ Fazal M. Kamal, "Terminal phenomenon", in *Dhaka Courier*, July 13, 2001, p.21.

⁴ Cite in Farhad Mazhar, "Reflections on left politics", in *The Holiday* (Weekly Newsmagazine, Dhaka) September 5, 1997, p.4, 6.

⁵ See *Ibid*.

⁶ See *Dhaka Courier*, July 13, 2001.

the 24 new globalisers together with Malaysia, China and India. These nations were increasingly defined by policies to integrating into the world economy through foreign investment and exports. Bangladesh has been contrasted with Pakistan, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt and Central Asian countries which have remained marginal to the international economy winning little capital, often with declining incomes and rising poverty.

It has been mentioned earlier (Chapter VIII) that the country embarked on economic liberalisation through reform process from 1979 to 1990. Simplification of tariffs begun in 1986. The import weighted duty rate was 21 per cent in 1995 down from 47 per cent a decade ago. The government has been privatising the state-owned enterprises which have made loss of millions of dollars every year. It has also found in the previous chapter that during the 1990s, Bangladesh has been able to increase exports by a factor of four permitting to finance a significant proportion of imports. The investment has been increased to 15-17 per cent of GDP. A growth of cycle has been registered in the economy. GDP has increased about 4.5 per cent, much further than population growth. This has contributed to improving per capita income. Bangladeshi analyst suggests,

“Bangladesh has been going through a stage which may be described as ‘economic take-off’. It appears that open economy is better than closed economy and that globalisation has helped Bangladesh to accelerate its economic growth⁷.”

→ (This economic liberalisation, caused by the wave of globalisation has also put the country in the edge of challenge. Furthermore, this challenge has mingled with challenges of the institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. The different spheres of globalisation that are affecting the institutionalisation process of democracy have been going in the midst of such challenges.)

^ Since both the rich and the poor have to share the same process of globalisation, with out equality in terms of qualifications the benefits of globalisation are hardly possible to harness by both the partners equally. After completion of the so-called ‘take-off’ stage the real challenge will be surfacing. It has very much unlikely for Bangladesh to face that challenge successfully without required quality. This requirement is also severely felt in case of increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation.\

The conflict ridden political scenario is the first and foremost challenge in this regard. There is hardly any consensus among the political forces of the country as to how the country will face the challenges of globalisation.

One of Bangladesh's major problems is its poor image. The improvement in human development, substantial progress in food security front, and significant lessening in the dependence on foreign aid hardly matter in this respect. These more subtle messages have yet to be filtered for creating a positive image. However, the usual image of desperately poor, aid-dependent nation at the mercy of the forces of nature and the depredations of man, persist. Many recently emerged bad images outweigh the many of the significant achievements that the country has gained. The national and international analysts could not overlook a quantum jump into the mire of corruption and anarchy and violence. In Bangladesh the many-headed hydra of poor governance and cronyism has now spread far and wide and affects everyone directly. The big question for Bangladesh is how the country will respond to the wave of information super highway. Whether further openness through information superhighway i.e. sub-marine cable connectivity etc. would make any harm for the country? Those are yet to be inquired and settled.

In a pre-dominantly authoritarian society like Bangladesh the process of democratisation is also dominated by the 'hereditary leadership'. However, it is very difficult for the existing leadership to respond to the globalisation so that it can properly fit with the need of democratisation.

The country has witnessed a remarkable shift in occupation of its population in recent times, from agriculture to non-agriculture sector. However, most of the labour force in the country is termed as unskilled or semi-skilled. With this vast unskilled or semi-skilled labour force it is hardly possible to cope with the process of globalisation. One of the features of this unskilled labour force is poor knowledge of English language. This is often seen as a major hurdle to face the challenges of globalisation.

One of the dominant 'institutions' in Bangladesh is bureaucracy. The 'bureaucratic red-tapism' is often viewed as one of the major hurdle towards the country, that restrain it to face the challenges of globalisation adequately.

⁷ See Harun ur Rashid, "Globalisation: Challenges for Bangladesh", in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) April 25, 2002, p.4.

The above mentioned challenges are mainly socio-political. Apart from these challenges the economic base of the country is narrow. About 93 per cent of exports are on a few low value added products. This is an undermining situation that restrains the country to gear up the export earning. Besides, the readymade garment exports, which constitute 68 per cent of total exports, have to face stiff competition when the quota system is abolished in 2004.

To conclude, globalisation is a complex phenomenon and process that can perhaps be managed by public policies. In managing the process, Bangladesh faces challenges from a world order that is particularly burdensome on her. Yet, as many other developing countries demonstrated, it is possible for public policy to manage the process with a view to maximising benefits to its citizens while minimising risks. The nature of optimal integration, however, is highly country specific and contextual. On balance, there appears to be greater advantage in well-managed and appropriate integration into the global process, which would imply more effective interventions by the Government. In fact, markets do not and can not exist in a vacuum, i.e., without some externally imposed rules and such order is a product of public policy. The challenges of globalisation particularly for poorer countries like Bangladesh are in essence at national level, at the level of sound public policies by the government.

The problems of the poor, the vulnerable and the underprivileged will continue to be the responsibility of national government and hence of public policy. Unfortunately, globalisation does not appear to strengthen national government in discharging this worthy cause. Yet, sound public policies at the national level in a least developed country like Bangladesh are very critical in the current context of levels of development, extent of globalisation, and degree of regional integration.

“There is a potential for benefit, if the global challenges are met primarily at national level without losing sight of benefits of bilateral as well as regional cooperation among the countries of South Asia.”⁸

⁸ See Y V Reddy, “Globalisation and challenges for South Asia”, in *The New Nation*, Dhaka, May 13, 2002, p.5.

IX.4.e Periodic constraints:

The institutionalization constraints of democracy differ according to periodic variation. It could be observed during the events of periodic elections and in different political events of the country. There is no denying the fact that one event of election differs from that of another, the political atmosphere also differs accordingly. The atmosphere of mutual trust among the political forces of the country, which was present during the pro-democratic movement of 1990s, becomes rare in the later period.

