



A Brief  
**History** of  
Bangladesh  
With Essays on Bangladesh Studies



**Dr. S M A Mamun Chowdhury**



# **A Brief History of Bangladesh**

**With Essays on Bangladesh Studies**

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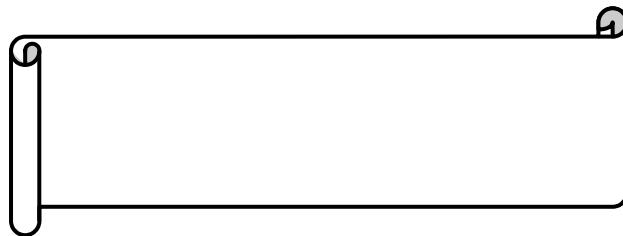
**By**

**Dr. Sayed M Abdullah Al Mamun Chowdhury**  
BA (Hon's) MA (First Class First), M.Phil, PhD

**Chairman**  
Department of International Relations  
Rajshahi University  
Ex-Associate Professor  
Department of History

A Brief History of Bangladesh 9

Rajshahi University



**Dedicated to my beloved mother  
Roushan Ara Begum  
who was an activist of language movement in  
1952**



## Preface

Without having a clear conception of the national ideology as well as obvious knowledge on the history and heritage, no nation can withstand with dignity. Despite this, Bangladesh had been ignorant for long years to offer its learners an authentic narration of its history in the academic level. What the learners have been learnt all those years through the academic curriculum was neither satisfactory nor authentic. A zigzag style of poorly organized texts was offered, therefore, the learners found no interest in studying history. However, the present authority is trying to reorganize the study-system; therefore, study of history in the tertiary level has been made compulsory. The present work entitled ‘A Brief History of Bangladesh: with selected Essays on Bangladesh Studies’ is an effort to contribute to this noble enterprise.

In this study, the learners will find a brief history of Bangladesh from the ancient period to the liberation war of Bangladesh. The first four chapters are organized to cover this history.

There are five more chapters which include updated information of the constitution, economy, tribal groups and the situation of Chittagong hill tracts, government system, foreign policy, society and culture etc. of Bangladesh.

It is hoped that this book will be valuable for the learners of the history of Bangladesh and the learners of Bangladesh Studies in the tertiary level.

We've tried our best to present an error-free edition. However, some printing mistakes still remain in the present edition. We'll try to amend them in the next edition.

If the learners find even a piece of help from this edition, we'll feel fine, which will guide us to approach one more step forward.

Author

**Written specially in accordance with the new syllabus for all Public and Private Universities of Bangladesh and West Bengal**

## **Contents**

### **Part-o1: A Brief History of Bangladesh**

<b>Chapter-01 :</b>	Origin of the Name of ‘Bangladesh’, the People and Language .....	7-45
<b>Chapter-02 :</b>	Geographical Features of Bangladesh.....	47-63
<b>Chapter-03 :</b>	Roots of Bangladesh: Political Development of Bengal, specially of the Eastern Bengal during, (a) Ancient Period, (b) Medieval Period (1204-1765), (c) British Rule (1765-1947).....	65-188
<b>Chapter-04 :</b>	Emergence of Bangladesh: Cultural, Political and Economical Background-Towards Independence (1970-1971), Liberation War (26 March, 1971-16 December 1971), Role of India, China and the USSR.....	189-248

### **Part-o2: Bangladesh Studies**

<b>Chapter-05 :</b>	Constitution of Bangladesh and Major Amendments.....	249-264
<b>Chapter-06 :</b>	Politics and Governance: Party System of Bangladesh and its Characteristics- The Executive, The Legislature and the	

Judiciary Branch of the Government- Local Government and Agencies.....	265-288
<b>Chapter-07 :</b> Foreign Policy: Goals, Objectives, SAARC, and Bangladesh.....	287-303
<b>Chapter-08 :</b> Society and Social Structure: Culture and Religion, Education.....	305-354
<b>Chapter-09 :</b> Tribal People, Insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Peace Accord (Dec.1997).....	355-382

## **Chapter- One**

### **Origin of the Name of Bangladesh, the People and Language**

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#### **Objectives**

This chapter aims at introducing the learners with their basic identity i.e.to provide information about the anthropological identity of the Bengali nation, the origin and the development of their language and literature, art and architecture. It will alsodiscuss on the origin of the country name: Bangladesh.

#### **Chapter Outlines**

Origin of the name of Bangladesh, identity of the people, origin of ‘Bangla’ language, literature and culture; festivals, religion, myth, food habits, dress, ornaments; social, economic and cultural life.

#### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will be able to answer the questions on their racial background, language, literature, social activities and customs, economic life, cultural achievements etc. They will also be able to discuss on how the name ‘Bangladesh’has been emerged.

## **Chapter-One**

### **Origin of the Name of Bangladesh, the People and Language**

#### **Introduction**

The independent, sovereign state ‘Bangladesh’ has come into being in 1971 through a blood-shedding liberation war. This modern country has on its south the Bay of Bengal, Myanmar in the south-east and India by other three sides. However, ‘Bangladesh’ is actually a larger eastern part of original ‘Bangla’. The term ‘Bangla’ from which the country-name ‘Bangladesh’ is derived, has its distinct and unique definition. On August 25, 1955 when the members of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly (MCA) elected from the Muslim League and other Islamist parties argued for placing ‘East Pakistan’ instead of ‘East Bengal’, Sheikh Mujibar Rahman protested the attempt fiercely and gave the following speech in the parliament:

Sir, you will see that they want to place the words ‘East Pakistan’ instead of ‘East Bengal’. We have demanded so many times that you should make it ‘Bengal.’ The word ‘Bengal’ has a history, has a tradition of its own. You can change it only after the people have been consulted. If you want to change it, then we will have to go back to Bengal and asked them whether they accept it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hasan Hafizur Rahman(edited), *Bangladesher Shadhinatajuddha: Dalipatra*, Vol.1 (Dhaka: Ministry of Information, Govt. of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh,

He also said, ‘So far as the changing name is concerned, we would like to be called ourselves as Bengali.’<sup>2</sup>

However, it is a matter of discussion whether the term ‘Bangla’ within the name ‘Bangladesh’ indicates a nation or a language or a place. To get the answer, let us examine the origin of the name of Bangladesh.

### **1.1 Origin of the name of Bangla/Bangladesh**

The official name ‘Bangladesh’ came into existence through the declaration of independence in March 26, 1971. The word ‘Bangladesh’ is derived from ‘Bangla’, which is further derived from the words ‘Bongo’, ‘Bongal’, ‘Bongaloh’ etc. However, it is difficult to identify the exact origin of the word ‘Bangla’ due to insufficient documents. Therefore, the scholars try to originate the word from different sources such as ancient literature, stone or copper plate inscriptions and myths.

#### **According to ancient manuscripts**

The word ‘Bongo’ was first mentioned in a verse of Aryan literature *Oiteriyo Aronnok*.<sup>3</sup> During second century BC Patanjoli mentioned three divisions of eastern India: Aungo, Bango and Summa in his *Mohabhashso*.<sup>4</sup>

Some argue that the word ‘Bongo’ indicates a place because it was a very ancient ‘Janapad’(i.e. human habitation). In the ancient manuscripts, it was mentioned as a territory adjacent to Magadha and Coalinda.

In the *Mahabharata*, it was mentioned as the neighboring place of Pundra, Tamralipti and Summa.

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1982), p. 431.

<sup>2</sup>*Speeches of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in the Parliament(1955-56)*, Vol.1, edited by Ziaur Rahman (Dhaka: Hakkani Publishers, 1990), p.29.

<sup>3</sup>Sukumar Sen, *Bangala Shahitter itihas*, Prothom Khondo, Purbardho(Kolikata: Eastern Publishers, Ponchom Sonskoron, 1970), p. 1-5.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

In the writings of Chandragupta (Vikramaditya), Chanakkodeva (Koutilya), the stone plates of Rashtrakuta Govinda III (Nesari plates, 805 AD) and the books of Kalidas contained the description of ‘Banga Janapad’.

It was assumed that in the east and east-south part of present Bangladesh, there lived a nation named ‘Bango’, for which the place is known as ‘Bango’. The ancient documents also indicate that the place between the Ganga and the Bhagirathi River was known as ‘Bongo’.

### **Observations of the linguists**

The linguists observe that like some river names such as the Gonga, the Hoang Ho, and the Yang Se Kiang ‘Bang’ or ‘Bong’ contains the same sound: ‘ng’ or ‘ing’, which indicates ‘wetland’.

Others believe that the name originates from the Tibetan word ‘Bans’, which means ‘wet’ or ‘moist’. So, they conclude, the name ‘Bang’ or ‘Bong’ is derived to indicate the east or eastern side of the Ancient River the Bhagirathi, because approximately three thousand years before the vast eastern side of the Bhagirathi was a wetland.

Again, some others believe that the word ‘Bang’ is derived from Dravidian-speaking tribe ‘Bang’ or ‘Banga’ that settled in the area around the year 1000 BC.

It is also believed that the word Vanga (Bongo) has come from the Austric word ‘Bonga’, which means ‘Sun-god’.

Some also believe that the name originated from Assamese word ‘Bodo Bang La’ which means ‘plain lands’.

### **Description of Abul Fazal**

Again, it is believed that the word ‘Bangla’ is derived from a Sanskrit word ‘Bongal’: Bong + al (Sanskrit suffix)> Bongal> Bangla. Abul Fazal, a courtier of Mughal emperor Akbar, gave an interesting description of the origin of ‘Bangla’ in his renowned book *Ain-e-Akbari*. He wrote, in the ancient period, the people of ‘Bong’ used to build ten yard high and twenty yardwide ‘ail’ (dam) to protect the corn fields from flood water.<sup>5</sup> So ‘Bangla’ is derived from Bong + ail> Bongail>Bongal> Bangla.

### **Observations of Sukumar Sen**

Dr. Sukumar Sen observes that the English ‘Bengal’ or the Portuguese ‘Bengala’ is derived from the Farsi word ‘Bongaloh’. In *Dharmasutra* of Boudhayan ‘Banga’ is mentioned as a territory out of Aryan civilization and adjacent to Kolinga. *The Mahabharata* mentioned in its chapter ‘Digbijoy’ that people of ‘Bang’ attacked the Aryans with Vim from Pundra.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rahim & Others, *Bangladeshher Itihas*(Dhaka: Nouroj Kitabistan, 2001), pp. 18-20.

### **Observations of Ramesh Chandra Majumdar**

Romesh Chandra Majumdar argued that ‘Bong’ and ‘Bongal’ are different words. The word ‘Bangla’ is derived from ‘Bongal’ because sometimes, when we want to insult somebody we use the word ‘Bangal’ and it is an age-old tradition. According to him, from the word ‘Bongal’ there derived country-name Bangla>Bangladesh and nationality ‘Bangali’.<sup>6</sup>

### **Observations of Justice Habibur Rahman**

The ex- chief advisor of Caretaker Government Muhammad Habibur Rahman, a renowned researcher of History of Bengal, mentioned in his book *Gongariddhi Theke Bangladesh* that the name ‘Bang’ is derived from the name of a son of Prophet Nuh or Noah.<sup>7</sup> He also indicates that the name ‘Banga’ might be derived from ‘Karpas-cotton’ because in the ancient times both the names used to convey the same meaning.<sup>8</sup>

### **According to the Muslim accounts**

According to the Muslim accounts, ‘Bang’ is the name of a son of Hind (who was the son of Ham and the grandson of Prophet Noah).<sup>9</sup> *The Bible (Old Testament)* also supports this to some extent.

### **Some myths**

There are also some interesting myths about the origin of the word ‘Bong’ or ‘Bang’. According to *the Mahabharata* and *the Purana*, Harivamsha Vanga was one of the adopted sons of king Vali(Bali) who founded the Vanga (Banga) Kingdom. According to Brahman legend, Shudeshna, the queen of the king of Vali(king of Chandra dynasty) gave birth to five sons- Aunga, Bonga, Pundra, Kolingga and Summa by the help of a blind saint Dirghatoma.

### **Historical development of the naming of Bangla**

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rahim & Others, *op.cit*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Habibur Rahman, *Gongariddhi Theke Bangladesh*(Bangla Academy: Bhasa Shaheed Gronthamala, 1994), pp.11-14.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*

In fact, from the very ancient times, the boundary of the country had been changed in line with numerous political changes. Sometimes it was called as ‘Vanga’, Vangal or Bangala. The first Bengali independent ruler Sashanka united the whole Bengal under the name ‘Gaur’.

During Pala and Sena dynasty, the rulers preferred to be addressed as ‘Gaureshwar’ (the king of Gaur) than ‘Bangeshwar’ (the king of Bengal).

After Bakhtiar’s invasion, Bengal was known as ‘Lakhnauti’ or Lakkhanavoti’. Later, the Muslim rulers preferred to mention the area as ‘Bangla’ than ‘Gaur’ or ‘Pundra’.

According to the medieval historian Shams E Siraj Afif, when Shams-ud-Din Illius Shah ruled the area, he took the title ‘Shah –e – Bangala’.

Later the great Mughals named the area as ‘Suba Bangla.’ Before the Battle of Plassey Bengal meant the area integrated with ‘Bangla’, Vihar and Orissa.

However, during the British rule, some parts of Bengal were amalgamated with different provinces. In 1905, Bengal province was again divided into West Bengal and East Bengal. Assam was included to the latter. Thereafter, in 1911 the decision was reversed. Finally, in 1947 Bengal was divided into East Bengal and West Bengal as per Redcliff boundary commission. As a part of Pakistan, Bengal was first called East Bengal. However, during the commencement of Pakistan’s first constitution in 1956, East Bengal was renamed as East Pakistan ignoring the protest of Bengali parliament members. When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh on 26 March, 1971 he mentioned the country-name as ‘Bangladesh’, which was later approved by the Mujibnagar Government through ‘The Proclamation of Independence’ on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1971 at Mujibnagar, Meherpur.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, we come to know that the ‘origin’ of the name ‘Bangladesh’ is enrooted deeply. The first part of the word ‘Bangla’ has a history, a tradition of its own. Sometimes, it indicates

the name of a nation, sometimes a place and sometimes a language. However, in the twentieth century, the word ‘Bangla’ conveyed the meaning of ‘place’ and ‘language’. After, language movement in 1952, the word became prominent in indicating ‘state language’. During our liberation war in 1971, the word took a suffix ‘desh’ after it and together with made our country-name ‘Bangladesh’ which generally means the country inhabited by ‘Bangla’ speaking people.

## 1.2 The People (Racial and Anthropological Identity)

### Introduction

Biologically, humans belong to the same species. However, people explored place to place from the very beginning due to external reasons: climate change, natural calamities, scarcity of food and shelter, population explosion, nature of curiosity etc. This tendency of migration has created distinctions and diverse groups within human races and as ages went by, there emerged different identity among them.

The people of Bangladesh were the descendent of ‘Bongal’ people. They were different from Aryans and lived much earlier than the arrival of the Aryans during 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Let us examine the racial and anthropological identity of the people of Bangladesh.

### Origin of the human habitation

The present Bangladesh was a part of ‘historical Bangla’ through ages; therefore, the people of Bangladesh might be racially or anthropologically related to the people of the whole area. The archaeological evidences proved that people lived here from the very ancient times. Anthropologists remark that Bangladesh is a melting pot of ancient people.

### Evidence of ancient human habitation

⇒ In Bangladesh some tools of Paleolithic, Neolithic and copper ages are found.<sup>10</sup> Some tools of Neolithic age such as axe, chisel etc. are

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<sup>10</sup>i‡gkP>`a gRyg`vi, evsjv‡`#ki BwZnvm(KwjKvZv: †Rbv‡ij wcÖ›Uvm© GÛ cviewjkvm© cÖvB‡fU wjwg‡UW,1998), c„. 12 [Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *Bangadesher Itihas* (Kolkata: General Printers and Publishers Private Limited, 1998), p. 12]

found in ‘Uary Boteshwar’, a place in Narsingdi 70 kilometer north-east of Dhaka district. By comparing the same tools found in other civilizations, Dr. Harun Ur Rashid and some other archaeologists believe that the first human habitation started here approximately 10 thousand to 1 lac years before.

⇒ In 1963 ‘an axe’ was found through excavation at Chhagolnaiya of Feni district, which is thought to be 20 thousand years old.

⇒ While excavating in 1958, American archaeologist Dyson found ‘a stone weapon’ at Rangamati which is assumed 40 thousand years old.

⇒ Again, the utensils found in Maynamati in Comilla while excavating in 1977 were similar to those of Neolithic age.

All these archaeological documents prove that human habitation started in some parts of Bangladesh during Stone Age.<sup>11</sup>

⇒ One recognized anthropological method of identifying human race is to examine the shape and formation of human skull. Recently, 14 human skeletons were found by excavating at ‘Pandu Rajar Dhivi’(hillock of king of Pandu) on the bank of the river ‘Ajoy’ at Bardhawan district of West Bengal. The skulls of these skeletons are long-shaped. They belong to Indo-Mediterranean Dravidian-speaking people. Archaeologists think that these skeletons were of copper ages.

⇒ In 1978 while excavating at ‘Sijua’ on the bank of Kongshavoti river of Medinipur of West Bengal, a stone-fossil of human chin was found. It is believed that the fossil belongs to Pleistocene age. From these ancient fossils and skeletons Herbert Risley, Seul, Kele Fon Aykstadt, J.H. Huton, Biroja Shankar Guha, Rama Prashad Chanda, Haran Chandra Chakladar, Minendra Bosu stressed on scientific explanations to identify the human race of the people of this area.

### Scholars' views about ancient races

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<sup>11</sup> mywd gy-ÍvwdRyi ingvb, Dqvix e#Uk|i: tkK#oi mÜv#b(XvKv: cÖ\_gv cÖKvk, 2012), c..199 [Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, *Uary Boteshwar: Shekorer Sondhane* (Dhaka: Prothoma Prokason, 2012), p. 199]

Most historians believe that the ancient Bengali tribes such as Kol, Shabar, Pulinda, Dom, Chandal etc. were the descendent of these ancient people. Some others also believe that Kayasthas, Sadgop, Koibarto are also originated to this ancient race.<sup>12</sup>

**Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar** assumes that all these ancient tribes or Qaom belong to the same race. He addressed them as the Austro-Asiatic or Austric descendent.<sup>13</sup> He also claims that the people of Bangladesh belong to this race while some others addressed these ancient people as ‘Nishad’.<sup>14</sup>

**Sir Harbert Risley** was the high official in the Department of Anthropology in India and the Chief Commissioner of the Population Census program in 1901. On the basis of population survey in 1901 Risley divided the Indian people into seven categories<sup>15</sup>: Dravidian, Mongoloid, Turko-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Scythian-Dravidian, Aryan-Dravidian, and Mongol- Dravidian. From his observation, he remarked in his book *The People of India* that the people of ‘Bengali’ and ‘Uriya’ nation are derived from the mixing of Dravidian and Mongoloid blood. He said,

The Mongolo-Dravidian type of lower Bengal and Orissa, comprising the Bengal Brahman and Kayasthas, the Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal and other groups are peculiar to this part of India, probably, a blend of Dravidian and Mongolian elements with a strain of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher group. The head is broad; complexion dark hair on the face usually plentiful; stature medium, nose medium with a tendency to broad.<sup>16</sup>

According to Risley, ‘broad head’ Bengali nation is derived from the mixing of short-head Mongol and long-head Dravidian.

However, the prominent historians Nihar Ranjan Roy, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar and Roma Prashad Chanda differed with Risley.

<sup>12</sup>AZjz m~i, evOvwji b,,ZvwĒjK cwiPq(KwjKvZv: wRĀvmv, 1979), c., 43 [Atul Sur, *Anthropological Identity of Bangali*(Kolkata: Gyiggasha, 1979), p. 43]

<sup>13</sup>Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 13

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>15</sup>H.H. Risley, *The People of India* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Company, 1908), pp.31-33

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid*, p. 32

They argued that ‘Dravidian’ is not a name of human race, it indicates a language group. Secondly, all the Dravidian speaking people of Indian sub-continent are not ‘long-headed’, some of them are ‘broad-headed’. Thirdly, all the Mongoloids are also not short-headed; some of them are also long-headed.

According to Seoul, a prominent Anthropologist, the pre-Dravidian race that entered into Indian sub-continent through the north-west of India was the predecessor of pre-Australoid human race of the Indian sub-continent.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Biroja Shankar Guha succeeded to find out similarities of pre-Dravidian human race with the Vedda<sup>18</sup> of Sri Lanka and the ethnic people of Australia. The Anthropological characteristics of ethnic people of Australia were: broad-head, wide nose, black skin, short in size, curly coppery hair, broad-opened eyes, and flat-face. Dr. Biroja observed that most Bengali people belong to these characteristics though they are different in religion, caste; whether they belong to upper class or lower class. Therefore, he concludes, this race is the mainstream of Bengali race.

According to Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy Bengali is a crossed nation. He said, anthropologically Bengali nation is a mixture of three human races: long-headed, broad-nose pre-Australoid or Collide; long-headed, broad or long nose Egyptian-Asian Melanid and short-headed, lofty-nose Alpines or Brackid<sup>19</sup>. He further said, some Mongoloid and pre-Nordic blood are also mixed with these races.

**According to Muntassir Mamoon**, the Bangali nation originated from the mixing of different native tribal races. Later it is admixed with numerous foreign bloods when they remained criss-crossed during different political changes and has come to the present shape of nationality. He told, the Bengalis did not originate from one single race rather their descent is from a mixture of a number of races.<sup>20</sup> In every ancient time, these races lived in much closed tribes with little

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<sup>17</sup> R.B.S. Sewell Proceedings on the Indian Science Conference 1929, p. 337

<sup>18</sup> B. S. Guha, ‘The Negrito Racial Strain in India’, *The Nature*, Volume:May 1928 & June 1929

<sup>19</sup> Nihar Ranjan Roy, *Bangalir Itihas: Adiparbo*(Kolkata: Dey’s Publishing House, 2009), p. 40

connection with one another. With the advance of civilization, the different tribes began to communicate among themselves. Larger tribes were formed by merging of smaller tribes such as the Banga, Rhar, Pundra etc.

### **1.3 Origin of ‘Bangla’ Language**

#### **Introduction**

Men cannot live alone. Therefore, they live within a group or society. People within a society want to share their feelings to others. Therefore, they try to invent something through which they can transfer their thoughts to other people surrounding them as well as to remote people or to the next generation. The quest for a suitable media of transferring expressions to others ultimately led people to invent ‘language’ which is the most significant single element of any civilization. By inventing ‘language’ men entered into the historic age. From then onwards numerous languages were produced and practiced in every nook and corner of the world. In line with the ups and downs of different civilizations, languages also took different patterns. Some of them became dead while others are still persistent through age-old modifications. ‘Bangla’ is one of the most live languages among the persistent languages in the present world; however, it is one of the most ancient languages too. It is also worth mentioning here that approximately 3500 working languages are there in the present world and, according to the number of users, Bangla has taken its position after Chinese, Hindi, English and Arabic. Bangla, as a language, has also gained a prestigious position among the languages of the world since 21 February has been declared as ‘International Mother Language Day’ when all the people of the world observe the day by singing “ aamar vaier rokte rangano ekuse February, aami ki vulite paari”.

#### **Bangla belongs to Indo-European language group**

The linguists have succeeded to trace out the root of almost all languages. Most of them are derived from a limited number of language groups. Among them ‘Indo-European language group’ is the most prominent. The main languages of the world are derived from this group. Bangla is the most northern marginal language of this

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<sup>20</sup> Muntassir Mamoon, *Bangladesh: Bangali Psyche, State Formation And Modernity* (Dhaka: International Centre for Bengal Studies, 2009), p.12

‘Indo-European language group’. However, it is very difficult to conclude on the origin of Bangla language since it was not the same format at the beginning.

### **Historical development of Indo-European language group**

#### **Aryans and the extinction of local dialects**

The people who used to speak ‘Indo-European language’ lived in Central Asia four thousand and a half years ago. Due to population explosion they wandered all over the world in groups. One of these groups entered into India through North-West frontier of Pakistan. These people are called as Aryan and their language were called as ‘ancient Vedic language’.

The Aryans imposed their language upon the people speaking local dialects. Before the Arian-imposition in Bengal, people lived here used to speak Austric language. According to Nihar Ranjon Roy, the ancient Bangali dialect were not belonged to pure ‘Austric language group’ rather it was mixed up with ‘Mon-Khom, Kol-Munda, Dravidian and Vote-Brahmen’ dialect.<sup>21</sup> Gradually, this language lost its ground after the advent of Aryans.

#### **Sanskrit and Prakrit language**

The Aryan language had succeeded to win over the local languages but unable to hold its purity because common people used to use it through their local utterance and many local words and phrases were mixed up with the ‘noble language.’ Therefore, the concerned Aryan scholars reformed the ‘ancient Vedic language’ to ensure its purity. Since the language was reformed (sanskar) and turned into the ‘language of Vedic literature’, it was named as ‘Sanskrit language’. However, this reformed language (Sanskrit Language) became confined to elite class because only Brahmins could use this language and it was strictly prohibited for the common people. The latter used to speak unreformed language, which is known as ‘Prakrit language.’ ‘Prakrit’ means impoverished, therefore, Prakrit language means the language used by impoverished people.

#### **Apabhrangsha**

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<sup>21</sup>Nihar Ranjon Roy, *op.cit.*, pp. 566-567.

As time passed by, Prakrit language took different variations due to the use of different groups of people, such as: Maghdhi Prakrit, Souroseni Prakrit, Moharastrik Prakrit, Gauri Prakrit etc. At the time of writing books, scholars further refined the Prakrit language and gave two names: Pali and Apabhrangsha'. But the oral language remained 'Prakrit language.' Scholars believe that 'Maghdhi Prakrit' language has become the present Bangla language through the evolution and deformation of 'Apabhrangsha'.

### **Bangla during Pala and Sena rule**

During Pala and Sena dynasty Sanskrit language was nourished in Bengal extensively for the royal intension. Bengali language could not flourish during this time.

### **Bangla during Muslim rule**

During the medieval period the Muslim rulers patronized the cultivation of Bengali language and literature. Both Muslim and Hindu poets began to write poetry and 'Bangla' as a language became enriched gradually.

### **Bangla in the modern age**

Before nineteenth century, no one knew about the history of the origin of Bangla language. During the second half of this century, scholars of Bangla language started to pay their attention to this. During the first decade of twentieth century a debate has been occurred on what basis the 'Bangla Grammar' is to be structured. Two schools of thought emerged: one group was named 'Sanskrit bhasaponthi' and the other was 'Prakrit bhasaponthi'.

At this time, language researcher Harprasad Sashri found three Bangli 'Charjapada Puthi' at the royal library of Nepal which was named *Hajar Bochhorer Boudho Gaan O Dhoha*. At the same time, Basanto Ranjan discovered two puthi (books)named *Sri Krishna Kirtan*. After the two discoveries, research on the origin of Bangla language was carried on vigorously. Later, by the restless research of Bijoy Chandra Majumdar, Sunity Kumar Chatterjee, Sukumar Sen and Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah the history of the evolution of Bangla

language was written. According to them, Bangla language was developed through the following three phases:

- a. Ancient Age: 650 BC- 1200 AD
- b. Middle Age: 1200 AD- 1800 AD
- c. Modern Age: 1800 AD- present time.

### **1.3.1 Types of Bangla language**

The present Bangla language has been evolved and developed through thousands of years. Like other languages, Bangla has two forms: written and oral. Written form has further two forms: Sadhu and Chalito. Again, oral form has also two forms: chalito and local dialect. There is no use of ‘Sadhu style’ in oral language.

There are also some other variations in Bangla language. Such as:

- a. Uttarbongiyo (Northern Bengal) dialect: This type is seen in Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bogra, Pabna districts.
- b. Purbabongiyo (Eastern Bengal) dialect: This type further includes three sub-dialect area: i) Dhaka-Mymensingh, Comilla and Barisal area; ii) Faridpur, Jessor, Khulna area; and iii) Sylhet area.

### **1.3.2 Territorial sub-division of Bangla language**

Not all the Bengali speaking people live in the same country now. They belong to different countries or states. So, modern Bangla language has also got different patterns. Therefore, Bangla linguists find five sub-dialect areas due to the language patterns:

- a. Rari (West and middle Bengal)
- b. Jharkhandi (South-West Bengal, Singhbhum, Maanbhumi, Puruliya)
- c. Varendri (North Bengal)
- d. Bongali (East and South-East Bengal, Bangladesh)
- e. Kamrupi (North-East Bengal, Assam, Koachbihar and Kachhar)

### **1.4 Rise and development of Bengali literature**

Bengali literature is also as ancient as Bengali language. ‘Charjapada’ is a ready example. Before the discovery of ‘Charjapada’ people used to think that Bengali had no practice of literature in the ancient times. But we’ve come to know that like many other Chinese scholars *It Sing* came to Tamralipti (a Bengali Janapad) in 7<sup>th</sup> century AD with a view to gathering knowledge on shobdosasro (Bengali words and

grammar).<sup>22</sup> If there is no literature, why did *It Sing* come to Tamralipti for studying words and grammar? In fact, Bengali literature started its beginning during ancient period.

Most scholars agree that Bengali literature develops through three stages:

- a. Ancient Age: 650 BC- 1200 AD
- b. Middle Age: 1200 AD- 1800 AD
- c. Modern Age: 1800 AD- present time.

#### **1.4.1 Ancient age: 650 BC- 1200 AD**

This is the beginning period of Bengali literature. We do not possess much information or examples of literary works. Charjapada is the only Bengali literature of this period yet discovered. In 1907 language researcher Harprasad Sashri found three Bengali ‘Charjapada Puthi’ at the royal library of Nepal, which was named as *Hajar Bochhorer Boudho Gaan O Dhoha*. He published a book entitled ‘Charjachorjobinischoy’ on this ancient collection. It is actually a collection of lyrical songs or poems composed by Buddhist monks during the reign of Pala and Sena kings. Till today only 47 Charjapada<sup>23</sup> composed by 23 poets<sup>24</sup> are found. Among them 12 are composed by Krishnapada or Kahnopa. Other known composers were: Lui Pa, Sarah Pa, Bhusuku. Each Charjapada contains four to six ‘Pada’(lines).

The Buddhist kings were the patron of language-literature, art and culture. During this period, ‘Charjapada’ was composed in Bengal. In Bengali literature ancient period is considered up to 1200 century AD. Therefore, linguists considered ‘Charjapada’ as an ancient literature.

According to Romesh Chandra Majumdar, the discovered Charjapada were composed within 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Along with Charjapada, Harprasad Sashri also discovered three Puthi(books)- *Saraha, Doha*

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<sup>22</sup> Nihar Ranjon Roy, *op.cit.*, pp. 570

<sup>23</sup>Dr. Shahanara Hossain mentioned the number 51. See: kvnvbviv tnv‡mb, cÖvPxb evsjvi BwZnvm(ivRkvnx: AvBweGm, 2012), c.,. 89 [Shahanara Hossain, *History of Ancient Bengal* (Rajshahi: IBS, Rajshahi University, 2012), p. 89]

<sup>24</sup>Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 13

and *Dakornab* which are written with Souraseni Orobhrangso language. There were also 50 other translated Charjapada found in a renowned Tibetan book named *Tengur*.

A Bengali book named ‘Sadukti Karnamrita’ compiled by Sri Dhar Das was written in ancient Bengal. It’s a collection of poems written by one hundred and thirteen poets and Buddhist inhabitants of ancient Bengal.

Charjapada are the source of ancient literature. These are actually ritualistic lyrical songs. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar said that Shahajiya songs, Boisnob Padaboli, shakta and Baul songs are developed from these Charjapada.

From Charjapada we know about many things of ancient Bengal. It tells us that Chess was the most favorite game in ancient Bengal. The name of Indian harp(flute) was found in the list of musical instrument of Charjapada. It also tells us that marriage ceremony was performed with pomp and grandeur. Women used to dress their hair into a knot. Men also kept long curly hair hanging back down to the neck. They used to wear a circular ornamental band on the head during marriage ceremony. Some charjapada describe the lifestyle of non-Brahmins: ancient Bengali Koum(clan) such as ‘Shabar’, ‘Dom’. Others questioned about the necessity and patterns of different prayers.

During Sena dynasty Sanskrit language enjoyed its golden age. Sena kings, especially, Vallala Sena and Lakshman Sena were great scholars on Sanskrit literature. Scholars think, due to the royal affection to Sanskrit literature, no other literature, not even Bangla could develop in Bengal during this period. However, on the eve of Muslim conquest in Bengal, a book named *Shunnya Purana* was written by Ramai Pandit. During this time, stories of Hindu Gods and Goddess like Manasa, Shitala and Chandi were widely circulated.

#### **1.4.2 Middle age: 1200 AD- 1800 AD**

There is no evidence of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century Bangla literature available.<sup>25</sup> Hence, the early two hundred years’ of Muslim rule is considered as Dark Age. During these years political changes

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<sup>25</sup>Khetra Gupta, *Bangla Shahitter Samagra Itihas* (Dhaka: Jatiyo Grontho Prokason, 2000), p. 52

demolished Brahmen-Buddhist supremacy and new thoughts of Turkey rulers spread over the old culture. Internal challenges to external cultural imposition have created cultural integration between Hindus and Muslims. Through these challenges and responses, changes and acceptances paved the way of 15<sup>th</sup> century's basement of Bengali literature.