The politicians of the country failed to rise to the occasion at the right moment when it needed most and also the people were not aware of their rights. Apart from the democracy's inherent difficulties of transplanting it-essentially a Western creation-to parts of the world with different cultures and traditions, democracy will have to face a challenge typical of the change of time.¹

Constructing and promoting democracy requires patience, time and, most importantly, a consensus among the powerful groups and elite in a society on the desirability of rule of law and governance through the consent of the people. Periodic election is a must for democracy. Democracy rests on people's consent and is reflected through periodical election. Ironically despite frequency of electoral competition, political leaders have not been successful in promoting an environment that would encourage the growth of democratic norms and civility. Popular aspiration for democracy has not received a corresponding support from the elected political leadership. Therefore, a strong tendency towards illiberal usage of democracy continues to threaten prospects of democratic consolidation. These contradictory processes are transforming the political landscapes into a hostile one. The onus of responsibility for constructing democracy, promoting democratic norms, and institutionalizing democratic practices and principles is on the elites of the political class and civil society. Political leaders and members of the civil society through their actions and conduct, influence the formation of democratic norms at the popular level. In Bangladesh, gap exists between cup and the leap of political leaders on professed principles of democracy. Regular periodical general election can gradually reduce this disturbing "gaps".

¹ Brig. (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz, "Democracy under assault?" in *The Daily Star* (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka), November 1, 1999, p.8.

In this chapter we presented our survey findings along with discussion on institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh. In view of the findings and its relevant discussions it may be concluded at this point that in terms of constraints, Bangladesh remains the same as it was over thirty years ago. It is in this sense that the country is less enabled to deal with the use of force by supra state and supra-social entities in the name of security forces, political parties and powerful groups and individuals. The inherent cause of such disorder lies in the institutionalization of lack of accountability at every level of the state and the government. The critical chasm between the state and the members of the society is in fact developed and sustained. When power is abused at levels that set examples, parliament is invalid, street agitations seek to topple governments and budget numbers are off limits for those who pay for it, one must be ready to be outraged by the prevailing disorder and the lack of justice delivery that follows.

The problem lies in locating the position of the individual citizen in relation to the state. Analyst argues that the country has developed an “institutional caste system in which some are more superior to others. Till equality happens, extra judicial activities also happen. Only by changing that equation can Bangladesh put an end to it.”² The concluding chapter will draw the summary of findings and some recommendations.

² See Editorial, in *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2002, p.4

Chapter X

Conclusions

This chapter contains a summary of results of this study, an evaluation of the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh during 1990-1996, and concludes with some recommendations to arrive at a possible resolution to overcome the constraints.

In this chapter, three broad conclusions have been discerned. First, though the institutions were weak, however, due to conscious effort, the higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation had been possible to contain and divert for democratic transition during 1990s. This was the result of conscious effort of the political forces, dominated by middle class population. However, alongside this success story, there have been also some stumbling blocks. Second, higher rates of social mobilisation and political participation are important if not dominant sources of constraints to institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh during 1990-1996. Third, even though social mobilisation and political participation, since 1990s, have been expected to regulate democratically, in most cases, if not all, it remains to be succeeded. Hence instability and disorder persist. The political instability and political disorder which have been prevailing in Bangladesh since 1990's amidst the institutionalization process of democracy should be viewed as the institutionalization constraints of democracy in the country.

However, using the estimates and categories of institutionalization constraints along with other evidences in the literature, it may be concluded that no single category receives strong and consistent support. Instead, the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh do decisively accept the hypothesis, along with the complex relations between different categories of constraints to institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh, for its appropriate explanation.

Since 1990s the provision of Caretaker Government for conducting general elections has brought about substantial improvement on the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. The ballot has been the *sine quo non* for transfer of power.

The prime objective of the study was to inquire into the constraints of institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. The study tested the hypothesis borrowed from Samuel P. Huntington. The hypothesis went on: 'The rates of social mobilisation and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organisation and institutionalization are low. The result is political instability and disorder.' The primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change. The study might have a minor deviation from Huntington (1968) who viewed the issue of institutionalization both for democratic USA, UK and also for former totalitarian USSR (till 1990) along with the instability and disorder that had been prevailing in the Third World countries during that period. Huntington found order and stability in the democratic western as well as totalitarian USSR and, disorder and instability in Third World Countries. These Third World countries were neither democratic nor totalitarian in nature. Nevertheless, Huntington himself was in confusion about the suitable political creed of these countries.

In view of democratic transition in 1990s a study was conducted viewing Huntington's institutionalization paradigm in line with democracy. Thus, it is preferred to use the term as institutionalization *of democracy* instead of only *institutionalization* or *political institutionalization*. Or careful use of *institutionalization* or *political institutionalization* to mean *institutionalization of democracy*. However, Huntington found absence of institutionalization in the *changing societies* i.e. developing countries. These countries suffered and still have been suffering from political instability and political disorder. Because, compared to social and economic change, political institutions were sufficiently weak.

In Bangladesh, the 1990's movement for democratic transition provided an opportunity and left an example for many Third World countries to contain the changes democratically and thus to build, re-build or even create new political institutions in line with the changing socio-cultural, economic, political and global arena to sustain institutionalization process of democracy in the country.

X.1 Summary of findings: In terms of the hypothesis it is evident that the cumulative effect of increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation along with the

conscious efforts, have led to remarkable progress of the country in many respects. As an independent nation-state, Bangladesh has failures in many areas, but, at the same time, she has many aspects for being proud.¹ The macro-economic management and improvement was encouraging and there had been remarkable achievements in the social sectors during the last decade. The growth rate of GDP had gone up from 3.94 in 1990-1991 to 5.94 in 1999-2000. The literacy rate increased to 64 per cent and the life expectancy at birth reached to 61 years. The country was almost self-sufficient in rice production. Rural areas are well connected with cities, municipalities and growth centres with different modes of transport. Impressive successes have been achieved in reducing human poverty. The rate of improvement in human development index in Bangladesh was found to be faster in South Asia. Accordingly, incidence of human poverty declined from 61.3 per cent in 1980-83 to 41.6 per cent in 1997. All these have helped creating, among others, a huge number of middle class populace in the country.

The middle class populace with their conscious effort had been successful to bring about a change in the political power of the country. This was manifested in a joint declaration by the three alliances of political parties in November 1990. According to this declaration, the then autocratic ruler-Ershad had been compelled to hand over power to the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. This transfer of power from the autocratic ruler to a neutral caretaker government with a view to conduct a general election opened up the channels for democratic transition.

The general elections for the 5th Parliament under this caretaker government paved the way for institutionalization of democracy in the country. Further move of the political forces to amend the constitution following the path of *consent and debate* had been uniquely democratic. However, the 12th amendment to the Constitution, which reintroduced parliamentary democracy, further accelerated democratization process in the country. The whole process was done on the basis of consensus among the political forces of the country.