In fact, Bengali literature reached a decent platform of advancement from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Kirtibus is the pioneer of this new era.<sup>26</sup> Scholars think, Muslim rulers patronized the development of common peoples' language and literature so that they could expand the thought of Islam to vast number of people. The Muslim sufis and saints played a significant role in circulation of Islamic thoughts. They established 'Khankahs' and 'Madrasas' which became centers of Islamic knowledge. The Muslim saints learnt local language and used to express their religious teachings in Bangla.

The deprived Hindus and others during Sena period became enchanted by the Muslim slogan: 'All men are equal in the eye of Allah'. They embraced Islam groups after groups and got equal privileges during Muslim rule. The liberal attitude of Muslim rulers created a congenial atmosphere for both Hindu and Muslim scholars. As a result, both Hindu and Muslim writers used to express their thoughts freely.

During this period two schools of thought developed: one within Hindus and the other within Muslims. Among Hindus translation and Boisnob literature developed<sup>27</sup>. Bijoy Gupta, Devij Madhavacharya collected and published *Mangalkavya* (a kind of narrative poems). Mukundaram Chokrovorti (known as kobikonkon) wrote The *Poem in Praise of Chandi*. Maladhar Basu, Kirtibus, Kobindra Poromeshwar, Sri Kor Nondi got royal support and translated the Sanskrit literature i.e. *Ramayana*, *Bhagabota*, *Mahabharata* etc. into Bangla. Bhagabota is actually a 'Krishnalila Kavya'. Sultan Rukon Uddin Barbak Shah patronized Maladhar Basu to translated *Bhagabata*<sup>28</sup>. He also patronized Kirtibus to translate the *Ramayana*.

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<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, p. 53

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid*, p. 63.

Srikor Nondi and Kobindra Parameshwar translated *Mahabharata* by the support of the Muslim rulers of Chittagong. Narayan Dev, Bijoy Gupta, Biprodas Piplai, Boru Chandidas were famous for *Mangalkabya*. Bidyapoti, Chandidas wrote Boisnob poems. These poems were composed based on illegal love stories of Radha and Krishna.

During 15<sup>th</sup> century Muslim poets also composed their own stories. Dr. Enamul Hoq, Abdul Karim Shahityabisharad, Ahmed Sharif discovered immense Puthi (books) which reveal the document of Muslim literature of medieval period. From those manuscripts we came to know that Shah Muhammad Sagir was the most ancient Muslim poet in Bengal. He was royal servant of Sultan Gius Uddin Azam Shah. He composed *Yusuf Zolekha Kavya*. It's a romantic Islamist love-episode. Five manuscript of *Yusuf Zolekha* has been found.

16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century has become prominent for cultural renaissance in Bengal. During this period the Hindu literate people occupied many royal key positions for the liberal attitude of Muslim rulers. As a result Sri Choitonnyo was able to spread his 'Bhoktibadi dharmadolon'. During this time, Boisnob literature developed rapidly. Lots of poems were composed by numerous poets. They were categorically four types: Charito Shahitya or biography, Padaboli, Krishnalila Kavya, Korcha Nibondho. Murari Gupta, the classmate of Sri Choitonnyo, composed *Sri Sri Krishnachoitonnyochoritamrita*. Brindabon Das composed *Choitonnyo Bhagabata*. Both Joyananda and Lochon Das composed *Choitonnyomongal kavya*. Krishnadas Kobiraj composed *Choitonnyochoritamrita*. It's a complete biography of Sri Choitonnyo. Mukunda Chokrovorti wrote Chondimongal. He was the most prominent episode writer during this era.

During this era Muslim readers and poets were also increasing by leaps and bounds. Different types of Islamist literature developed this time among them biography literature, Janganama, Shastro, Peermohima, dobhasi were prominent.

Ujir Ali, Sheikh Monohor, Abdul Karim khondokar wrote biography literature. Hamid, Hayat Mahmood, Shah Goribullah was famous for Janganama. Muhammad Akil, Sheikh Sadi, Elim Alom, Sheikh

Sherbaj were famous for Shastro shahitya. Faijullah, Fakir Muhammad, Jainuddin, Sharfuddin composed Peermohima. Famous dobhasi literature writer were Eakub Ali, Shah Goribullah.

Sheikh Monohor wrote *Shamser Gazinama*, Abdul Karim Khondokar wrote *Dulpa Majlis, Nurnama* etc. Hayat Mahmood wrote *Janganama* based on Karbala battle. Shar Garibullah wrote *Yusuf-Zolekha, Sonavan, Ameer Hamza* etc.

#### **1.4.3 Modern age: 1800 AD- present**

Modern age of Bangla literature started from the advent of British rule. In the past, both the rulers whether they were Hindus or Muslims were the inhabitants of Bharat. But the British were completely different. Therefore, the culture and literature that they import were also very different from the previous native literature. The Indians were introduced to Secular Western education. As a result, the European Renaissance affect Bengali think tank which caused Bengali Renaissance among mostly city-elites. Ram Mohon Roy, Banqim Chandra Chottapaddhay, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started to practice essay-type literature. In fact, William Kerry, Thomas, Ward, Marshman were the pioneer of Bengali prose. These missionaries used to write essays to spread Christianity, therefore, developed Bangla literature. Nathaniel Brassy Halhead wrote A Grammar of Bengali Language(1778). The development of press also helped tremendous development of modern Bangla literature. The teachers of Fort William College, especially, William Kerry, Mrittunjoy Tarkalankar and Munsi Ram Ram Basu had immense contribution in developing Bangla literature. Michel Madhusudon Dutt was another prominent figure in modern Bangla literature. The most prominent literature of this period are as follows: *Bedanto Shar*(1815), *Tuhfat Ul Muahiddin*(1803-04) by Ram Mohon Roy; *Betal Ponchabingsoti*(1841), *Bhrantibilas*(1869), *Shakuntala*(1854), *Sitar Bonobas*(1860) by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar; *Meghnadbodh Kavya*(1861) by Michael Madhusudon Datt; *Alaler Ghore Dulal*(1858) by Parichand Mitra; *Durgeshnondini*(1865), *Kapalkundala*(1866), *Mrinalini*(1869), *Rajshingha*(1882), *Ananda Moth*(1882), *Devi Choudhurani*(1882), *Bishbrikho*(1873) by Banqim Chandra Chottapaddhay; *Hutum Pyachar Naksha* by Kaliprasannyao Shingho; *Bishad Sindhu*(1885-1890), *Gazi Miar Bostani*(1899) *Zomidar Darpan*(1873), *Bibi Kulsum*(1910) by Mir

Mosharrof Hossain; *Aushrumala*(1894), *Mohashasan*((1904) by Kaikobad; *Devdas*(1917), *Srikanta*(1917) by Saratchandra Chattopaddhay; *Oborodhbashini*(1928) by Begum Rokeya; *Roynondini*(1928) by Ismail Hossain Siraji; *Dhumketu, Rajbondir Jobanbondi* by Kazi Nazrul Islam etc. Finally, Rabindra Nath Thakur won Nobel Prize in 1913 for his masterpiece *Geetanjoli* and this was a universal recognition of Bengali literature.

### **1.5 Socio-cultural life of Bengali people**

It is well accepted that Bengali aborigines were not Aryans. They were Austric speaking people named ‘Nishad’. Later another race named Alpines mixed with this race and they together developed a culture in Bengal. They lived in groups entitled ‘Koum’(tribes) which were the base of ancient social structure. They were named as Kol, Bhil, Dhibor, Munda, Pundra, Banga etc. The names of ancient Janapad(locality) came from these group names(Koums). People of different professions lived within these ‘Koum’ or groups or tribes but there were no social divisions or duties of four Hindu castes as the Aryans had. The society was controlled by the customs of fooding, clothing, marriages and other myths. Before the rule of Mouryas there was no political structure in Bengal society.

#### **1.5.1 Social structure and status of people in the society**

##### **Bengal in the ancient age**

During the last Vedic age or some years later the Aryans succeeded to expand their colonial grip up to Bengal. Before Vedic conquests, the ancient Bengali culture might lock in clash with the Aryan culture for several centuries. Finally, Aryans won over the ancient Bengal and during Gupta era Brahmins of North India entered into Bengal in groups.

The Aryans introduced social orders in Bengal. They divided the society into four castes namely, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The upper class in the society included the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The Brahmins were on top position in Aryan social structure. They used to perform religious duties and were entitled as Sharma, Chatta, Bhatta, Bondya, Mtra, Gatri etc. The Brahmins who came from North India were divided into seven in Rarodesh and five in Varendra. The written plates of fifth and eighth century revels that the lower class includes the titles Datta, Pala, Mitra, Barman, Das, Bhadra, Sen, Dev, Ghosh, Kundu, Palit, Nag,

Chandra, Dam, Bhuti, Vishnu, Josh, Shiv, Rudra etc. According to Dr. Shahanara Hossain, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas were never clearly distinguished and recognized in Bengal. In Bangladesh they were never distinguished as a different caste.<sup>29</sup> So, during ancient Bengal the upper class was dominated by Brahmins and the lower class included various professional groups.<sup>30</sup>

The Brahmins were the most respected class and they had strong influences within all stages of the society. They used to engage themselves in religious activities and did not do any physical labor. The kings used to give Brahmins non-taxable lands for their living.

The Kshatriyas usually were engaged in warfare and held remarkable administrative posts.

Vaishyas were in traders, cultivators and other artisans. According to *Charjapada* the lower castes includes Medh, Anodhra, Chandal, Domb, Shabar, Kapalik etc. did all odd jobs and they were elusive people.

The above-mentioned social structure remained prevalent during Mourya, Gupta and Pala period in the Hindu society.

The Mourya and Gupta ruled in Bengal from fifth century to third century B.C. The Mouryas were Buddhist and liberal. As a result, people accepted Buddhism. During this period, the Brahmins used to live in the society side by side of Buddhism. A small number of Jainas were also lived in ancient Bengal. However, in the Gupta period the Brahmins became powerful and dominant. They were conservative also. As a result, the society again became communal. The Buddhists were victimized during this period.

During Pala Empire Buddhism revived again but the Pala kings ruled liberally. The Brahmins lost their state power but their social prestige within Hindu society remained unbroken. Pala were Buddhists. But they did not demolish the Hindu Brahmins. In Pala period royal administration did not impose social divisions as we had seen in the Aryan age. Pala kings were quite liberal to their subjects. That's why

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<sup>29</sup>Shahanara Hossain, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

we see, there is no mention of ‘Kshatriyas’ and ‘Vaishyas’ castes in the long lists of royal servants and distinguished inhabitants. Two other social castes namely Koron-Kshatriya and Kaibarta were known from Pala kings’ written-plates.

From the last phase of Pala period Brahmin-tantrik (rites prescribed in the ‘Tantra’ of Shaktas) dominated social system started to emerge and it was well established during Sena period. The Senas introduced Kaulinnya system(aristocracy). Vallal Sena wanted to reconstruct the society on the basis of caste system. Even the top social ranked Brahmins were also divided into 52 or 59 categories in Rarodesh and 100 categories in Varendra due to their aristocracy. All the Brahmins were mainly divided into three categories: Prime aristocrat, minor aristocrat and ‘Shrotri’.

All the people other than Brahmins were considered as Shudras and hybrids. Shudra-hybrid castes were further divided into three: upper hybrid, middle hybrid and lower hybrid. Upper hybrid includes 20 sub-castes, middle hybrid includes 12 sub-castes and the lower hybrid includes 9 sub-castes.

There was strong prohibition on inter-caste marriage, taking food and water even touching each other. However, it is interesting that the Brahmins could stay at the house of Shudras and take food if necessary. Marriage among the same caste was a general custom. Marriages between female of upper caste and male of lower caste were strongly prohibited and strictly punishable. However, Marriages between male of upper caste and female of lower caste was a sin but not unseen.<sup>31</sup>

### **Bengal in the Muslim**

The conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khalji in the thirteenth century removed the Hindus from the state power and groups after groups of Muslims entered into Bengal from Afghanistan, central Asia, Turkey and Arabian territory. They primarily called for social equality. Mainly lower caste Hindus and Buddhists who were deprived from human rights within Brahmin’s social structure embraced Islam.

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<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*

However, before five to six hundred years of the conquest of Bakhtyar Khilji, the Arab Muslim traders started to settle in the coastal areas of south-eastern Bengal. Thereafter, Sufis and devotees began to come to Bengal in order to preach Islam. Many common Hindus and Buddhists started to embrace Islam by the effort of Sufis. This way from eleven to fifteenth century the number of Muslims in Bengal reached in a remarkable figure.

A large number of Muslims from outside Bengal married local females and resided in Bengal permanently. Gradually a Muslim social structure developed along with the Hindu and Buddhist social structure. The caste system of the Hindus and Buddhist society also affected Muslim society to some extent.

In the Muslim society two classes were developed, namely Ashraf (aristocrat) and Atraf (lower class). The noble class includes Syed [descendants of Prophet Muhammad (sm)], Alim (learned persons in Islamic knowledge), service-holders of Sultans entitled Khan, Malik, Ameer, Sadar, Kabir, Maarif Kazi, Mollah etc. Lower class in the Muslim society includes Gola (milkman), zola (weaver), Mukery (bullock rider), Kabari (fish seller), kosai (butcher), dorji (tailor) etc. In the Hindu society caste system remained present in the thirteenth and fourteenth century.

However, during Muslim rule (medieval period) the culture of the Buddhists, Hindus and the Muslims began to mingle, and therefore, developed a common culture which may be called as ‘Bengali culture’.

### **Bengal in the English age**

From the beginning of the British rule the social structure and customs, which were developed in Bengal during the medieval period started to collapse due to irresponsible misrule, famine, torture on the common people, economic degradation etc. Due to unabated injustice and absence of any fruitful challenge against the ruling elites, people became disappointed, therefore, became dependent on many religious superstitions. Country life went under feudal system and the people under zamindary system used to face immense inequality and injustice. Age-old social tradition started to loss their appeal and gradually developed new social structure. Middle class society, who became wage earners, developed. Introduction of railway

communication compelled every class of people to sit side by side whether they are Brahmin or Shudras. Spread of western education broke social prejudices. Two great social reformers namely Raja Ram Mohon Roy(1772-1833) and Haji Shariatullah(1781-1840) came forward to reform social and religious life of Bengal.

### **Ram Mohon Roy and his social reform movement**

Ram Mohon Roy tried to reform Hindu society and Haji Shariatullah for Muslim society. Ram Mohon Roy sharply criticized orthodox and conservative Hindu society for their worship of idols in ‘Vedanta’ and ‘Upanishad’. He established Vedanta College for the purpose. He began to organize peoples’ opinion in order to abolish some social bad practices such as ‘koulinaya system’, Childhood marriage, Polygamy, Suttee system etc. He realized the importance of imparting to the Indian people modern knowledge, science, philosophy etc. instead of only Sanskrit education. He established ‘Atmiya Shava’ for preaching the message of ‘Monotheism’. Later on, he established ‘Brahma Samaj’ to rectify religious thoughts of the Hindus.

All these efforts created a renaissance among the Hindu society of Calcutta that spread over the literate people of Bengal. However, the impact of the movement of Raja Ram Mohon Roy was confined to the cities only, the overwhelming population living in the rural areas lagged behind the modern knowledge.

### **Shariatullah and Faraeji movement**

Like Ram Mohon Roy, Muslim reformer Shariatullah also wanted to wipe out all superstitions that engulfed the Muslim society. He realized that unless the Muslims retained their own existence and identity through purification and sanctity of their religious life, they would be lagged behind. It is assumed to him that the British government was inimical and antagonistic toward the Muslims in India. However, he did not call for direct action against the British; rather he wanted the Muslim became fundamental Muslims.

He suggested that the Muslims in Bengal should remain aloof from two kinds of sins and vices namely, ‘Sherq’ and ‘Be’dat’. The first kind of sins (Sherq) is to worshipping graves, worshipping devotees, sejda system etc. and the second kind of vices (Be’dat) is singing song of Gazi Kalu, reciting the names of ‘panch-pir’, ‘Badar Pir’,

swearing by Khwaja Khijir while floating rafts, singing the folk songs ‘jari’, celebrating six day of birth, observing the mourning in the Muharram etc. He wanted to uphold the obligatory duties in Islam which are called as ‘Faraj’. Hence his movement is named as ‘Faraeji Movement.’

Faraeji movement later turned into a strong movement against ‘Indigo planters’ and ‘zamindars’. The British government strictly and brutally suppressed the movement but the movement made the Muslims in Bengal politically conscious which paved the way of anti-British movements.

In the nineteenth century both the Hindu and Muslim community became conscious about their rights. European thoughts and education, liberal ideas shook the Bengali society. Gradually people became fond of democracy. Age-old social classification both within Hindu and Muslim society became weak. The participation of general people in the anti-British movement led by Indian National Congress and Muslim League broke the strictness of social class system. Human rights and equal dignity of human being has been recognized everywhere. The end of British colonial regime emerged two independent countries which were committed to constitutional rule and all kinds of social class-system were wiped out constitutionally. Now we are living in a democratic environment where human rights are recognized constitutionally.

### **1.5.2 Housing**

Like the present time most of the people of ancient Bengal lived in countryside or villages. The Brahmins, land lords, artisans, landless cultivators, and small businessmen lived in the inner side of the villages whereas Dom, Chandal, Shabar Kapalic and some other lower caste people were to live out the villages. King, aristocratic people, feudal lords and other administrative personnel lived in the cities. Some rich businessmen, traders, artisans and social workers also lived in the cities. After the arrival of Muslims in Bengal from thirteen to fourteen century, the people that are mentioned here used to live in the villages. Some low class Muslims lived in the villages. Sultans, his companions, royal officers, rich businessmen, small artisans, social workers used to live in the cities. Sometimes Pir-Awleeas (Muslim saints) were also lived in the cities. This kind of

tendencies was prevalent in the Medieval and Modern ages also. However, in all ages the farmers, fishermen, potters, carpenters used to live in the villages.

In the ancient Bengal the houses of villages were usually made of mud, straw, bamboo, wood etc. Some people used to live in the huts made of straws. There were also houses made of mud-walls. According to *Charjapada*, in Bengal people living in the villages used to build their houses with wooden poles, mud-made walls and straw-made roofs. The able men used to build two-roofed or four-roofed houses with the same materials. There were no brick-made houses in the villages. People in the cities used to build their houses with bricks and wood. The kings lived in Palaces and forts made of burnt bricks, wood and metals. In the Muslim and British period people used to build their houses with the same materials.

According to *Saduktikarnamrita*, the houses of solvent people had many rooms. Females of solvent families lived in separate rooms. Females of royal families lived in the special rooms made for them. Sometimes they spent their leisure on the roof top of palaces. Palaces were multi-storied (two or three storied). But the houses of poor people generally had only two rooms. Farmers used to live in one-roomed houses. Generally, every solvent family had a yard in front of their house.

Now in Bangladesh most houses in the cities and towns, even in the villages are made of brick and concrete (RCC concrete pillar based). Major cities have multi-storied buildings also. The tallest building in Bangladesh is “The City Center” at Motijheel area which is 561 feet high. (till 2016). However, in the villages, most houses still are made of bamboo poles, bamboo sheets, wood, straw or wave-tin. Some mud-made houses are also seen in the impoverished areas.

### 1.5.3 Religion

#### Pre-historic religious belief

The religious belief of the pre-historic Bengali people is difficult to identify. However, by the observation of different elements, it is noted that people before the advent of Aryans used to worship different elements of the nature such as big trees, mountains, special stones, fruits, birds, places and other natural forces. Gradually, religious beliefs developed, and therefore, religion played an

important role in the life of the people of ancient Bengal. The ancient literature and philosophy, architecture, sculpture, painting and encrypted plates showed the dominance of religion in peoples' life. Like other civilizations, in ancient Bengal religious injunctions were used to administer the country.

### **Ancient religious belief**

In the ancient Bengal Buddhism, the Jainism and the Brahmanism were practiced side by side. The encrypted plates showed that from the fourth or fifth century people used to practice Vedic religion. In this period numerous Vedic temples were established and people used to worship different God or Goddess. Bengali kings used to give lands to Brahmins for their religious activities. During sixth century, the King of Kamrupa gave lands to 205 Brahmins and established them. The Pala emperors also patronized practicing *Vedic*, *Vedanta*, *Mimangsa* based functions. During this period, a couple of Brahmins came to Bengal from North India. The Senas restructured the society by introducing caste system in the name of religion. Numerous Vedic-tantric practices were used to follow by the patronizing of state power. According to the documents, from the Gupta age to the last of Hindu period (Sena dynasty) Vedic religious functions were practiced prominently.

Like other provinces of India pouranic religion was practiced and spread in Bengal during Gupta era. Vishnu, Shiv and Shakto were three pouranic God. Names of many pouranic goddess and their stories were encrypted in the copper plates found in Bengal. According to the myth Devraj Indra or Purandar was defeated by monster king Boli. Those copper plates also tell about the birth of Krishna and his sexual engagement with the Gopies. People used to worship different names of Shiva: Sadashiva, Ordhonarishwar, Dhurjoti, Maheshwar etc. In Bengal, Baishnava and Shiva religion spread remarkably. Bengal king Shasanka and Bhaskararma of Kamrupa were the follower of Shiva. Pala emperor Natrayan Pala established a Shiva temple and gave a village to the 'Pashipat' community to meet-up its expenditure. Bijoy Sena and Vallal Senawere the follower of Shiva.

From eighth to twelfth century Baishnava religion were practiced in Bengal with great extent. Sena king Lakhman Sena was a strong follower of Vishnu. Therefore, he introduced worship of Visnu instead of Shiva at the beginning of daily royal official activities. His royal poet Joydeva wrote *Geetgovinda* and it was highly honored by the Baishnav community. The religious myth named 'Radha-Krishnalila' of Joydeva got immense popularity among the people of Bengal.

From the very ancient times in Bengal 'Shaktipuja' was practiced. According to *Devipurana* the 'Bamachari Shakta' community of Varendra and Rarodesh used to worship different goddess of shakta.

Jain religion was very much ancient in Bengal. During second century AD Jain religion was very strong in Bengal. Morya emperor Ashoka killed all the Jain people living at Patliputra because he heard that the Jain of Pundrabarwan did not show proper honor to Buddha. Chinese traveler Huen Sang wrote that during his visit he saw lots of Jain followers in Bengal but afterwards their number became reduced. The Pala and Sena copper plates did not mention Jain religion. All these prove that the Jain religion was suppressed by the Buddhists and Brahmins, and therefore, their number became reduced in Bengal.

Buddhism established in Bengal during Morya emperor Ashoka and during fifth and seventh century AD it became influential here. Chinese traveler Fa Hien wrote that only in Tamralipti there were 22 Buddhist temples. Huen Sung wrote, in Pundrabarwana(North Bengal) more than three hundred Buddhist Hinajan saint lived in 20 Vihara (religious educational institutions). Shilvadra, a Bengali Buddhist became internationally renowned for his knowledge. He became the Chancellor of Nalanda Maha Vihara. During the four hundred years of the Pala rule in Bengal Buddhism became influential and Bengal became the center of 'Bouddhasangho'. During Sena rule, Buddhists were suppressed brutally and after the thirteenth century Muslim attack, 'Bouddhasangho' took shelter in Nepal and Tibbet. At last the departure of 'Bouddhasangho' ended up Buddhist influence in Bengal. Now the Buddhists people in Bangladesh generally reside in south-eastern region, especially in Chittagong hill tracts, Chittagong and Comilla district. Buddhists

from Chittagong hill tracts are from Chakma, Marma, Chak, Khyang and Tanchungya.

### **Medieval age and Islam**

Islam is the latest major religion on earth. It was first introduced to the people in 610 AD by Prophet Muhammad(sm) at the Arabian Peninsula. Soon it began to spread over every nook and corner of the world for its revolutionary teaching. The people of Bengal also came to know the religion at the very beginning of its spreading. From the ancient times, Bengal had trade links with the Arabian businessmen. They used to come through the Bay of Bengal, stayed at Chittagong port and exchanged commodities. It is widely believed that through this trade link, some ‘sufis’ or preacher of Islam came to Bengal and engaged them in preaching the religion. Islam became a dominant religion in Bengal after the invasion of Baktyiar Khilji in the thirteenth century. After that incident, series of Muslim fortune finders or preachers came to Bengal and reside here permanently. Their restless effort established the religion here. Today Islam has become the largest religion in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, most of the followers of Islam are sunny. There are also Shiya, Ahmadiya (Kadiani), Ismailia sects. Islam plays a significant role in the daily life of the Muslims in Bangladesh as religious festivals like Eid ul Fitr, Eid ul Azha, Muharram, Milad-un-Nabi, Shab-e-Barat, Ramadan, Shab-e-Kadar, Marriage, Death and other religious practices. The Muslims generally say their prayers five times a day and a major gathering is seen in the mosque in every Friday noon. Imam of the mosque gives a speech and recites ‘Khudbah’ before the prayer (Salat) which conveys the solutions of the problems of everyday life according to Quran and Hadith.

### **Christianity**

Christianity is another important religion in Bengal; however, they are very few in number. People used to know the religion from very ancient times through Christian missionaries. After the European renaissance, Christian traders tried to discover a sea-route to India to enjoy India’s spices, silk and other commodities. Vasco Da Gama discovered succeeded to reach Indian port ‘Kalikot’ in 1498 and from then series of European trade companies travelled moved for destiny.

Along with the trade, European Christian missionaries came here and preach Christianity especially among impoverished people. At last, the English had succeeded to grab the state power in Bengal in 1957 and within a short time the whole India came under the English East India Company. The English ruled over India approximately two hundred years and during this time Christianity spread with the help of royal power. But it failed to win the heart of mass people because the Christians did not reside here permanently and did not eager to mix up with local culture. They always showed hatred to the native culture. That's why Christianity lost its appeal as soon as the English were compelled to quite India. However, some Christian people had been residing here from their forefathers. Most of the Christians living in Bangladesh are Roman Catholics and part of Roman Catholic Church. Others are Protestants.

With the above discussion, we have come to know that in Bangladesh presently there are four major religions namely Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Let us see their position in the demographic table:

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Islam	89.0
Hinduism	9.5
Buddhism	0.7
Christianity	0.6
Others	0.2

Source: Census Report of Bangladesh, 2011

#### **1.5.4 Food, dress and ornaments, festivals**

Food, dress, festivals and some of the ornaments of the people of ancient Bengal were not much different from those of the people of Bangladesh of the present time. However, some changes were also seen among them through ages.

##### **a. Food**

###### **Food habits in the ancient Bengal**

During the ancient times, the main food was rice, fish and vegetables. People used to eat meat, card, ghee, sweets and milk. Hilsha fish was also very much favorite but not all the people afford to enjoy it. They also ate fruits like mangoes, bananas, jackfruits, sugarcane etc. As a

vegetables they used to eat brinjal, beans, bottle-gourd, pumpkin, cucurbitaceous, kakrol, kachu(a sort of arum) and various kinds of leafs etc. They also produced different kinds of pulses. Small fishes like Shofor, Puti, Shol, Mola and different types of white and reddish fishes. People of east Bengal liked dried fish. In the Brahmin dominated society Camel, cock, duck, cow, goat, pig, scorpion, snail etc. were banned for eating. But the people of impoverished society used to take those animals. Milk, coconut-water, juice of sugarcane, juice of Palmira tree etc. were popular drinks. However, drinking water was scented with camphor. People also habituated in drinking some home-made wines, especially, on the occasions of festivals. Different kinds of home-made cakes were prepared. At the end of eating, it is customary to serve spicy betels.

### **Food habits in the medieval Bengal**

During thirteenth and fourteenth century, the Muslim people used to eat with spicy curry or roasted beef, mutton, duck, hen etc. The elite Muslims used to take rose water and honey after eating. But the Hindus and some of the diverted Muslims used to follow their earlier food-habits. During Mughal period new food habits emerged among the Bengali society. Ruti, Kabab, Rezala, Korma were some of them.

### **Food habits in the modern Bengal**

Bread and butter, sauces, omelet, bacon, roasted poultry, a variety of savory vegetables including Plum Pudding and Mince Pies were added to the Bangali elite dish during English period. The English introduced ‘tea’ as a drink which has become a popular drink. However, all the ages’ rice and curry, meat and fish, pulses and vegetables were the main food habits in Bengal. Presently, we have diversified food habits. But rice, bread, meat, fish, leafs; pulses and vegetables are the common food items in almost all the societies in Bangladesh.

## **b. Dress**

### **In the ancient age**

Archaeological evidences and literature show, in the ancient times, Bengali males used to wear dhoti (loin-cloth). They used to tuck their loin-cloth lightly between their legs like a suspender. It was then wrapped round the waist tightly. They generally wore short dhoti.

They also wore lungyi, pantaloons, or a kind of short trouser at the lower part of their body.

Saints or impoverished people wore nangoti or nengti (a tiny piece of cloth covering the private parts only).

Soldiers, dual fighters or the day labors used to wear short and tight payjama or half pant.

Children used to wear short dhoti, half pant or short payjama. During thirteenth or fourteenth century, the Hindus wore dhoti. Aristocrat Hindus wore chador and pagri (turban).

Women of ancient times used to wear sarees like the women of modern age. But the former generally did not cover their upper body-parts with sari or a wrapper or urna. The archaeological evidence shows that it was a common scene to let the upper body part uncovered.<sup>32</sup> However, some of them used to wear separate short kamij or bodies or blouses to cover upper body parts.

Common people in the ancient Bengal used to wear ‘khorom’(wooden sandal). Warriors or guards used to wear leather shoes. Elegant people used to wear leather shoes or ‘choti’(slippers).

### **In the Muslim period**

The Muslim aristocrat wore ‘ijar’ (payjama), Panjabi and long attire round their neck. This costume (long attire) they wore by tying with the waist with a broad lace. The middle class Muslims wore payjama, Panjabi and tupi (cap) or turban. The ordinary Muslims wore payjama, nima (fatua or short attire) and tupi.

The dress of Hindus particularly of aristocrat Hindus changed remarkable as soon as the Muslim rules established in Bengal. They started to follow the Muslim dress-up as finely as though they were Muslims. Unless they put tilok mark on their forehead or wear earring, nobody could distinguish them from the Muslims. However, general Hindus wore dhoti only.

In the Muslim period, aristocrat people used to wear leather shoes with splendid designs on them and socks. They also wore decorative leather slippers.

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<sup>32</sup>Shahanara Hossain, *op.cit.*, p. 43

Muslim ladies wore short kamij and salwar with urna. The urnas wear of silk-mate or cotton made. They also wore costly sarees. But the style of wearing sarees has been changed during Muslim period. The Muslim ladies introduced a new style by intermingling local and foreign style, which might cover their upper body-parts.

### **The present dress-up in Bangladesh**

In the present days people who are in service either the Hindus or the Muslims wear pants and shirts with shoes or sandals. Some of them wear payjama and panjabi with sandals. In the rural areas, people generally wear lungyi and genji(T-shirt) or lungyi and shirt. Elegant Hindus still wear dhoti and Panjabi with a chador.

In the agricultural society, people generally wrap their waist or forehead with gamecha (towel). Rich people wear coat, tie with leather shoes(named complete). Aged Muslim people generally wear payjama-panjabi and cap with slipper.

Women in the cities generally wear salwar-kamij with urna. They also wear saree but prefer to wear in the occasions, not in everyday life. Young ladies, even most married ladies, prefer salwar-kamij instead of sarees for better movement.

Jeans pant or shorts with T-shirt is now becoming popular among young generation. Even the girls in the big cities are becoming fond of jeans and T-shirts now-a-days. Kids generally wear half pant with T-shirt. They also wear payjama-panjabi on the occasions.

### **c. Ornaments, make-ups and perfumes**

#### **In the ancient time**

In the ancient period both male and females used to keep their hair long. At times, men tied a tuft of their long hair and put it on the head like peacock's tail. Women dressed up the hair into a coil or bun. Sometimes they let the bun unfasten; sometimes they tied it with cords or lace. They used various types of perfumes also.

Women used to put kohl 'tip' (mark or stain by thumb) at the forehead or wore a bit of tinsel on the forehead. They also used kohl and 'surma' on the eye-lids. Generally, married women used vermillion at the parting of hair on the forehead. Women oiled their

hair and colored their insteps with the liquid dye of lac. They also used fragrant chandon dye or chandon powder (made from sandal wood) over the body and face, mask-deer, saffron, kumkum, camphor etc. as a perfume. To color their hands and nails they used a substance named 'hena'. To redden their lips they ate betels.

Both men and women used to wear ornaments. In the ancient times, women decorated themselves with various types of ornaments such as 'Kundal', 'Har', 'Angod', 'Keyur', Boloy, Moni-Mekhla, Rasana etc. (necklace, Kankan, bangles, ear-rings, rings, anklets etc.) Women of elegant families wore ornaments made of gold and various types of rare stones. However, poor women used ornaments made of flower or leaf or conch-bracelet.

### **In the medieval age**

During medieval period, some ornaments were added to the ancient practice. During this time, ladies used to wear tiara and 'sinhipathi' on the head, ear ring, tops, jhumka, kasul, kanbala, balis in the ear; nose-ring in the nose, necklace and hansuli in the neck; Kankan, bangles, string churi, khar, penchi in the hands; rings in the finger; mekhala and kinkini in the waist, anklet, bangles in the ankle and pansuli in the toes. Men generally wore ear ring, finger ring, bracelet and necklace.

### **In the present age**

Now the ornaments and perfumes are diversified. Women generally use cosmetics items and imitation ornaments. Gold-plated and silver-plated ornaments are using randomly. Different types of plastic materials are used as ornaments, which is as dazzling as the real stones.