Again, this process did not or could not sustain. In lieu of adhering the path of adaptability, flexibility and complexity, the political forces of the country seemed to follow the traditional rigid and simple path. Accordingly, they (the political forces)

¹ See Report in this regard in The Weekly Dhaka Courier (Dhaka), 16 March 2001, p.13

became divided. The increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have remained to be adapted in complex, adaptable and flexible manner with the political institutions.

However, it is argued that increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation have had quantitative effects on the process of democratic transition. Since independence in 1971 and specifically since 1990's the rate of social and economic development indicators have considerably increased that also resulted into increase in people's consciousness.

The process had been accelerated by different historical events of the country in the form of social mobilisation and political participation. These were, among others, language movement of 1952, elections for East Pakistan Provincial Assembly in 1954, education movement in 1962, six-point movement of 1966, 1969's mass upsurge, general elections in 1970, war of liberation in 1971, anti-autocratic and pro-democratic movement in 1990s, parliamentary elections in February 1991, movement for caretaker government in 1994 and the general elections for the 7th Jatiya Sangsad in June 1996. The people of Bangladesh had mobilised in large number in these events.

Accordingly, the events also led to an enhanced process of political participation. Besides, the rate of increased political participation could be specifically found in the voter turnouts of different elections since 1970's and especially in the elections during 1990-1996. Compared to all general elections since 1970's, the voter turnouts in the general elections since 1990s had been remarkably increased. These increased rates of voter turnout have been identified as the mark of increased rate of political participation. The increased rate of voter turnout or increased rate of voter's (people's) participation might be termed as the outcome of growing people's consciousness. But increased rate of social mobilisation, consciousness and people's consciousness could not bring expected political stability and political order in the country.

The prevailing situation in the politics, bureaucracy, governance, institutions and public sector etc. negate much of the positive observations. However, it is worth mentioning that the appreciable achievements have been earned after the democratic transition in 1990s. Nevertheless, almost all the social, economic and political

achievements can be attributed to the democratisation process since 1990s. While some may argue that during the period opportunism governed the *raison d'être* of political parties, achievements should not be overlooked.

X.1.a *Achievements:*

The major achievements during the period may be summarised as follows:

1) A mass 'people power' campaign toppled the autocratic government in December 1990 and the Chief Justice of the country became an interim President (Chief Executive) with the consent of opposition parties. This is a creditable achievement for the people of Bangladesh. A general election was held on 27 February in 1991 and a democratically elected government under Begum Khaleda Zia was installed. The poll was declared free and fair by international and national observers. The elected government of 1991 was replaced in 1996 through a free and fair election as well. Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister. Besides another election for the 8th Parliament was held in 2001 which brought the BNP led four-party alliance into power.

2) An amendment was incorporated in the Constitution to enable a non-party caretaker government to take over the administration once the parliament expires or is dissolved. The caretaker government acts as an interim government and holds elections through the Election Commission to ensure that elections are held 'peacefully, fairly and impartially' (Article 58 D of the Constitution). All contesting parties stand on their political strength without any backing of the government machinery. This appears to be unique mechanism in Bangladesh for holding free and fair elections.

3) The process of election observation has been institutionalised by setting up some voluntary organisations, which has also strengthened fair conduct of elections. The civil society grouped together to ensure that elections are conducted in an impartial manner.

4) The voters have become more aware of their voting rights than ever before. They assess which local candidate is better able than the other to form opinions on the questions of the day and to represent their local interests. While there are clear connections between social class and voting, there is a pronounced swing in participation rate by the poor in the elections. Furthermore, election studies have demonstrated that the female participation in voting has remarkably increased during

the decade. Most of the poor females in both urban and rural areas have been found not too ignorant or apathetic to decide between rival party candidates.

5) Free media is a *sine qua non* for democracy. Since 1991, tight grip of state control on print media has been relaxed. It enjoys comparatively more freedom than before. The number of newspapers and magazines has increased dramatically. The democratic government of the day seems to tolerate criticism in print media.

6) The driving force during the period together with democracy is the *economic reforms* that have taken place in the country. The promotion of foreign investment particularly in export-oriented manufacturing industries has been a pivotal element of Bangladesh's market-oriented policy reforms. Bangladesh is one of the open economies in the developing world. The policy reform since 1991 envisaged that 'the public sector' would concentrate on essential areas that are not usually attractive to the private entrepreneurs either because the investments involved are too large or because the financial rate of return is not attractive.

On the other hand, the socio-economic and political changes were yet to be contained democratically along with the urge of its suitability with the culture and the tradition of the country. Thus, the authoritarian nature of the society is yet to be done away with.

The political parties of the country along with their student fronts played the key role in the pro-democratic movement in 1990s. They also advanced an innovative idea to form a non-party caretaker government (NPCTG), which ultimately led to an enactment of 13th Amendment to the Constitution. However, unlike the movement for independence in 1971, the pro-democratic movement of 1990's was urban-centric and dominated by students and middle-class urban dwellers. The majority rural people and people from agrarian class had hardly any role in 1990's movement. Moreover, even though the issue of NPCTG had gained ultimate endorsement from all political forces of the country, a considerable portion of them, earlier, had disagreed on the matter. Besides, the process of incorporating the 13th amendment to the Constitution for provision of NPCTG had again aligned with the process of chronic disagreement.

It is obvious that the increased rate of voter turnout, in most part has been 'mobilised' in nature rather than 'voluntary'. The contenders as well as the politicians of the election, in most cases, mobilise the people to cast votes in their favour. Thus the participation in the political process has been identified as mobilised participation and there has been a very little element of voluntary participation. So the questions emerge regarding the utility of such types of political participation in the institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, this type of mobilised participation hinted the dominance of money and muscle in the politics of the country. It also hindered the process of institutionalizing democracy. The constraints have been furthered with the violence and intimidation in the election, patronisation of terrorism by the politicians, and criminalisation of politics.

Nonetheless, the increased rates of social mobilisation and political participation require sufficient and suitable political institutions. But the country is also lagging behind such requirement; hence political instability and political disorder persist. However, the causes of political instability and political disorder have been explained as the constraints of institutionalizing democracy. Even though the 1990's democratic transition enhanced the possibility to regulate the causes of political instability and political disorder, democratically, this remains to be fulfilled.