Types and styles of ornaments remain same but materials are changed. Numerous cosmetics and perfume items are available now. Shampoo, soap, hair color, body spray, nail polish, eye liner, lipstick, lip jell, puff, powder, snow or cream, face wash of numerous brands are available now. In fact, we are living in the cosmetic world.

However, women now-a-days are choosee. Most of the ancient and medieval ornaments are now considered as the symbol of chains and not fit for easy movement. Therefore, women now-a-days prefer

bracelet or watch. Churi is worn in the occasions matching with sarees of other dresses. Ear ring, necklaces are also favorite. Most modern women are reluctant to wear nose ring, instead they use nose-pin. Nail polish, eye liner, lipsticks are still favorite.

#### **d. Functions/Customs/Festivals**

In the ancient Bengal peoples' life was confined with the religious bindings. From cradle to the grave they used to follow numerous customs or conduct festivals. It started from the birth of a child. Even some festivals began before the birth of a child, such as Gorvadhan, Pungsavan, Shimontannoyon, and Shossanti at home for the welfare of the forthcoming child. After birth functions were jatakarma, nishkraman, namkaran, poustikkarma, annaprashan, churakaran and upanayan. When a child started his education another function was held named 'hatekhari'. When he completed his study and returned home he was blessed by a function named samabartan (convocation). A function named 'salakarma' was held when a couple entered into a new home after marriage. During the marriage ceremony dancing, singing and festing were held. Lots of fun, laughter was the essential part of that ceremony. According to the Charjapada, when a bridegroom started for marriage the musical instrument like pataha, madal, karanda, kasala, dunduvi were tuned loudly. In fact, in the ancient period Bengali society was used to practice 'baromase tero parvan' (thirteen functions with a year).

During the Hindu era 'Durga Puja' was the main festival in Bengal. Sandhakar Nandi wrote in his *Ramacharita* that big functions were held in Varendra on the occasion of Uma (puja for Devi Durga). On the day of Bijoya Dasami people danced and sung in such an impoverished way that is not explainable. Some people coloured their body with mud, wore only the leaves of the trees and danced indescently. They used to utter slang language as merriment.

During the month of Chaitra people used to practice 'Kam mohotsab' in which they sang sexual lyrics with dancing. They used to believe that this way they would be blessed by Kamdev and got many sons, much wealth.

Another major festival of ancient Bengal was 'Holaka' or 'Holi Utsab' or 'Holi khela' in which both male and female participants

took part. In this festival people throw color to each other and danced furiously with merriment.

Another significant ceremony named ‘Dut Pratpad’ was held in the fortnight of the month of Kartik when the moon is increasingly visible. On the occasion people bet and play ‘pasha’ so that they might have a better fortune in the following year. In this ceremony they wore beautiful dresses, used perfumes and engaged in festing with friends and family. They used to decorate their bedrooms, redressed the bed and went to bed with his or her loving mate. During the full moon, people used to take part in a horse-play. They used to gather together with their relatives and enjoy supper. The main menu of this night was ‘chira’ (a kind of threshed frying wet paddy) and coconut made dishes. Another festival of Hindu era was ‘Shukratthan’. In the eighth day of the fortnight of full moon of the month of Vadra, a stick of Indra with a flag was lifted up. The king along with his secretaries, Brahmins, astrologers, the aristocrats and people attended the festival with beautiful dresses. However, most of the above mentioned customs and festivals have been died up. Only the Durga Puja remained as the main festivals of the Hindus.

### **1.5.5 Art and architecture, sculpture and paintings**

The art and architecture of the ancient Bengal was also rich. People also showed proficiency in the field of sculpture and paintings. The ruins of Stupas and Viharas of Buddhist era and the sculptures and architectures of Hindu period represent the mastery of the art of those ages. The accounts of the foreign travellers, different inscriptions and copper plates also give some ideas.

The Buddhist stupas were the oldest example of ancient architecture in India. Stupas were actually an architecture built on the bones of Lord Buddha and His articles. The followers of Buddha regarded the stupas as sacred as temples. The Mahasthangarh, the Somapura Mahavihara, the Maynamoti Vihara are good examples of Buddhist stupas and viharas. They are also a sign of magnificent art and sculptures of ancient Bengal.

#### **●Mahasthangarh**

The Mahasthangarh is believed to date back as far as 700 BC and appears to have been occupied right up to the 1700s. Mahasthangarh is located in the Shibganj Upzila (subdistrict) of the Bogra District of

Bangladesh, near the village of Mahasthan. It is the oldest urban-style fortified settlement discovered in Bangladesh to date. It is rectangular in plan, measuring roughly 1.523 km long from the north to south, and 1.371 km from east to west, with high and wide ramparts in all its wings. A 4.4 cm x 5.7 cm lime stone slab bearing six lines in Prakrit in Brahmin script was found here. The text of this slab appears to be a royal order of Magadh, possibly during the rule of Ashoka (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). Some 4 silver punch marked coins (between 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), some copper caste coins of Gupta era, a 5th century Buddha sculpture, a number of sand-stone door-frames, pillars and lintels, numerous Buddha bronze sculptures datable to 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, a number of terracotta plaques and many other artifacts of ancient times found there.



The Mahasthangarh, Bogra



Some artifacts found in Mahasthangarh

### ● Paharpur

Another ancient archaeological site, which contains numerous art and artifacts of ancient Bengal is Sompur Vihara at Paharpur, Badalgachhi Upazilla, Naogaon district. It is the best known Buddhist viharas in the Indian sub-continent which was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. It was an 80 feet high Buddhist complex built during the reign of Dharmapala in 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The quadrangular structure consists of 177 cells and a traditional Buddhist stupa in the center. The rooms were used by the monks for accommodation and meditation. In addition to the large number of

stupas and shrines of various sizes and shapes, terracotta plaques, stone sculptures, inscriptions, coins, ceramics etc. have been discovered. It was an important intellectual centre for religious traditions such as Buddhists, Jains and Hindus. The outside walls with ornamental terracotta palques still display the influence of these three religions.

The Sompur vihara complex was dominated by a temple, which was not typical but unusual. The temple had none of the characteristic features of Indian temple architecture, but is strongly reminiscent of Buddhist temples of Burma, Java and Cambodia, reproducing the cruciform basement, terraced structure with inset chambers and gradually dwindling pyramid form.



Sompur Vihar, Nawgaon



Mod  
el of Sompur Vihar



Sc  
ulptures of Sompur Vihar

### • Maynamoti Vihara

Mainamoti Vihara is another site of ancient Bengali architecture. It extends for about 17 km north-south from Mainamati village on the Gumti River to Chandi Mura near the Lalmai railway station. In its widest parts, the ridge is about 4.5 km across and its highest peaks attain a height of about 45 metres. These highlands were once thickly wooded with an abundance of wild life. It has more than 50 sites which represent ancient Buddhist culture. Among them the Shalban Vihara, Ananda Vihara, Rupban Mura and Itakhola Mura are most prominent.



The Shalbon Vihara at Mainamoti, Comilla and discovered relics.

The idols of Gods and Goddesses found in Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Mainamoti are the examples of ancient Bengali sculpture. They are built on the surface of the walls of those viharas like modern tiles. Most of them were made of terracotta. The magnificenc of terracotta, stone idols, and metal idols indicate that people of ancient Bengal were skilled in sculptures.

The people of ancient Bengal were also skilled in paintings. Scholars think, the art of painting developed due to religious purposes at the beginning of Pala dynasty. Pictures were mainly drawn on the surface of the the walls of temples and stupas. Many colorful pictures of Buddha and other Goddesses are found in many Buddhists manuscripts.



# **Chapter- Two**

## **Geographical Features of Bangladesh**

### **Objectives**

The motto of this chapter is to introduce the learners to the geographical elements and their characteristics of Bangladesh.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Geographical location and area, land, river, weather and climate, flora and faunas of Bangladesh.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the study, the learners will be enriched with the knowledge on the origin and the characteristics of the rivers in Bangladesh, the uniqueness of the weather, the natural vegetation and their impact on everyday life. They will be able to write essays or narrate how nature guides our way of life and living.

## **Geographical Features of Bangladesh**

The present Bangladesh is a part of traditional Bengal. Even the Bengali nation is also politically divided. However, the traditional Bengal had an area which covered approximately 80,000 square miles. When we discuss about the geographical characteristics and its impact on the people, we imagine such a Bengal which covers the area before 1947 AD. This was on the whole the natural boundary of Bangladesh although in the remote past the boundary was stretched from Assam to Orissa. However, the boundary of Bangladesh has been changed many times. Finally in 1947, Bengal was divided into two-East Bengal (which was renamed later as East Pakistan in 1956) and West Bengal and the large area has been shrunk to almost half. When West Pakistan imposed genocide over East Pakistan, the latter declared its independence and officially took the name ‘Bangladesh’. Bangladesh fought valiantly against Pakistani oppressors and succeeded to achieve its independence by sacrificing more than thirty lac people. On the other hand, West Bengal remains as a province under Indian central rule and recently (in 2016) it has been renamed as ‘Bangla’.

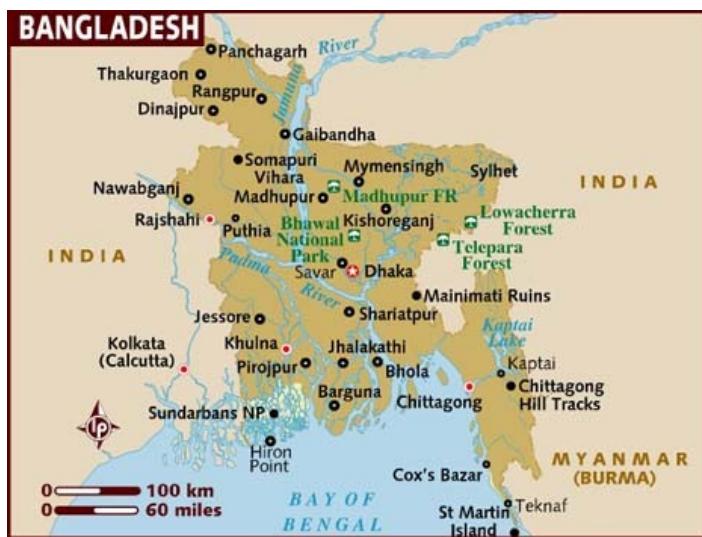
### **2.1 Geographical Location and Area**

Bangladesh is a low lying reverine country of South Asia. The physical geography of Bangladesh has two distinct features: a broad deltaic plain and a small hilly region. It is criss-crossed by numerous rivers mainly from north to south. Every year during monsoon the rivers become over flooded by upstream flow, therefore, flood engulfs huge areas adjacent to the rivers and its tributaries. Flood water left silt on the flooded field and it becomes fertile. This way roughly 80% of its land area becomes alluvial.

#### **a. Location**

Bangladesh is located an area having West Bengal of India in the west; West Bengal, Meghalaya, Arunachal province, Assam in the north; Assam, Tripura and Myanmar in the east and the Bay of Bengal in the south. However, according to the age old natural boundary, on the north Bangladesh stands the mighty Himalayas, Shilong plateau; on the south the Bay of Bengal; on the east there are

many big or small hills specially the hills of Garo, Kashiya, Jayantia, Lusai, Tripura and Chittagong; on the west stands the high mountainous lands of Rajmahal, Chhotonagpur and West Bengal. Geographically, at present Bangladesh lies between  $20^{\circ}34'$  and  $26^{\circ}38'$  north latitude and between  $88^{\circ}01'$  to  $92^{\circ}41'$  east longitude. The tropic of cancer divides Bangladesh at the middle.



### b. Area

According to the Statistical Year Book 2014 (published in January 13, 2016) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the total land area of Bangladesh is 56,977 sq. miles or 1,47,570 sq. kilometer. The limits of territorial water area of Bangladesh are 12 nautical miles and the area of the high seas extending to 200 nautical miles measured from the base lines constitutes the economic zone of the country. According to the year book, Bangladesh won in Arbitral Tribunal/PCA more than 1,18,813 square kilometers of waters comprising territorial sea, exclusive economic zone extending out to 200 NM across sizable area, and also have undeniable sovereign rights in the sea bed extending as far as 354 NM from Chittagong coast in the Bay of Bengal with all the living and non living resources.

To achieve an equitable result, the tribunal awarded Bangladesh 19,467sq km of area out of total disputed area of 25,602 sq km (approx). Recently, both Bangladesh and India mutually have exchanged 162 enclave lands.

According to the press release of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India, in November 20, 2015 entitled “Exchange of enclaves between India and Bangladesh” 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India became Indian Territory, a total area of 7,110 acres and 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh became Bangladeshi territory, a total area of 17,161 acres. So, the land area of Bangladesh has increased 10051 acres (40.675 sq. kilometer or 15.705 miles). This means the total area of Bangladesh is now 1,67,077.675 sq. km or 64,509.051 sq. miles. The area of Bangladesh is stretched 440 kilometer from East to West and 760 kilometer from North-West to South-East. Total boundary of Bangladesh is 5,138 kilometers. Its land boundary is 4427 kilometer, sea boundary is 711 kilometer. Bangladesh shares boundary with India 4144 kilometers and with Myanmar 283 kilometers.

### **c. Background**

Historically, in the ancient times, Bengal or Bangladesh was not united and its different parts were called with different name. North Bengal was named as Pundra and Varendri, West Bengal as Raro and Tamralipti, South and South-east Bengal as Vanga, Samatot, Horikel and Vabgal etc. Some parts of North and West Bengal were also called as Gaur or Lakhnouti.

During Sena rule Bangla first was united. During Mughal period Bengal stretched from Bay of Bengal to Gorhi (Teliagorhi of Rajmahal) and named as ‘Sube Bangla’.

During British period, Assam was cut from Bengal in 1874. Again, in 1905 Bihar and Orissa were cut from Bengal and a new province was formed by integrating Assam and the rest of Bengal. Dhaka was declared as capital of this province. The decision was further revised in 1911 to tame the anti-British movement named ‘Bangavonga Andolon.’ However, Bihar and Orissa were not merged into Bengal rather they got new status of province. The new Bangla province was formed with East Bengal and West Bengal with Darjiling district.

Sylhet, Kachhar and a part of Goalpara district remained within Assam. The capital also shifted to New Delhi from Calcutta.

In this way the British destroyed the glory of the leadership of Bengal in the Indian sub-continent and turned Bengal a very small province so that it might not be a challenge to the British colonial rule.

During the last phase of British rule, the communal harmony between the Hindu and the Muslim community destroyed, and therefore, the Muslims in the Indian sub-continent became concerned about their political destiny. They found a solution in the ‘Two Nations Theory’ of Jinnah. In 1940 ‘Pakistan’ resolution was passed at Lahore conference on 23 March which indicated two separate states for the Muslims of India.

However, the resolution was revised at a conference in Delhi by the Muslim League members of the Legislative Assembly in 1946 which amended the word ‘states’ to ‘state’. This was done illegally by the influence of Jinnah ignoring the protest of Bangali Muslim leaders. Bengali Muslim league leader Suhrawardy also did not able to keep himself out of the influence of Jinnah.

After that ‘Pakistan proposal’ became a demand of ‘one state for the Muslims’. Suhrawardy realized his mistakes soon in 1947 but it was then too late to amend. Everything has been slipped out from his grip by the time. As a result, Bengal province was further divided and with Sylhet East Bengal went under Pakistan. On the other hand, Darjiling, part of Dinajpur and Calcutta, the heart of Bengal province, went under India. An initiative from both the progressive part of Hindu and Muslim community was taken to form an undivided independent Bengal. But both Jinnah and Gandhi seemed reluctant to respond to the initiative.

East Bengal under Pakistani rule became a colony of West Pakistan from the very beginning. Gradually, people of East Bengal (East Pakistan after 1956) became outspoken against the oppressive rule. The Pakistani oppressive rulers took suppressive way to stop the democratic voice of the people of East Pakistan. At one moment they imposed genocide over the latter. People responded heroically to the Pakistani massacre. At last, Pakistani oppressors was compelled to

surrender to Bengali freedom fighters and sovereign independent Bangladesh emerged in December 16, 1971.

## 2.2 Land

Scientists believe that the earth is aged approximately 4.6 billion years. At the beginning of the creation of the earth, some ‘Shield Areas’ were produced on which the surface of the earth stands. Scientists believe ‘Indian Peninsula’ stands on one of these ‘Shield Areas’.

They also predict that during the last phase of Mesozoic Period ‘Gandowana Land’ of south hemisphere is splitted. As a result, ‘Indian Shield’ travelled 3000 miles in one billion year and hit ‘Asian Shield.’ Therefore, the silt and sedimentary rocks compiled on that shield became squeezed and created the Himalayas. Later some big rivers were produced from the melting ice of the Himalayas and these rivers flow toward the Bay of Bengal. It is estimated that the flow of the Padma and the Jamuna conveys approximately 1020 crore tons of silt every year. This huge amount of silt compiled years after year at the lower Gangetic areas and created the earth’s largest delta which is 2000 miles in length. Bangladesh is the largest part of this deltaic land. Therefore, Bangladesh is often called lower Gangetic Plain.