The Opposition political parties along with all pervasive *hartal* calls have also exposed the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh, among others, through the persistent boycott of the parliament. Political disorder in the country, viewing in line with Huntington's argument, has been manifested through failure of government to implement its own five-year plan along with its incapacity to execute its own orders and Annual Development Programmes.

X.1.b Constraints: To inquire into the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh a sample survey was conducted among the cross section of middle class population in the capital city of Dhaka and in some other rural areas with a *set of questions*. The total sample size of the survey population was 174. We have found a good number of constraints through the investigation. Nevertheless, the findings of the survey reflect the perception of knowledgeable quarter. These institutionalization

constraints have been broadly categorised into socio-cultural, political, periodic and global. According to the findings of the study the “Institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)” were:

1. Socio-cultural constraints: The main socio-cultural constraints were lack of education, moral degradation, terrorism, deteriorating law and order situation, lack of democratic culture, under or no representation of the women, lack of parliamentary knowledge, attitude and behaviour, and different forms of intolerance etc.

2. Economic Constraints: We found the economic constraints as impact of corruption, huge gap of ownership of wealth between the MPs and the poor people (electorate) at grass roots level, and under or no representation of the agrarian class.

3. Political Constraints: The major political constraints were lack of internal democracy with in the political parties of the country, problems created by both the ruling as well as the opposition parties, confrontational nature of politics, political bickering, political interference in the public administration, lack of consensus on basic national issues, abrupt changes in constitution, lack of transparency and accountability in the administration, *hartal* (general strike), and naked conflict for power.

Besides it was also found that the process of globalisation had brought forward some problems to the institutionalization process of democracy in Bangladesh. There were also some constraints, which were periodic in nature.

There is no denying the fact that the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh those were found through our investigation for the period of 1990-1996 are likewise present in the subsequent period (s). However, in view of the existing constraints, it would be convincing to assess that the institutionalization process of democracy in the country has been “enduring as under serious adversity”². The remarks of the foreign observers could be mentioned in this regard.

² See Arun Kumar Goswami, “The Grits of Democratisation in Bangladesh”, in *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Volume 1, Number 1, University of Dhaka, June 2001, pp.133-150.

“The past record of political instability and the still incomplete acceptance of democracy as the only solution for the country’s problems, suggest that the democratic institutions of 1992 are a fragile growth that will need to be nurtured if they are to survive.”³

X.2 Recommendations: The free, fair and impartial elections under newly conceived system of caretaker government in February 1991 had given hope for institutionalising democratic process after a long period of authoritarian rules in the form of one party and military rule. But time and again the politicians failed to seize the opportunity to establish democratic norm and deliver goods to the people and country. This is an unfortunate phenomenon. In view of our study on “Institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh (1990-1996)” we put the recommendations in this section, which in our view could help understanding the sight of possible way to overcome the prevailing constraints to institutionalising democracy in Bangladesh. The recommendations are mentioned below.

1) In a democratic set-up Parliament is the institution where members of both ruling and opposition parties could play a vital role in formulating, amending and altering laws. Debates could take place on national and international issues of importance. Parliament is the venue of the elected representatives to voice the grievances of the voters of the constituencies they represent and present their considered views on national and international issues. The ruling party should take cognisance of their views in formulating policies and laws. The role of Parliamentarians can hardly be over emphasised. Therefore, there are no cogent reasons to boycott Parliament sessions by any member of the parliament.

2) In the Parliamentary democracy the roles of both the ruling party and the opposition is equally important. In order to enhance the confidence of the opposition parties in the Parliament a number of measures could be taken as per parliamentary traditions in different countries of the world. For example, in Great Britain the opposition party in the House of Commons forms shadow government to hail or criticise the formulation of laws and international issue. In Germany, the Deputy Speaker is elected from the opposition party to preside over the important Parliamentary Committees where extensive preparatory work for legislation is carried out. These

³ “The Bangladesh Democracy Program (BDP) Assessment”, *Final Report*, USAID/Bangladesh and Bureau for Asia Democratic Affairs and Special Issues Branch, June 1992, p. ii.

systems could be followed even in any modified way to maintain check on the government.

3) The mind-set of both the ruling and the opposition members in parliament should be changed according to the need of the time. Both of them should consider that their counterpart is also indispensable for the country. To run the country the ruling party need critical support from the opposition members. The ruling party alone can not identify the real problems of the country. The process to find out the real problems of the country, nevertheless, must be a complex one. It should not and could not be simple as the one side or the other may consider.

4) To prop up country's image abroad a number of steps might be taken that in turn also help for institutionalization of democracy in the country. The most important among these steps are, introduce good governance based on rule of law, transparency, accountability, commitment to people and, above all, improved law and order situation.

5) Politicians in general and the parliamentarians in particular should be trained properly. That means, political education should be imparted to the parliamentarians and for this reason their should be Parliamentary Institutions in which every parliamentarians should under go training and education on parliamentary as well as other system of governments in the modern world.

Appendix-I

Questionnaire

(To inquire into the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh a sample survey was conducted among the cross section of middle class population in the capital city of Dhaka and in some other rural areas of Bangladesh. The interviewees were requested to answer the following *set of questions*. The total sample size was 174.)

Tick (✓) the appropriate box or write the correct answer;

1. Name:

2. Date of birth:

3. Age as on date of interview:

4. Educational Qualifications:

5. Profession:

6. Religion: Islam ; Hindu ; Buddhism ; Christian ;

7. Gendered/Sex: Male ; Female ;

8. Income: Monthly-, Yearly-;

9. What are the institutionalization constraints of democracy in Bangladesh ?

10. What are the socio-cultural constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country?

11. What are the economic constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country?

12. What are the political constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country?

13. What are the global constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country?

14. What are the periodic constraints to institutionalizing democracy in the country?

15. What are the constraints of political parties for being conducted democratically?

16. What are the constraints of parliament to be the centre for all political activities of the country?

17. Do you think that the present parliament is not sufficient to face the challenges?

Yes No

18. Do you think that the present leadership in the political parties is not sufficient to face the challenges?

Yes No

Appendix-III

(For Chapter V Generalised Social mobilisation section)

List of some selected novelists along with their selected important works which might be seen as the evidence of generalised social mobilisation in Bangladesh

Name of Novelists	Works	Publisher	Place and year of publication
Alauddin Al-Azad	<i>Karnafuli</i>	KARAVA	Dhaka, 1962
	<i>Kshudha O Asha</i>	Lekhak Sangha Prokashanee,	Dhaka, 1964
Abu Ishaq	<i>Surja Dighal Badi</i>	Nowrose Kitabistan	Dhaka, 1955
Abu Jafar Shamsuddin	<i>Mukti</i>	Kitabistan	Dhaka, 1959
	<i>Bhawal Garer Upakhyakhan</i>	Upayan Prokashanee	Dhaka, 1963
	<i>Padma Meghna Jamuna</i>	Kitabistan	Dhaka, 1974
Abu Rushd	<i>Anishchit</i>	Student Ways	Dhaka, 1969
	<i>Nongar</i>	Boighar	Chittagong, 1374 Bengali Year
	<i>Samne Notun Din</i>	Warsi Book Centre	Dhaka, 1956
Abdul Gaffar Choudhury	<i>Chandra dwiper Upakhyan</i>	Kathabitan	Dhaka, 1961
Abul Fazal	<i>Jeeban Pather Jatree</i>	Naorose Kitabistan	Dhaka, 1948
	<i>Ranga Provat</i>	Chattagram Boighar	Chittagong
Abul Mansur Ahmed	<i>Abehayet</i>	Ahmed Publishing House	Dhaka, 1968
	<i>Jeeban-Kshudha</i>	M Anam and Co	Mymensingh, 1955
Ahmed Chafa	<i>Surja Tumi Sathee</i>	Student Ways	Dhaka, 1969
Jashim Uddin	<i>Boba Kahinee</i>	Palash Prokashanee	Dhaka, 1964
Zahir Rayhan	<i>Shesh Bikaler Meya</i>	Sandhanee Prokashanee	Dhaka, 1960
	<i>Hajar bachar Dhore</i>	Sandhanee Prokashanee	Dhaka, 1964
Zahirul Islam	<i>Agni Sakhyee</i>	Harappa Prokashanee	Dhaka, 1969
Rabeya Khatun	<i>Madhumatee</i>	Kathabitan	Dhaka, 1963
Mizanur Rahaman Shelly	<i>Patale Sharbaree</i>	Concept Publications	Dhaka, 1965
Shawkat Osman	<i>Kritadasher Hasi</i>	A B Publications	Dhaka, 1962
Shahidullah Kaiser	<i>Sangsaptak</i>	Purbahanee	Dhaka, 1965
Shamsuddin Abul Kalam	<i>Kanchan mala</i>	Osmania Book Depot	Dhaka, 1961

Satyen Sen	<i>Alberunee</i>	Prakash	Dhaka, 1376 Bengali Year
	<i>Uttaran</i>	Student Ways	Dhaka, 1970
	<i>Ruddhadwar Muktapran</i>	Puthighar Prakash	Dhaka, 1374 Bengali Year
Sarder Jainudin	<i>Anek Surjer Asha</i>	Boighar	Chittagong, 1373 Bengali Year
	<i>Biddhasta Roder Dheu</i>	Adil Brothers	Dhaka, 1974
Syed Waliullah	<i>Kado Nach Kado</i>	Nawrose Kitabistan	Dhaka, 1964
Anwar pasha	<i>Sahitya Shilpee Abul Fazal</i>	Boighar	Chittagong, 1966

Appendix-IV

(For Chapter V Generalised Social mobilisation section)

List of some selected poets along with their important selected works which might be seen as the evidence of generalised social mobilisation in Bangladesh

Name of poets	Poetry	Publisher	Place of publication
Rabindranath Tagore	<i>Utsharga</i> , in Rabindrarchanabali 10 th Volume (Works of Rabindranath)	Viswabharatee	Calcutta, 1385 Bengali Year.
	<i>Kalpna</i> , in Rabindrarchanabali 7 th Volume (Works of Rabindranath)	Viswabharatee	Calcutta, 1975
	<i>Kheya</i> , in Rabindrarchanabali 10 th Volume (Works of Rabindranath)	Viswabharatee	Calcutta, 1385
	<i>Geetanjalee</i>	Rabindrarchanabali 11 th Volume (Works of Rabindranath)	Viswabharatee
	<i>Chaitalee</i> in Rabindrarchanabali 5 th Volume (Works of Rabindranath)	Viswabharatee	Calcutta, 1385

Satyendra Nath	<i>Avra Abeer</i>		Calcutta, 1922
	<i>Kuhu O Keka</i> , Kabi Satyandranath Granthabalee, 2 nd Volume,		1 st Published in Calcutta
Kazi Nazrul Islam	<i>Agnibeena</i> , Nazrul Rachanabali, 1 st part,	Central Bengali Development Board, Dacca,	Dacca, 11 Jayishtha 1373 Bengali
	<i>Zinzeer</i> , Nazrul Rachanabali, 2 nd part	Ibid	Ibid
	<i>Chandrabindu</i> , Nazrul Rachanabali, 2 nd part	Ibid	Ibid
	<i>Samyabad</i> , Nazrul Rachanabali, 2 nd part	Ibid	Ibid
	<i>Sarbaharar</i> , Nazrul Rachanabali, 2 nd part	Ibid	Ibid
Golam Mostafa	<i>Khojrose</i> , Golam Mostafa Kabyagrantha	Dacca	Dacca 1378 Bengali Year.
Farruk Ahmed	<i>Azad Karo Pakistan</i> , Farruk Rachanabali	Dacca	Dacca 1386 Bengali year
	<i>Satya Sagarer Majhi</i> , Farruk Rachanabali	Dacca	Dacca 1386 Bengali year
	<i>Sirajam Munira</i> , Farrukrachanabali	Dacca	Dacca 1386 Bengali year
Siakandar Abu Zafar	<i>Timirantik</i> ,	Samakal Prokashani,	Dacca, 1971.
	<i>Prashanna Prahar</i>	Samakal Prokashani,	Dacca, 1965.

Appendix V

(For Chapter VI 2 a. p 182)

The true copy of permission letter that allowed the Awami League to function after 1975,

No. 3A-41/76/531-P.A.

Dated. 4th November, 1976

To: Mrs. Sajeda Chowdhury
Acting General Secretary
Bangladesh Awami League
Moricha House, Indira Road,
Dacca

Sub: Submission of Documents, Under Paragraph 4 (1) of the Political Parties Regulation, 1976.

Madam,

With reference to your letter dated 03.10.76 and 01.11.76 on the above subject I am directed to inform that the revised document submitted on behalf of the political parties regulation, 1976 for operating as a political party.

Sd.

Section Officer

Source: Ghulam Akbar Chowdhury, *Bangladesher Rajniti O Awami Leaguer Bhumika* (Politics of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League), Muktdhara. Dhaka, 1998.