Bangladesh is mainly a plain low lying land. Generally from south to the north its altitude reaches 10 meters to 105 meters from the sea level. However, most elevations of the plain land are less than 10 meters from the sea level.

In the north-east (Sylhet areas), south-east (Chittagong hill tracts areas) and in the north there are some high altitudes. Chittagong hills rise steeply with altitudes from 600-900 meters above the sea level.

There are also some high lands named ‘Gar’ in Vawal of Gazipur and Madhupur of Tangail district.

According to the geological characteristics, the land of Bangladesh is of three kinds:

- a. Hills of tertiary age
- b. Slopes of Pleistocene age
- c. Contemporary sedimentary plains

### a. Hills of tertiary age

The lands of Rangamati, Bandarbans, Khagrachhari, Eastern part of Chittagong district, Cox’s bazaar, Northern part of Mymensingh and

Netrokona, North-eastern part of Sylhet, southern part of Moulavibazar and Habiganj are the hilly areas of tertiary age. From Sylhet to Chittagong hill tracts are included to this hilly land. The soil is hard and reddish here. There are some hills and hillocks here, which are generally 100-200 feet high. The hillock range of the southern part of Kushiara River in Sylhet rises up to 800 feet above the sea level. These are the Patharia, the Bangla, the Rajkandi, the Satgaon, the Kalimara and the Raghunandan.

There are also some hillocks between the river Surma and Kushiara at the adjacent to Gopalganj and Madhuganj. The Chittagong hill tracts include the hillock range of the Basitang, the Marang, the Kayanarang, the Bilaichhari, the Vangamura, the Batimain, the Dharkal, the Sitapahar and Fatikchhari. Tajingdong also known as "Bijoy" is the highest mountain of Bangladesh. Tajingdong is about 4300 ft (1310 meters) high from the sea level. It is situated in Remakri Pangsha union, some 40 kilometers away from Ruma Upazilla of Bandarban district. Sitakunda and Chandranath mountain range situate in Chittagong district. In Comilla there is Lalmai mountain range which is 37.50 meters high from the sea level.

#### **b. Slopes of Pleistocene age**

Varendravalley, Garof Madhupur and Vawal and the Lalmai area of Comilla are included to these slopes. Varendra valley is 6-12 meter high from sedimentary plains. Its area is approximately 9320 sq. kilometers. The Lalmai hillock range is 21 meter high from the sea level. It includes 33.65 sq. kilometers. 'Gar' of Vawal and Madhupur extend over the vast areas of Gazipur, Tangail and Mymensingh district. Its height is approximately 30 meters from the plain land. The famous Sal and Gazari forest is located here.

#### **c. Contemporary sedimentary plains**

The rest of the lands in Bangladesh (excluding the highlands and hill tracts discussed above) are mainly plain and soft. These vast lands have been formed by the siltation of the river Padma, the Jamuna, the Meghna, the Brahmaputra and their numerous tributaries. The area of this vast sedimentary plains is approximately 1,24,266 sq. kilometers. Vast tracts of this area go under water during the rainy season. Again,

a huge area of this plain land is located at the either sides of the rivers. Every year in monsoon when upstream flow runs huge volumes of water, the rivers fail to contain the volumes, and therefore, flood huge areas. Villages adjacent to the rivers go under the eroding water. After the monsoon when upstream flow withdraws its water pressure, new strip of sandy lands emerge from river bed. Locally, these lands are called as ‘Char’. These lands are full of silt, alluvial, therefore, fit for cultivation.

### **2.3 River**

Being a low lying land Bangladesh is criss-crossed by numerous rivers, canals and marshes. At present approximately 700 rivers and their tributaries are flowing through the country. Among them the Padma, the Jamuna, the Meghna, the Brahmaputra, the Tista, the Karnaphuli are main rivers. The origine of the big rivers of the country is outside of it in India and Nepal.

However, the abundance of rivers can be divided into five major networks namely: the Jamuna-Brahmaputra system, the Padma-Ganges system, the Surma-Meghna system, the Padma-Meghna system and the Karnaphuli system. The Jamuna-Brahmaputra is 292 kilometers long and extends from northern Bangladesh to its convergence with the Padma. Padma-Ganges has two sections: a 258-kilometer segment which extends from the western border with India to its convergence with the Jamuna some 72 kilometers west of Dhaka, and a 126-kilometer segment, the Padma, which runs from the Ganges-Jamuna convergence to where it joins the Meghna River at Chandpur.

The Surma-Meghna system is the longest river in Bangladesh which is formed by the union of six lesser rivers. It is 669 kilometers long. The Padma-Meghna system flows 145 kilometers to the Bay of Bengal. The Karnaphuli is the fifth river system in Bangladesh which is some 420 kilometers long. All these river systems flowing through the Bangladesh Plain drains an area of some 1.5 million square kilometers (excluding the Karnaphuli system).

Now let us discuss about the big rivers of Bangladesh.

#### **a. The Brahmaputra**

The name ‘Brahmaputra’ has many myths. It is mentioned as ‘Louhittyo’ in the *Mahabharata* and ‘Brahmaputra’ in the *Purana*. Greek scholar Ptolemy named it as ‘Annibal’ or ‘Ahradan.’ Medieval historian Minhaj Uddin Siraj wrote that during thirteen century it was three times bigger than the Ganga. From the last of eighteen century it began to be narrow. Mr. Reynolds, the Collector of Mymensingh, told in 1866 that it had become narrower than it was seen ten years ago. He predicted that once it would become an imperceptible sign. Today, his prediction has become true.

The Brahmaputra has changed its route many times than any river in Bangladesh. In the sixteen century AD it had been flowing near the Jungle of Madhupur, ran through eastern Dhaka, Sonargaon, took the name Dhaleshwary at Langalbond and then joined the Ganga. Once the Karatoa of north Bengal was the biggest and the main stream of the Brahmaputra.

It originates in the Chemaiyadoong glacier adjacent to Manas Sarabor in the Tibet plateau. It is then named as the Sangu in Tibet and flows through Assam and enters into Bangladesh at greater Rangpur (Kurigram). Its international length is 1800 kilometer. Presently it is flowing 150 miles through the estuary of the River Jamuna and joined the Padma at Goalanda. This two combined flow takes the name the Padma and again joined the Meghna at Chandpur. Finally, it takes the name ‘Tri-dhara’ and falls to the Bay of Bengal.

### **b. The Jamuna**

There was no mention of the river Jamuna in the map of Renel in 1780. After thirty years of Renel’s mapping, Buchanan Hamilton mentioned the name Jamuna (or Jabuna) as the main branch of the Brahmaputra. It is well known that the devastating flood of 1787 reshaped the geographical features of Bengal tremendously. Mr. William Hunter wrote, “The streets of Dhaka city were submerged to a depth sufficient to admit boats sailing them. 60,000 persons perished during the inundation and subsequent famine.” For this great inundation, the route of the Brahmaputra became changed, subsequently it joined the Tista. Moreover, during eighteen century, the Jamuna was known as ‘Jhenei’ and used to flow as a mere canal. Around 1887 the Varendra valley was separated from Madhupur Gar

as a result of a great earthquake. Therefore, the narrow flow of the Tista, the Atrai, the Mahananda and the Punarvaba joined with the stream Jhenai and created a big flow of the Jamuna. This flow became so big that during monsoon it was generally widened up to 4/5 miles.

**c. The Padma**

The Padma is a lower part of the river Ganga. The Ganga emerges from the Gangatri glacier of the Himalayas at the height of 12800 feet and then passes through North Province, Bihar and the West Bengal. In West Bengal it is divided into two flows: the Bhagirathi and the Padma. The flow Padma enters Bangladesh through Rajshahi border and joins the Jamuna at Goalanda. This integrated stream is further joined together with the Meghna at Chandpur and then runs toward the Bay of Bengal. In the map of D. Barros the Padma is mentioned as a big river.

In the past, the Padma has changed its course many times. The accounts of Ibn Batuta, a fourteenth century traveler and Ma Huan of fifteenth century reveal that the Padma ran toward the Bay of Bengal through the way near to Chittagong. Abul Fazal, the composer of *Ein-e-Akbari* mentioned the same. According to the map of Renel, the old course of the Padma ran through Faridpur district and joined the Meghna at 'Kandarpapu' of Mehendigonj in Barisal. Later, this course, which was once known as 'Mayakata' and 'Arial Kha' was abandoned. Once the present course of the Padma ran toward the west and passed through ancient Kaliganga and then Vikrampur. However, this course was not mentioned in the map of Renel. In 1840 Mr. Telor mentioned a name 'Kirtinasha' in his book *Topography of Dacca*. However, Renel imagined another course of the Padma, which he thought ran through the northern side of the present flow and joined the Meghna at Munsiganj. The scientists believe that the Padma is displacing toward the south right at the moment. Therefore, we see the Padma has changed its course three times in the near past.

**d. The Meghna**

The River Meghna has derived from several integrated streams of the hilly areas of Kachhar of Assam and Sylhet of Bangladesh. The

'Barak', a hilly river of Assam, has divided into two flows: Surma and Kushiara. Later, these two flows enter into Bangladesh through Sylhet and then again join together at 'Kalni'. This flow has now joined together with the Brahmaputra at Bhairab Bazar and with the Padma at Chandpur. The Meghna has been indicated as 'Mogan' in *the Indica* written by Megasthenes. The western scholars of eighteenth century mentioned it as 'cosine'. According to the map of Renel, the old course of the Padma joined the Meghna near Mehendigonj. At present, the streams of the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and several other rivers are flowing through this river. As a result, the lower portion of the Meghna (at Noakhali, Chandpur and Lakshmipur) are eroding every year. Assam, eastern Mymensingh, Sylhet and Noakhali are the valleys of the Meghna.

#### e. The Tista

The Tista is not a big river. However, its route has brought many changes in the geographical features of Bangladesh. The name 'Tista' has been derived from the ancient 'Tri Srota' (tri-current). According to the map of Vonden Brook, Tista has been divided into three streams at Jalpaiguri of India. Its east course is named as the Karatoa, the middle course is named as the Atrai and the western course is named as the Punarvaba. The map of Renel has also mentioned these three courses. The name Tista is also found in a 'Papyrus book' (as 'Psitars) written in the first century AD. During the inundation of 1786, the Tista is cut off from the Padma and joined the Brahmaputra.

#### 2.4 The impact of rivers on human life

The significance of the rivers on the life of the people of Bangladesh is immeasurable. During the rainy season the rivers become inundated, therefore, flooded vast tracts of cultivable lands. Sometimes, the eroding rivers engulf villages after villages. As a result, thousands of people become homeless. They suffer from food, clean water, medicine as well as shelter. So the rivers are, at one sense, a curse for the rural people.

However, there is another side of the scene. River means easy communication. River means supply of fish. River means a natural support for irrigation. Again, as the flooding of river is an eternal scene of the rural Bangladesh, people know how to fight the nature.

The people of Bangladesh do not bend to this natural calamity. They fight valiantly against the nature. They shift their husbandry to the safer place nearby eroding river. Sometimes they build dams with their local materials in a body. This makes a sense of unity among the village people, which create a strong social bond. This fighting spirit is a special characteristic that are seen in the behavior of Bengali people. The spirit lead them fight against any oppressors.

Rivers not only erodes the cultivable lands but spread alluvial silt over the land which makes the fertile. As a result, after flood people can grow crops easily because flood water plays the role of irrigation naturally. After flood, new alluvial land rise near the river bed. These fertile sandy lands are valuable for easy cultivation. Locally they are called as ‘char’. People nearby ‘char area’ fight each-other to establish their rights. Nobody wants to leave even an inch of earth of that char because they think these lands are theirs because river has grabbed it from their predecessors.

A piece of ‘char land’ is similar to a piece of gold to them. They spill blood to protect the land for the land is their existence. This game has been played generations after generation: rivers erode lands, rise alluvial char after coming down the flood water and then people fight one another for the ‘char land’. Once established the right on a piece of char, people sow seeds and easily get bumper crops. As soon as they harvest the crops, their all miseries go to oblivion. They feel happy.

They store foods, sell foods, buy their daily necessities and distribute cakes and other home-made foods to neighbors. Again, they get prepared for the next rainy season.

So, the river teaches the nearby people developing dual character. In time of a common danger, people fight for the common goal automatically. However, in time of peace, they scatter each other for their personal interests. This behavior pattern is not only seen among the rural people, it is a national characteristic.

## **2.5 Weather and Climate**

Bangladesh lies in the tropical region. Therefore, we have a sub-tropical monsoon, wide variations of seasons, rainfalls and

temperature. As our country is mainly a plain land having very little mountainous areas, therefore, climatic differences are minor. This means all the people of this country from Teknaf to Tetulia and Rupsha to Pathuria, enjoy almost the same climatic patterns. The climate of this country is temperate. Comparatively, April is the hottest month and January feel coolest in most parts of the country. Natural calamities such as floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes and tidal bores are annual visitors. In the coastal areas, major cyclones hit almost every year and due to the funnel-shape of the Bay of Bengal's sea-shore tidal bores sweep the shorelines almost every year.

In our country temperature varies from 9°C (48°F) to 14°C(57°F) in winter and from 25°C (77°F) to 40°C (104°) in summer. Average temperature at day is 26-30°C at day and around 20°C at night. Average rainfall is 48 to 138 inches. The humidity ranges from 99% (in July) to 36% (in December).

We have six seasons: summer (grishma), rainy seasons (borsha), autumn (sarat), late autumn(hemonta), winter(seet) and spring(basanta). However, the main seasons are three: summer(March-June), monsoon (July-October) and winter (November-February).

Summer season ranges from March to May. The weather feels hot in this season. The nature especially soil becomes dry to dust. Air becomes hot and goes up, therefore, makes depression. As a result, it often creates windy day. The sky becomes cloudy, and suddenly day becomes night as the black clouds engulf the sun. Lightning and thunder storms are common scene in summer which amalgamates the surroundings all on a sudden. Sometimes frozen rain comes down on earth violently. Temperature ranges between 38°C to 41°C. April is the hottest month.

Rainy season comes after summer which generally ranges from June to August. At the first shower of the season, people get relieved from the thirsty hot weather. Gradually, things become hard for the people as soon as rain continue to fall all day long. As Bangladesh is a low lying country, almost 70% of her land goes under water during this season. Sometimes, rain falls in torrents and it makes difficult to go out. In the rural areas 'kacha' roads become muddy and slippery.

Areas nearby rivers become flooded, and therefore, people and animals have to shift to a safer place, at least higher ground. Boats become the only means of communications. In Bangladesh almost all village home have a boat kept for this season. Jute is the main crops in the season.

The sky ends its tearing as soon as September comes. Gradually, it becomes clear and blue. A soft cool wind starts to blow which washes away the grimes of the rainy season. White clouds move from one to the other end of the sky and take numerous shapes. New vegetation appears, and therefore, everywhere there are green and green. Birds sing here and there and the human mind fills with eternal peace. The tuft of soft downy white flowers (Kash ful) on the river banks or in the fields gives heavenly pose. In autumn the weather feels slight humid and at the late of night it becomes chilly.

The late autumn (Bengali name is Hemanta) comes after the short span of autumn (Bengali name is Sarat). It ranges from October to November. It's the harvesting time. In this season, nature gives return to what the people did in the rainy and its subsequent days. Nature repays extravagantly. It is not too hot or too cold. The morning sun of late autumn gives soft golden rays, nature becomes bright dressed and everywhere it becomes heavenly. Fields become full of crops. Festivals flourish to hail the harvest. Flowers bloom and the chirping of birds make the earth a musical theatre. However, air becomes fresh and there at the end of late autumn. Morning starts to become foggy to welcome the winter.

Though November-December is considered the season of winter, in fact, winter stretches up to February, even to March sometimes. January becomes the coolest month when the temperature ranges from 16°C to 20°C at day and 10°C at night. However, in our country, temperature sometimes falls down to 4°C to 5°C in some areas such as Kurigram, Rangpur, Rajshahi etc. Sometimes there is dense fog and the sun cannot peep. People pull out their warm clothes. The poor people in the city streets and in the villages burn straws and waste materials at night or in the morning to have some

warmth. The trees start to loss its leaves. Everywhere it becomes dry and barren.

Spring (Bengali name Basanta) comes after winter when the nature regains its strength, tender leaves of the trees are peeped. Everywhere there is a new look. It's the king of seasons. It ranges from December to February. There is no rain, no fog, no humidity nor even a naughty wind or angry sun. Temperature is fine, not cool or too hot. Gentle breeze blows all day long in this season. It's a short spanned season but feels heavenly with flowers everywhere. There are abundance of new vegetables and fruits. People rushed to make cakes (pithas). People remain busy with fairs and festivals. Marriages are held in this season.

## **2.6 Flora and Fauna**

Flora and fauna refer to plant and wildlife respectively. The indigenous plant and wildlife of a geographical region is often referred to as that region's flora and fauna. However, the forest cover of Bangladesh is only about 9 percent.

Bangladesh has the plant and animal life typical of a tropical and riverine swamp. It makes Bangladesh a land of green vegetation. More than 6,000 plant species occur in Bangladesh, of which about 300 are exotic and 8 are endemic. The landscape, which for most of the year is lush green, is dotted with palms and flowering trees. Tall grasses present a picturesque site near the banks of the rivers and the marshes. Around 60% of the Gangetic plain is under rice paddy and jute cultivation. There grows wide varieties of cereals like rice, wheat and maize. Mangoes, jackfruits, guavas, bananas, coconuts, watermelons and lichis also grow abundantly. In Bangladesh there are numerous varieties of flowers. Water lily, Lotus, Rose, Jasmine, Goldmohur, Champa Rajanigandha, Sheuli, Shimul, Jaba, Kadam are among them. The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world. There are also Sal and Gazeri forests in Modhupur and Vowal 'Gar' area. In the Chittagong hill tracts and also all over Bangladesh Bamboo trees are common.

Bangladesh is the habitat of more than 650 species of birds. The Magpie Robin is the National Bird of Bangladesh and it is common and known as the Doyel or Doel. It is widely used as symbol in

Bangladesh. The most common other birds are: crow, pigeon, stork, crane, owl, duck, goose, cock, hen, hawk, sparrow, cuckoo, maynah, kingfisher, woodpecker, parrot etc.

The large forest area of the Sunderbans in the southwest and the Chittagong hill tracts are the home of wildlife in Bangladesh. Of the 200 species of mammals, the pride of place goes to the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderbans, the largest block of littoral forests spreading over an area of 6,000 sq. km. Next comes the elephants found mainly in the forests of the Chittagong Hill Tracts districts. There are also cheetahs, leopards, crocodiles, elephants, spotted deer, monkeys, boars, bears, pheasants, Jackal, monkeys, wild boar, wild cats, buffalo, ox. There are about 150 species of reptiles. Among them Python, cobra, rat snake, krait, sea turtle, mud turtle, river tortoise, crocodiles, mugger are common.

#### **2.4 The influence of geographical features over the people of Bangladesh**

It is well known that the surrounding environment naturally influences the process of peoples' growing up. As we have seen, the geographical location, climate and vegetation of Bangladesh are quite different from many other countries; they give unique characteristics among the people living here. Bangladesh lies in the tropical area. Although the weather is not extreme, it is hot. Due to this weather people generally slightly hot-headed, restless here. Not only that the diversified seasons and rude natural calamities make the people dependent on lots of myths. From time immemorial, people used to worship different natural forces and sought their help. They also sacrificed their valuable things to those natural things of forces to overcome misery. The practice of worshipping of different imaginary God and Gods has been derived from this tendency. For an example, people used to think that Cholera disease is caused for the curse of 'Ola Bibi'. So they worshipped 'Ola Goddess' to get relieved of the curse of Ola Bibi.

In Bangladesh there are vast tracts of plain cultivable lands and numerous rivers with their tributaries. During monsoon lands go under river-flooded water, which is full of silt. As a result, the soil of Bangladesh becomes fertile and grows crops abundantly. This way,

Bangladesh has become a producer of abundant crops. Having criss-crossed by numerous rivers Bangladesh becomes boat rowing. Hence from the ancient times, the soldiers of Bangladesh are efficient in naval warfare. Therefore, the invaders from the north and the west were unable to control the rebellions of Bengal for a long time. From the history, we have come to know that in the medieval period Sultan Ghyasuddin Iwaz Khalji built up a navy in Bengal for the protection of conquering lands and also for the soldiers' security. Again, during the rebellion of 'Boro Bhuyian', the Mughal forces were unable to subdue them for their naval force and naval communication. Moreover, the waterways played the most important role in the transportation of men and commodities. From the ancient period, Bengal was connected with the rest of the world through the waterways and used to export commodities, especially the cloths, Chandan wood, spices to many other countries. Bengal cotton and Mosline was famous worldwide. This easy communication of waterways nourishes internal trade and commerce. Therefore, people from the ancient times were happy. They have plenty of grains, cereals, fishes and meats, fruits and leisure. While the boatmen used to row their boats under the vast blue sky, their minds filled with eternal feelings. They used to sing melodious tune. This way numerous folk songs i.e. Vatiali, Murshidi, Marfati are produced. So we see, the blue sky, gentle breeze, the vast flowing water and temperate climate have made the people soft hearted.

Nature has given different food habits and dress up to the people of Bangladesh. As it is a temperate region; neither too cold nor too hot, people generally wear light dresses such as Lungi, pantaloons, Dhoti, Gamchha, T-shirt(fatua), Sari, salwar-kamij etc. Rice and fish is their main food. Lots of vegetables are taken here due to the vegetation. People used to hunt birds and enjoyed these.

Again we see another characteristic among the people of Bangladesh. Sometimes they become too hard to make them bend. This is for the impact of natural fluctuations. The people of Bangladesh have to face the natural calamity annually. They are to face cyclones and tidal-waves caused by fluctuations of weather and seasons. This has made them struggling men. As they never surrender to natural calamity, it

becomes their nature not to bow down their head to anybody. This is seen during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.

# **Chapter- Three**

## **Roots of Bangladesh**

### **Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to let the learners know about the political history of the ancient, medieval and modern ages of Bangladesh. It also aims at providing in-depth knowledge on the socio-economic condition of the Bengali people, the ancient administrative systems etc.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Janapad Era, Pandu Rajar Dhivi,Morya Era, Gupta Era, Sasanka, Pala Dynasty, Sena Dynasty, Administration System of Ancient Bengal, Socio-economic Conditions of Ancient Bengal, Invasion of Bakhtiar Khilji and khilji Era, Shamsuddin Illius Shah: Shah-e-Bangala, Raja Ganesh, Husseinshahi Era: Ekdala Fort, Boro Bhuyans, Subadar Islam Khan, Subadar Mir Jumla, Subadar Murshid Quli Khan, Subadar Shaista Khan

Nabab Alivordi Khan, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah : Tragedy of Plassey,Mir Jafar, Mir Kashim, Arrival of European Companies in the Indian Sub-continent: British Supremacy, Rise of British East India Company: Famine of 1770, Permanent Settlement, 1789,Sepoy Mutiny and Indian Act of 1858, Western Education and Bengal Renaissance, Sir Syed Ahmed and Aligarh Movement, Lord Curzon and the Partition of Bengal(1905), The Indian National Congress and The Muslim League,Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, Lucknow Pact, 1916, Khilafat and Non-Cooperative Movement, Bengal Pact, 1923, The Nehru Report and Jinnah's 14-Points,Lahore Proposal, 1940, Integral Sovereign Bengal Proposal of Basu-Sohrawardi, Partition of India: Emergence of Independent Pakistan and India.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the study, the learners will be able to answer all sorts of question on the political history since the ancient period up to the modern times.

## **Chapter- Three**

### **Roots of Bangladesh**

Though the exact age or date of human habitation in Bangladesh is still unknown to us, it is no doubt that the root of Bangladesh is very deep. Some archaeological elements such as weapons of Paleolithic, Neolithic and Copper age were found in some parts of undivided Bengal. In 1963 ‘an axe’ of ancient age was found in Chhagolnaya of Feni district while excavating. It is more than twenty thousand years old. In 1958 an American citizen Dyson found a weapon made by stone. It is believed to be forty thousand years old. So it is clear that human habitation in the Bangladesh area started from approximately the same time of other areas of the world. The historians believe that ancient Bengali tribes, namely: Kol, Vill, Sabar, Dom, Pulinda, Hari, Chandal, Kaibarta, Sadgop, Kayastha etc. were the descendent of these stone-age people. According to the archaeologists’ view, Bangladesh’s ancient civilization was contemporary to the Indus civilization which was existed in 3000 years BC. However, we’ve found a very little information of pre-Aryan age.

#### **3.1 Pandu Rajar Dhibi**

As we have mentioned in the previous chapter that the land of Bengal is very ancient except from its south-east part. Here people used to live from pre-historic ages. These people developed the oldest civilization of Bengal on the shore of the river ‘Ajoy’ of Burdwan district in West Bengal. In 1962-63 the Archaeology Department of West Bengal excavated some areas of Ajoy, Kunur, Kopay river bank in Birbhum and Burdwan district. Through this excavation the archaeologists found some elements of ancient civilizations that was existed in 1500 BC. The excavated site nearer to the southern bank of Ajoy River was named as ‘Pandu Rajar Dhibi’ as the scholars found its main mound associated with ‘Pandu Raja’ mentioned in *the Mahabharata*.

The instances found in ‘Pandu Rajar Dhibi’ near the river Ajoy proved that it was a rich civilization of non-Aryan origin of Bengalis existed more than three thousand years ago. The discovered elements

show that the people living there knew how to cultivate paddy, how to hunt nilgai (large Indian antelope), deer etc., how to tame pig and other animals, how to catch fishes. Perhaps, rice was the staple food. They used to use various types of picture-decorated earth-pots. At the initial stage of the civilization, people knew the usage of stone and copper. Gradually, they became familiarized with iron. They could build specious and luxurious houses, which they built on strong brick or stone made basement. The houses were generally quadrangular. However, some circular shaped houses were also found. The walls of some houses were built by mixing mud and reeds. The roofs of the houses were made of Tally or terracotta. They also used wooden poles to build houses. They have knowledge of town-planning with pavements and streets.

In Pandu Rajar Dhibi a roundish seal made of steatite stone was found. It has some engraved symbols. Experts are of the view that they are pictographs and the seal was from Crete, the Mediterranean island. Experts also assumed that the seal was made before three thousand and a half years before. Some idols of terracotta were also found in the bank of Ajoy River, which proved the antiquity of these artifacts.

In fact, Pandu Rajar Dhibi represents the ruins of trading township. The seal and many other excavated instances proved that they had perhaps a trade links with similar civilization of central India and Rajasthan and with Crete, the homeland of ancient civilization of human being. People used to trade to remote places loading their boats with spices, cotton made clothes, ivory, gold, silver, copper. Perhaps, diamond and sugar were the main export items.

The instances found in Pandu Rajar Dhibi prove that a rich civilization was developed in south-west Bengal at the same time while the people of western and middle India also had developed similar prosperous civilizations.

### **3.2 Political Development: Ancient Period**

Aryans entered India 2000 BC. They developed a rich civilization in northern, southern, central and western India. But they entered east of India i.e. in Bengal many years after their coming in India. This means for many years the people of Bengal were able to prevent their

entrance. However, we've little information about the life and living of the people of Bengal before the Aryans come.

How was the state of Bengal when the Vedic Aryan started to reside the territories adjacent to Panchanad is still unknown. There is no mention of 'Bengal' in *Vedic Sutras*. In *Oiterio Brahman* a name 'Pundra' is mentioned as one of several dacoit nations. Pundra was located at North Bengal. *Oterio Aronnyk* spoke ill of Bengali people. However, *The Purana*, *the Mahabharata* and other later Brahmin literature conveyed the name of different nations living in Bengal and also contained lots of stories on the Aryan expansions here. All these elements indicate that Bengal was then divided into many small independent human settlements similar to small kingdoms. Therefore, it is clear that Aryan expansion in Bengal occurred much later of their coming in India.

### **3.2.1 Janapada Era**

Perhaps, it was not an undivided area then. In fact, in the ancient period, no single state was established throughout the whole of Bengal. The country was then divided into many independent territories. Even the areas of those territories changed frequently. Although they seemed independent, they were not kingdoms or states. They were Janapad. The Janapad is actually an independent human settlement.

In the history of South Asia, ancient period ranges from pre-historic ages up to 1200 AD. However, the ancient literature gave us information from the sixth century AD when there were some independent political settlements in the eastern India, which were known as Janapad. From that literature we came to know about nine Janapadas: Gaur, Banga, Samatat, Pundra, Harikel, Varendra, Tamralipti, Chandradip, Radha.

#### **Gaur (Gauda)**

It is well known to all but there are much debate on the actual location of ancient Gaur. The name was first mentioned in the grammar of Panini. *The Arthashastra* of Koutillya also gave accounts of the luxuries of the people of Gaur of third and fourth century AD. According to the stone-plate inscription of Harshabardhana, Gaur was not much far from the Bay of Bengal. The accounts of Barah Mihir

written in six century AD also tell that Gaur was a separate Janapad from other Janapad such as Pundra, Banga and Samatata. *Bhabisya Purana* described its location as: south of the river Padma and North of Bardhawam. The description of the writer's of seventh century AD also echoes the same narration. During this century the capital of Gaur was located at Kornasubarna near Murshidabad and Shasanka was the ruler of Gaur. During Pala dynasty vast areas of North India had come under Gaur. As a center of Pala empire Gaur achieved the prestige of being undefeated. However, during the declining of Pala rule Gaur lost its past glory. It is now believed that the modern Maldah, Murshidabad, Birbhum, part of Burdwam were the border of Gaur. At the beginning of Muslim period Laksmanavati of Maldah was called as Gaur. Later Gaur was used to indicate the whole of Bengal.

### **Banga**

Banga was a very ancient Janapada. In the ancient Puthi (manuscript) it is mentioned as the neighboring territory of Magadha and Kalinga. In the *Mahabharata* it is mentioned as adjacent to Pundra, Tamralipti and Summa. The accounts of Banga are also found in the stone-plate inscriptions of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, Kaultillya and in the book of Kalidas.

Another source indicates that a Janapada named 'Banga' was developed in the east and south-east of present Bangladesh. It is assumed that once a nation named 'Banga' was inhabited here. Therefore, the locality was named after the name of 'Banga race'. All the evidences and witnesses proved that 'Banga' was the name of the plain land located between the Gonga and Bhagirohi River. During the Pala and Sena dynasty the area of Banga Janapada was reduced to a small territory. In the eleventh century AD, during the last phase of Pala dynasty Banga Janapada was divided into two: Uttar Banga and Dakkhin Banga. In the ancient stone-plate inscriptions there found two territories in Banga named: Vikrampur and Navya. At present there is no place left that is named as Nabba. However, it is assumed that Faridpur, Barisal, the lower marshy lands of ancient Patuakhali was within Nabba. Finally, the historians conclude that Banga was founded with the area of greater Bogra, Pabna, and western part of Mymensingh, Dhaka, Faridpur, Kustia, greater Comilla and some parts of Noakhali.

### **Pundra**

Pundra was the most important Janapada in ancient Bengal. It is said that the nation named ‘Pundra’ founded the Janapada. The name was mentioned as a ‘nation’ in the *Vedic literature* and in the *Mahabharata*. The capital of Pundra people was ‘Pundranagar’. Later the name has been changed to Mahasthangarh. Perhaps, the ancient Pundanagar lost its sovereignty during the reign of Maurya emperor Ashoka (273-232 BC). With the gradual development of its prosperity it became Pundrabardhana in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. During this period, Pundrabardhana covered an area of Bogra, Dinajpur and Rajshahi district. According to the historians, from Rajmahal-Ganga-Bhagirathi to Karatoa, as a whole, almost all the areas of North Bengal were under Pundrabardhana. During Sena dynasty, the south border of it had crossed the Padma and reached up to Khari Bisoy (the present Khari Pargana of Chobish Pargana) as well as up to the sea-shore of Dhaka-Barisal. The scholars believe the present Mahasthangarh which is seven miles away from Bogra is the ruins of ancient city, Pundranagar.

### **Harikel**

The writers of seventh century AD mentioned Harikel as a Janapada in their writings. Chinese traveler ‘It Sing’ told that Harikel was located at the last border of East India. However, other manuscripts indicate that it was a part of Chittagong. From all these writings the scholars think that Harikel was extended from Sylhet in the east to a part of the present Chittagong, although some parts of Samatat Janapada covered within this territory. However, the actual location of Harikel and Samatat is still a matter of dispute. In fact, in the ancient period Banga, Samatat and Harikel shared each other’s borders and the border line might not be as clear as the present time. Therefore, an influence of one Janapade might be felt within other Janapada. However, Harikel was an independent Janapada from 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century AD to 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> century AD. While Troilakkya Chandra conquered Chandradip, Harikel went under Banga. Some others also believe that Harikel and Sylhet covered the same territory.

### **Samatat**

Samatat was a neighboring Janapada of Banga of east and south-east Bengal. It was a humid marshy land. Some believe that Samatat is the name of ancient Comilla. Others are of the view that it was founded with the territory of Comilla and Noakhali. From seventh century AD to twelfth century, Tripura district remained under Samata Janapada. During this period its west border was stretched up to Khari Pargana of Chabbish Pargana. However, once the land ranges from eastern shore of Ganga-Bhagirathi to the outlet of the Meghna was known as Samatat Janapada. The place ‘Boro Kamta’ which was 12 miles away from Comilla town was the capital of Samatat during seventh century AD.