Appendix-VI

(For Chapter VI, Section VI.2.a)

Eleven causes of military intervention delineated by Bertsch, Clark and Wood.

- 1) a sharp decline in the prestige of the government, or of the ruling political party, causing the regime to use increasing amounts of physical coercion to maintain order and to stress the imperative of national unity in the face of crisis and consequent suppression of dissent could prompt military intervention in politics.
- 2) possible cause in schism between or among political leaders, when military commanders begin to doubt the continued ability of the civilian regimes to govern effectively.
- 3) military intervention is more likely when there is low probability of external intervention by a major world power or by neighbouring states in the event of a coup.
- 4) military coups in some countries could also prompt similar action in the neighbouring countries.
- 5) domestic social antagonism, particularly in the countries governed by a minority group (Ibos in Nigeria and Arabs in Zanzibar) could give rise to military coup.
- 6) economic crisis affecting the standards of living of organised urban sections, e.g. labours unions, civil servants, etc.
- 7) Corruption and inefficiency among governmental and party officials or the alleged "selling out" of the nation to some foreign groups could invite military intervention, as happened in Peru and Chile.
- 8) a highly rigid class structure of society may leave military service the only possible avenue for the poor but ambitious people to move from low to high status.
- 9) growing belief among the military that they are the only social class with enough discipline and enough commitment to modernisation to move the country out of its traditional ways.
- 10) "foreign influence", particularly experience gained by the military in foreign wars or in foreign training centres, or foreign aid in the form of equipment and weapons.
- 11) defeat of the military in a war with another country could lead to a military coup, particularly when the military are convinced that the civilian government betrayed them by negotiating disadvantageous peace terms or by mismanaging the war effort behind the front lines, as happened in Bolivia in the 1940s.

Source Gary K. Bertsch, Robert P. Clark, David M. Wood, *Comparing Political Systems: Power and Policy in Three Worlds*, London: MacMillan, 1969

Appendix-VII
(For Chapter VII, Section 1, p.213)

Name and Number of slains killed by the police and the ruffians of Ershad to quell the movement for democracy

Name of the slain persons	Number of slains	Date of Killing	Alleged Killer	Place	Party Affiliation of the slain	Rem
Zakir, Joynal, Mozammel, Kanchan, Deepali Saha and others	8(Eight)	10 February, 1983	Police Firing	Near Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Dhaka	Anonymous	
Four Anonymous	4(four)	15 February to 18 February, 1983	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Abdullah, Nurunnabi and Obaid	3(Three)	28 November, 1983	Police	In front of Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka	Anonymous	
Selim, Delwar	2(Two)	28 November, 1983	Ran over by Police truck	Dhaka	Awami League affiliated Students' Organisation	
Moyezuddin Ahmed	1(One)	September, 1984	Ershad's ruffian Ajam Khan	Kaliganj Municipality, Gazipur, Dhaka	Awami League	
Anonymous	9(Nine)	27 October, 1984	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Titas, Ramiz and one anonymous	3(Three)	1 November, 1984	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Roufun Bosunia	1(One)	13 February, 1985	Ershad's ruffians in a procession	Dhaka University Campus	Awami League affiliated Students' Organisation	
Shajahan	1(One)	13 February, 1985	Police	Rajshahi	Anonymous	
Anonymous	20(Twenty)	1986	Police and Ruffians	In different district towns	Anonymous	
Anonymous	3(Three)	22,23 June, 1987	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Nur Hossain	1(One)	1 November, 1987	Police	Zero Point in front of Dhaka GPO	Awami League affiliated Youth Organisation	
Mohiuddin Shamim, Badrul, Mohammed Hasan, Albert Gomes, Swapan Biswas, Swapan Chowdhury, Ramesh Boidya, G. K. Chowdhury, Sajjad Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Kashem, Sajal Dutta, Palash, Sabuj Hossain, Kamal Hossain, Shadat Hossain, Hasan, Chan Miah, D K Das, Quddus, Pankaj Baidya, Gobinda Das, Baharuddin, Ajit Sarker and others	More than 25 including some anonymous	24 January, 1988	Police Firing in an Opposition rally which was to be addressed by AL leader Sheikh Hasina	Chittagong	Most of the slains were members and workers of AL and CPB with some others who had no party affiliation	

Anonymous	8(Eight)	1988	Police	In different district Towns	Anonymous	
Nazimuddin and Others	more than one	1989	Police	Dhaka		
Jehad, Monwar, Billal, Zakir and others	6(Six)	10 October, 1990	Police	Dhaka		Students
Maniruzzaman Manir	1(One)	13 October, 1990	Police	Dhaka		
Dr. Shamsul Alam Milon	1(One)	27 November, 1990	Ruffians of Ershad	On Dhaka University Campus	Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA)	Professional
Alamgir, Hasina Akter	2(Two)	28 November, 1990	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	Students
Yunus, Milon	2(Two)	29 November, 1990	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Murad, Hanif	2(Two)	30 November, 1990	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Akkas Ali, Abdul Khaleque and 18 Others	20 (Twenty)	1 December, 1990	Police	Dhaka	Anonymous	
Nure Alam Bidyut, Kazi Nurul Huda, Emon, Abul Hossain, Md. Sarwar Hossain, Abdul Karim Mubyan, Abu Jafzal Shafi, Maharaj, Nimai, Firoj, Jahangir and others	15 (Fifteen)	December, 1990	Police and Ruffians	Dhaka, Chittagong and some other district towns of the country	Anonymous	
Total	140(at least)					

Source: Compiled with the information gathered from different Daily Newspapers

Appendix-VIII

(For Chapter VII)

Position of different political parties in the parliamentary general elections (from 1st to 4th)

Parliamentary general elections	Name of political parties	Number of seat(s) won in the elections
First, 7 March 1973	Bangladesh Awami League	293+15
	Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	1
	Bangladesh Jatiya League	1
	Independent	5
Total		300+15(reserved seat for Women)=315
Second, 18 January 1979	BNP	220+30=250
	AL	39
	AL	12
	JSD	8
	Islamic Democratic League	6
	AL(Mizan)	2
	Jatiya League	2
	Bangladesh Ganatantrik Andolan	1
	Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal	1
	Jatiya Ekota Party	1
	NAP (Mozaffar)	1
	Independent	5
Total		300+30(reserved seat for women) =330
Third, 7 May 1986	Jatiya Party	183+30=213
	AL	76
	Jamaat	10
	CPB	6
	Oikya Pad	5
	Muslim League	4
	JSD(Rab)	4
	WP(Nazrul)	3
	JSD(Siraj)	3
	NAP(Muzaffar)	2
	Independent	4
	Total	
Fourth, 3 March 1988	Jatiya Party	251
	Combined Opposition Party	19
	JSD(Siraj)	3
	Freedom Party	2
	Independent	25
Total		300
No reserved seat for women		

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Secretariat, Agargaon, Dhaka

Appendix-IX

(For Chapter VII.3, p.256)

The Growth of Bangladeshi Electorate

Acts or Ordinance of Representation	Provisions	Total Voters	Population
Indian Council Act, 1861	The Governor General was directed to establish a Legislative Council for Bengal. The 12-member Legislative Council was created through nomination and there was no election	NA	Total population may be around 2.54 crore according to estimate of M.A.Rahim
Indian Council Act, 1892	Increased the number of members from 12 to 20. The provision for nomination was made on the basis of recommendation from certain recommending authorities. Apart from Calcutta Corporation all other recommending bodies were nominated by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.	NA	2.66 crore population
Indian Council Act, 1909	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of additional members increased to 50, 2. Introduced separate electorate for Muslims, 3. Non-official members were to be elected either by groups of local authorities, large landholders, trade associations or universities. The principle of election, which remained implied in the Act of 1892, was embodied in 1909. 		

<p>Indian council Act, 1919</p>	<p>1. Increased the number to 140. The distribution of seats were, i. Nominated members 26, (a)Official 20, (b)Non-official 6. ii. Special electorates 22 seats iii. General constituencies 92, (a)Muslim Urban, (b)Muslim Rural, (c) Non-Muslim Urban (d) Non-Muslim Rural (e)European (f)Anglo-Indian Qualifications of the Voters (i) Members of the related community or group. (ii) Residence, (iii) Payment of Taxes of certain amount. For rural Non-Muslim payment of cess at least Rupee 1 or union rate of not less than Rupees 2 per annu For Urban areas payment of municipal taxes Rupees 1/8 per annum. For Howrah and Cossipore Chitpur Rs.3 per annum.</p>	
<p>The Government of India Act, 1935</p>	<p>Bi-Cameral Legislature, Upper House 62 members,(a)Provincial Governor Nominated 5, (b)Legislative Assembly nominated 27, and all other members of the Upper House were elected. The categories were General Urban 2, General Rural 8, Mohammedan Urban 1, Mohanmedan Rural 16, and European 3. Lower House 250 members, 1.Muslims 117, 2.Caste Hindus 48, 3. Scheduled Caste Hindus 30 and Special Seats 55. Separate electorate retained in the Government of India Act, 1935</p>	<p>The Elections of 1937 was held under this Act. There were 66,95,483 voters. The number of Muslim Votes was 34,58,364.</p>
		<p>The Elections of 1946 were held under the Government of India Act 1935.</p>
	<p>The Elections of 1954 was also held under the Government of India Act, 1935(Separate Electorate)</p>	<p>Muslim voters= 1,51,59,825, General= 20,95,355,</p>

		Scheduled Caste= 23,03,578, Women, Muslim= 1,61,966, General=25,726, Scheduled Caste=14,911, Pakistani Christian= 43,911, Budhist= 1,36,417. Total Voter= 1,99,41,563.	
Legal Framework Order (LFO), 1970	Provision for Separate Electorate was abolished and the General Elections of 1970 were held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise.	Non-adherence of the election results by the Pakistani rulers led the War of Bangladesh's Liberation in 1971.	
In all other subsequent elections the country did not get back to the principle of separate electorate. Since the first parliamentary general elections in 1973 the country have been following the principle of Universal Adult Franchise.			

Source: (i) *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Volume VII, p 292. (ii) M.A.Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*, Vol.II, 1982, p. 15. (iii) Bangladesh Election Commission, *The Election to East Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1954*, Dacca, 1977, pp.22.

Appendix-X

(For Chapter VIII)

Name of the opposition MPs who tabled the Adjournment motions during the opposition -participated 286 working days in 13 sessions of the 5th JS.

Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury
A.M.Riasat Ali
Rashed Khan Menon
M.Shamsul Haque
Syed Nazibul Bashar
Latifur Rahaman
Ruhul Quddus
Aminul Islam
Md. Abdus Shahid
Abul Kalam Azad
Abdur Razzak
Shajahan Siraj
Abdus Samad Azad
Rahamat Ali
Motiā Choudhury
Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury
Rafiqul Islam
Mizanur Rahaman Manu
Tofael Ahmed
Tabibur Rahaman Sarder
Shajahan Khan
Joynal Abedin Hazari
Shajahan Chowdhury
Hafeza Asma Khanam
Kazi Abdur Rashid
Khan Tipu Sultan
Manirul Huq Chowdhury
Mosharraf Hossain

Source: Adopted from Parliament Secretariat documents and Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1998, p.154.

Appendix-XI

(For Chapter IX, Political Constraints)

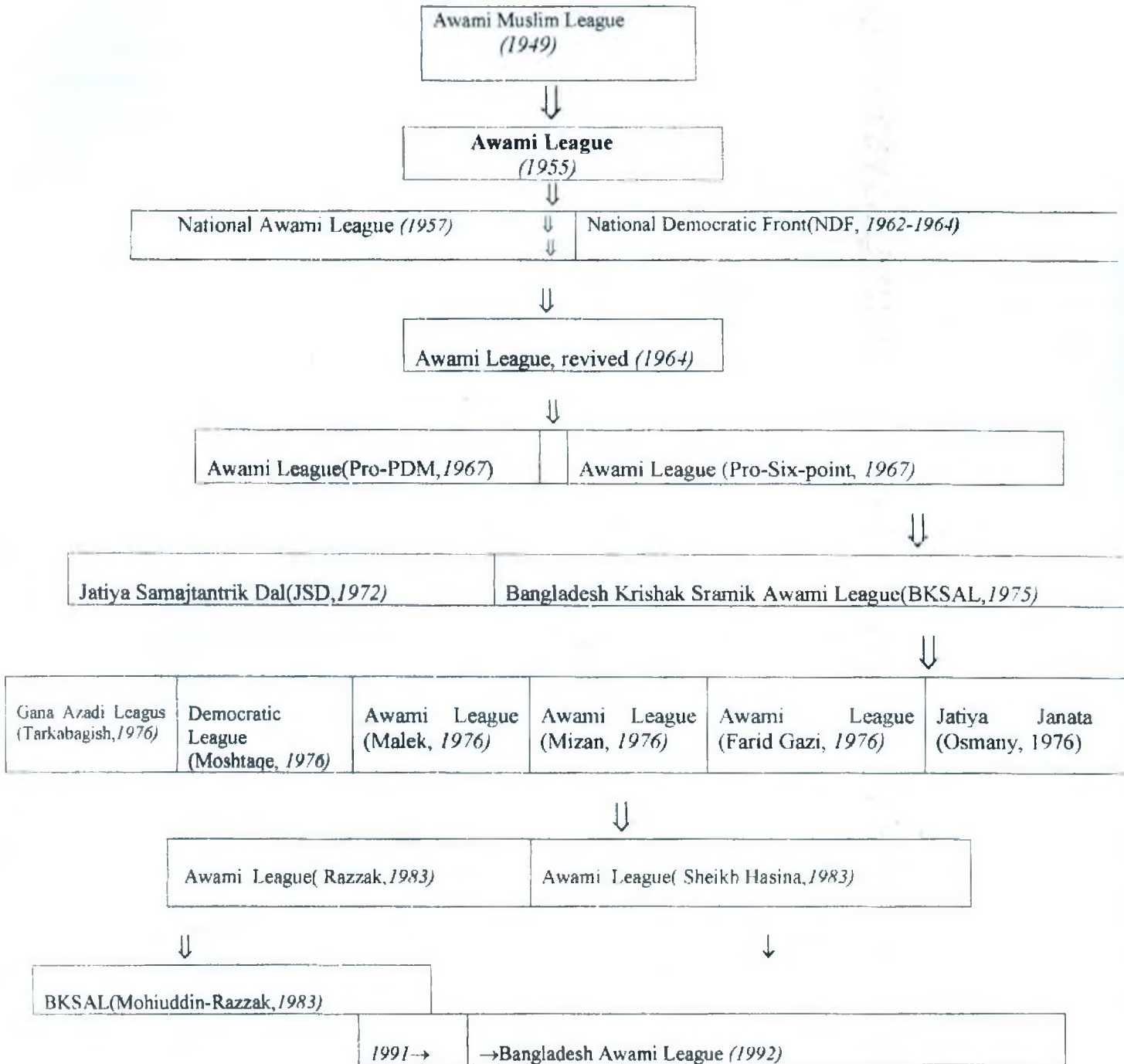
President and General Secretary of Bangladesh Awami League in different years		
Year	President	General Secretary
1949(Working Committee)	Moulana Bhashani	Shamsul Haque
1953(First Council)	Moulana Bhashani	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman
1955(Council)	Moulana Bhashani	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman
1964(Council)	Moulana Tarkabagish	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman
1966(Council)	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman Syed Nazrul Islam (Temporary in Charge)	Tajuddin Ahmed Amena Begum (in charge)
1969(Council)	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman	Tajuddin Ahmed
1972(Council)	Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman	Zillur Rahaman
1974(Council)	Md. Kamruzzaman	Zillur Rahaman
1975(BKSAL)	Chairman Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman	Abdur Razzak
1978(Council)	Abdul Malek Ukil	Abdur Razzak
1981(Council)	Sheikh Hasina	Sajeda Choudhury(in- charge, 1983- 1987)
1987(Council)	Sheikh Hasina	Sajeda Choudhury
1992(Council)	Sheikh Hasina	Zillur Rahaman
1997(Council)	Sheikh Hasina	Zillur Rahaman

Source: Collected from Awami League Office, Dhaka by the author in June 2000, and The Bangladesh Times, May 6, 1997, p.1, 8

Appendix-XII

(For Chapter IX, Political Constraints)

Schematic presentation of Awami League's ascendancy to present position



Source: Collected from Awami League Office, Dhaka by the author in June 2000.

Appendix-XIII

(For Chapter X, Political Constraints)

Results of Survey conducted by *The Daily Bhorer Kagoj* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka)

Total Number of Respondents 6896

QUESTIONS	Replied Yes	Replied No	Restrain from answering
Behind the scene fund collection by political parties is the principal cause for spread of corruption in the country	5868 (85.1%)	588 (8.52%)	---
People have the right to know the income source of political parties	6256(90.71%)	360(5.22%)	280(4.06%)
The annual accounts of income and expenditure of the political parties should be officially announce for the public	6192(89.8%)	452(6.55%)	252(3.62%)

The three questions of opinion survey were published in *The Daily Bhorer Kagoj* on April 25, 2000. People from all walks of life spontaneously took part in the survey. The respondents' opinion were collected in five days until 29 April 2000. The method of random sampling was followed to select the survey population. Apart from Dhaka the survey was also spread through some other parts of the country. These places were Nandail, Mymensingh, Parbatipur (Dinajpur), Nabiganj, Habiganj, Comilla, Matlab(Chandpur), Gaibandha, Nilfamari, Munshiganj, Magura, Madaripur, Barisal, Rajshahi, Barguna, Sherpur, Islampur, Jamalpur, Netrokona, Noakhali, Chatkhil(Laxmipur), Savar(Dhaka), Sreemangal(Moulavibazar), Seetakundu, Meerasarai, Rajan, Chittagong, Kapasia(Gazipur), Goalando(Rajbari), and Faridpur Thana of Pabna District. (See *Bhorer Kagoj*, May 7, 2000, p 1,2.)

Appendix-XIV
Chief Election Commissioners in different Period

Period	Name of the Chief Election Commissioners	Remarks
1970's General Election	Justice Abdus Sattar	
7 July 1972 to 7 July 1977	Justice Md. Idris	
8 July 1977 to 17 February 1985	Justice Nurul Islam	
Ershad suspended the Constitution after capturing the state power through a bloodless Coup. Thus Nurul Islam continued three years more than his scheduled time		
17 February 1985 to 17 February 1990	Justice A T M Masud	
17 February 1990 to 24 December 1990	Justice Sultan Hossain Khan	
25 December 1990 to 18 April 1995	Justice Abdur Rouf	He was the first one to be nominated on consensus basis.
27 April 1995 to 6 April 1996	Justice A K M Sadek	He was nominated without consultation with the opposition parties.
9 April 1995 to 8 May 2000	Md. Abu Hena	First bureaucrat nominated as CEC on consensus basis.
23 May 2000	M A Sayeed	second bureaucrat

Source: Collected from the Bangladesh Election Commission, Dhaka by the Researcher.

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