### **Varendra**

Varendra, Varendri or Varendrabhumi was the name of another Janapada of ancient Bengal. It was also located at north Bengal. Varendra was the most important territory within Pundrabardhana. The main city, the residence of the provincial head of Pundranagar of Maurya and Gupla period were located here. Therefore, some do not consider Varendra as a Janapada. However, once the mentioned place was known to all as Varendra. That’s why, the scholars of ancient history recognize Varendra as Janapada. It was located between the rivers Ganga and Karatoa. Varendra covered an area of Bogra, Dinajpur, a major part of Rajshahi district and Pabna.

### **Tamralipti**

Tamralipti Janapada was located at the north of Harikel. The present ‘Tamluk’ of Medinipur of West Bengal was the center of Tamralipti. It was a very low and damp land nearer to the sea. However, it was suitable for naval communication. In the ancient period it was a significant place and a center of naval trade. There is a river port here, which was located at the bank of the river Rupnarayan 12 miles away from the outlet of the Hoogly and the Rupnarayan. From seventh century AD it had been recognized as ‘Dandabhukti’. However, Tamralipti gradually lost its previous glory from 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **Chandradip**

In the ancient Bengal there was another small independent human settlement named Chandradip. The present Barisal district was the mainland and center point of Chandradip. Scholars have mentioned its location between the river Baleshwar and the Meghna.

## **Radh**

The land of west Bhagirathi was known as Radh. In the ancient times, 'Kotibarsha' was the capital of Radh. According to Subhash Mukhapadhyha Radh was first mentioned in a Jain Puthi (manuscript) *Acharanga Sutra*. During sixth century BC Mahavir came to Radh for preaching his religion with some of his disciples. According to *Acharanga Sutra*, during this period there were no roads and streets, no social manner or customs of living here. People seemed impoverished and rude. They let the dogs loose toward the Jain saints. Radh Janapada was divided into two: Bazrabhumi and Summabhumi.

### **Bazrabhumi**

The north part of Radh was known as Bazrabhumi. It was also known as Uttar Radh. Bazrabhumi covered an area of western part of present Murshidabad district means Kandi Mahakuma, whole of Birbhum district (with Santali lands), and Katoa Mahakuma of Burdwam district. As a whole, the south border of Uttar Radh was up to the river Ajoy. The Northern border of Uttar Radh sometimes crossed the river Ganga and stretched toward further north.

### **Summabhumi**

The south lands along the western bank of the river Ganga-Bhagirathi was known as Summabhumi or Dakkhin Radh. This means, Summabhumi Janapada covered an area of the southern part of present Burdwam district, most of Hoogli and Haora district. Later, it was known as Dakkhin Radh. The river Ajoy was the north border of Dakkhin Radh.

**Table: Location of Janapada**

Name of Janapada	Present Location
Pundra	: Greater Bogra, Rajshahi, Rangpur, part of Dinajpur.
Varendra	: Bogra, Pabna, North-west part of Rajshahi, Rangpur, some parts of Dinajpur.
Banga	: Kustia, Jessor, Nadia, Shantipur, Dhaka, Faridpur and greater Mymensingh.
Gauda(Gaur)	: Maldah, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Burdwam, Chainababginj.

Samatat	: Greater Comilla and Noakhali.
Uttar Radh	: Part of Murshidabad, whole Birbhum, part of Burdwam.
Dakkhin Radh	: Southern part of Burdwam, most part of Hoogly and Haora district.
Harikel	: Chittagong, Parbattyo Chottogram, Tripura, Sylhet.
Chandradip	: Barisal.
Tamralipti	: Medinipur district.

### 3.2.2 Greek Period

Greek writers gave much information about ancient Bengal. Greek warrior Alexander invaded the north-west India in 327 BC. The Greek and Latin writhers mentioned that there was a powerful king in ‘Gangaridoy’ or Gangariddi during Alexander’s invasion in India. Plini wrote that the last phase of the river Ganga flowed through this river. He also wrote that its capital was ‘Parthalis’ and its king was always accompanied by 60,000 infantry, 1000 knight and 700 war elephants when he went to any war. So it is clear, Gangaridoi indicate an area of ancient Bengal. Deudorus wrote the king of Gangaridoy had four thousand trained war elephants; therefore, the army of Alexander dared not invade Bengal. Roman poet Vergil wrote about the prosperity of Gangaridoy (approximately in 30 BC). Ptolemy wrote the course of Ganga used to fall to the Bay of Bengal through five different streams and all the streams had passed through Gangaridoy. So it is clear from the Greek writings during the Greek invasion in India Bengal was a very powerful and prosperous country. However, from three hundred BC to three hundred AD remains dark to us as there is no evidence found to reconstruct the history of six hundred years. After the departure of Alexander, Chandra Gupta Mourya established a strong empire covering almost all the areas of India.

### 3.2.3 Maurya Dynasty

We do not have necessary documents to write the political history of Bengal before Gupta era chronologically. However, it is proved from other sources that Maurya rule was established in Bengal before the coming of the Arians. In 321 BC Chandra Gupta Maurya established the Maurya rule in India. However, in north Bengal Mourya rule was

established during the reign of emperor Ashoka (269-232 BC). Pundra or Pundranagar was a prosperous religious city and the center of Maurya province in north Bengal.

The present ‘Mahasthan Gar’ which is five kilometers away from Bogra sadar is the ruins of that Maurya edifice. The Chinese traveler Uan Chuang wrote that he saw Buddhists’ Vihar at Karnasuvarna(Murshidabad district), Tamralipti (Hoogli district) and Samatat (South-east Bengal). Therefore, it is assumed perhaps Maurya rule spread over other territories in Bengal. However, evidence show that Gangariddi kingdom of Bengal was still powerful and prosperous during Mourya rule especially in the first and second century AD.

After Maurya era, the history of Bengal again goes in dark up to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD due to lack of proper evidences. However, some evidences show the establishment of a short span of Sunga (187-75 BC) and Kanya rule. Perhaps they ruled on a very small part of Bengal. Then series of foreign attacks occurred in India such as: the Greeks, the Shakes, the Pahlavas, the Kushans etc. However, no valid evidence found that can prove that these invaders came up to Bengal. Some Kushan coins were found in Bengal. But historians think these coins reached in Bengal perhaps for other reasons such as trade.

### **3.2.4 Gupta Era**

Historians found numerous sources about the Gupta age by which the history of the Gupta can be reconstructed. At the advent of Gupta rule in India Bengal was divided into many independent human settlements. The Gupta Empire was established in India in 320 AD. From historical analysis, some historians believe that the original home of the Gupta kings was in Bengal i.e., therefore, they think the Gupta might be Bengali. However, there is no valid document in favor of their claim.

Evidence show, some portion of Bengal came under Gupta rule when Chandra Gupta I reigned. Later he brought the whole of Bengal territory under his Gupta Empire. During Gupta era the capital of Bengal was at Pundranagar of Mahasthangarh at Bogra. Again when the Gupta rule gradually lost its control over India due to the ferocious Hun’s attack from the hilly areas of central Asia, its

dominance remained in Bengal and it continued to rule in north Bengal up to the middle of sixth century.

The Gupta ruled mainly from 335 AD 550 AD. The name of Gupta rulers are: Sri Gupta (may be a feudal lord), Ghatatkacha (may be a Maharaja or king), Chandra Gupta I (first emperor of Gupta Empire, 319/20-335 AD), Samudra Gupta (the actual founder of great Gupta Empire, 335-380 AD), Chandra Gupta II (380-412 AD), Kumar Gupta ( 412-454 AD), Skandha Gupta (454-467 AD), Puru Gupta (?), Budha Gupta(?-474), then some other Gupta kings ruled up to 550 AD while their power had already become insignificant and the empire had been reduced to a small territory.

It is believed that once the Gupta were the feudal lords under Kushanas in Uttar Pradesh. Later they took the advantage of century long political disintegration of Maurya Empire and started to consolidate their political power from Magadha and parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. During the reign of Samaudragupta series of conquests continued and the Gupta Empire reached to its full length. He fought hundreds of battles to build his empire. Hence, Vincent Smith calls him ‘the Napoleon of India’.

Samudra Gupta categorized the conquered kingdoms into four. First category includes twelve states of Dekkhinpath: Kosala, Mashakantara, Kaurata, Pishtpura, Kottura, Erandapalli, Kanchi, Avamukta, Vengi, Palakka, Devrashtra, and Kushthalpura. He conquered these states, captured the kings but then liberated the kings of these kingdoms with some conditions as they sought his mercy and promised to show obedience.

Second category of states included eight kingdoms of Aryavarta. He exterminated the kings as they were not obedient.

The third category of states was rulers of forest states, five Border States and nine tribal republics. He reduced the kings of forest states to servitude. He forced to pay due taxes and obey his orders to the kings of Border States and tribal republics. During the reign of Samudra Gupta, the Border States were: Samatat (west Bengal), Kamrupa (Assam), Nepala (Nepal), Davaka (Assam) and Kartipura (Kashmir). Tribal republics were Malavas, Yaudheya, Madarkas,

Abhiras, Prarjunas, Arjunayanas, Sarakinakas, Kavas and Kharapakiras.

The fourth category of states includes the Kushanas, the Shaka-Murundas, the dwellers of Sinhala (Ceylon) and all other island paying tribute to him.

### **3.2.5 Importance of Gupta rule in Bengal**

The Gupta not only conquered and subdued the kings and built a vast empire, they set up a sophisticated administration. They also did charitable works and cultivated music and poetry. That's why Gupta period is considered as the golden period of ancient Bengal.

#### **• Bengal Administration under Gupta rule**

Gupta administration had a strong chain of command and it was run through descending orders. During this period, Bengal was divided into some well-defined administrative units like bhukti, visaya, mandala, vithi, and grama. Each of the units seems to have an adhikarana or office of its own at its headquarters (adhishthana).

Bhukti, corresponding to modern division, was the largest unit of administration. From the contemporary epigraphic records, two names of bhuktis are found: Pundravardhana (the whole of north Bengal) and Vardhamana (the southern part of ancient Radha). Bhukti was governed by a deputy of the king and his title was Uparika or Uparika Maharaja.

Visaya was the second largest administrative unit. The title of the head of visaya was Kumaramatya and Ayuktaka. From the inscriptions some names of such visaya are found: Kotivarsa visaya, Panchanagari visaya, Barakmandala visaya etc. There was a kind of officials, named pustapala (record keeper), in the adhikarana of the visaya. The visayapati (officer-in-charge) was aided by a 'Board of Advisers'. This 'Advisory Board' was composed of, excluding himself, four other members representing various important interest groups of those days. The members of the 'Board' were the nagara-shresthi (the president of the various guilds or corporations of the town, or of the rich bankers), the prathama-sarthavaha (the chief merchant), the prathama-kulika (the chief artisan), and the prathama-kayastha (the chief scribe acting as a state official in the capacity of a

Secretary of modern days or representative the Kayastha class). However, the participation of the local people in the administration bears clear testimony to the fact that the democratic principle was pursued in local administration. It can also be asserted that Gupta administration was the earliest instance of local government in Bengal.

The vithi forms the next administrative unit. From the contemporary epigraphic records, we know the names of two vithis: Vakkattakkavithi (in Vardhamanabhukti) and Daksinangshakavithi (in Pundravardhanabhukti). According to the historians, the head of bithi was the adhikaranas. Most probably there was a 'Board of Advisors' of the vithis that constituted with mahattaras, agraharinias, khadgis, vahanayakas etc.

The grama (Village) probably formed the smallest unit of administration. It seems that Gramika, Brahmins, mahattaras, kutumbins were closely attached with village administration.

The land administration of the Guptas was also well controlled. Lands are categorized properly such as: ksetra (a field under cultivation), khila (uncultivated), and vastu (a dwelling site). Accurate measurement system of land was followed strictly. It was well monitored. The names of the units of measuring the lands were kulyavapa and dronavapa. There were also other units of measuring lands such as pataka, bhu-pataka, adhaka, kakini, khadika, hala, drona etc. measuring the land.

#### ● **Bengal economy under Gupta rule**

The Gupta had ruled north India for about 200 years. During this time Bengal went under Gupta rule and became an important province. The Gupta period had witnessed great prosperity, owing to the flourishing trade, agriculture and industry. Prosperity due to Roman trade, which began in the Kushana period, continued till the early reign of the Guptas. The Saka Satraps of western India continued trade with the west after the fall of the Kushans. Chandragupta II had conquered Malwa and Saurashtra, by overthrowing the Saka rulers had established direct link of the Guptas in India with Roman trade. Bengal enjoyed the benefit of being a part of the All-Indian Empire. Tamralipti the modern Tamlik was a major port of Bengal and carried on an extensive trade with China, Ceylon, Java and Sumatra.

Bengal had a participation in the all-Indian trade. Gold and silver coins brought into currency in entire Bengal. Introduction of a large number of gold coins proves economic prosperity of Bengal. Betel nut, silk, cotton, coconut, salt, and sugar etc. were probably exported from Bengal. At that time Bengal had trading link with Southeast Asia and China. The discovery of a large number of imitation Gupta coins from different places of Bengal proves that Bengal enjoyed the benefit of money economy.

### **3.2.6 The Independent Vanga Kingdom**

The Gupta Empire started to decline due to the Hun attacks and the incompetence of later Gupta successors. The Hun attack caused a major blow to the Gupta authority and broke the vast empire to small pieces. Taking advantages of these weakness two independent kingdoms emerged in Bengal. One of them was called as Independent ‘Vanga Kingdom’ located in the southern region of south-east and west Bengal.

In those days the sovereignty of a king or kingdom was known from the authority of instruction on copper plates or by the inscriptions of coins. In the south-east and west Bengal as many as seven copper plates were found. From those plates we came to know about three independent Kings named Gopachandra, Dharmaditta and Samachardeva. All of them assumed the title ‘Maharajadhiraj’. Again, in the ruins of the monasteries of Nalanda gold coins of the period of Samachardeva were found. So it is clear that the kingdom of ‘Banga’ was independent and sovereign because unless they were independent they might not be able to circulate gold coins.

From the copper inscriptions we came to know that the above mentioned three rulers of ancient Bengal ruled from 525 AD- 600 AD. The copper inscriptions tell that Maharaja Gopachandra brought the regions on the borders of Banga and Orissa under his control during the second decade of the sixth century.

The Joyrampur copper plate of Gopachandra tells us that he granted a village which was under Dandavukti (located at the border of Orissa and south-west Bengal). So his kingdom might be stretched up to that area. Again, his Mallasarul copper plate mentioned the name

Bardhawamvukti within his kingdom. So it is clear that His kingdom covered an area from south-west Bengal to south of West Bengal.

From the copper inscriptions the historians believe that Gopachandra ruled 33 years, Dharmaditta ruled 33 years and Samachardev ruled 14 years.

It is assumed either the invasion of Kirtivarmana of the Chalukya dynasty or due to the rise of independent Gaur kingdom the kingdom of independent Bengal came to an end. Though we have little information about the independent Banga kingdom, we can say this short span of dynast had power and prosperity. The gold coins and the copper inscriptions are the ready evidence.

### **3.2.7 Sasanka**

Sasanka was considered the first Bengali ruler in ancient Bengal who for the first time was able to dominate all India politics or at least the politics of north India, the center of the then sub-continent. He not only became the ruler of Gaur, his dominance was extended to Magadha (south Bihar) and the north of Orissa. However, there is no valid source to reconstruct the history of his childhood or early life. *Harshacharita* of Banvatta, the accounts of Chinese traveler Huen Tsung and the Gonjam copper plate inscription, seal are the only sources to know about him. However, it is to be noted that the Gupta were Buddhist. Banvatta and Huen Tsung were also Buddhists but Sasanka was the follower of Shiva.

A mould of ancient seal was found in Rohtasgarh mountain wall in which the name ‘Sri Mahasamanta Sasanka’ was engraved. Therefore, the historians believe that he was once the Mahasamanta (a kind of big feudal lord) of Gupta king Mahasena Gupta. It is supposed that Mahasena Gupta was his father or grandfather. Some also argued that his other name was Narendra Gupta and he was related to Gupta blood. Sasanka took advantage of the chaos during the declining of later Gupta dynasty, became the ruler of Gaur and quickly expanded its territory sometimes before 606 AD. His capital was Karnasubarna (at Rangamati of Murshidabad district).

Sasanka became a mighty king. North and north-west Bengal were under his kingdom. He expanded the boundary of his small Gaur

kingdom by conquering neighboring areas. He conquered the kingdom of Dandavukti, Utkala of Orissa, kingdom of Kanghod (adjacent to Chilka lagoon) and Magadha of Bihar. In the west he expanded his kingdom up to Varansi. He also defeated the King of Kamrupa. Then he looked toward north India.

It was then regarded prestigious to have influence on the politics of North India. Sasanka wanted to uphold himself to that prestigious position. At this time two kingdoms of north India became powerful. One of them was Thaneswar of Pushyabhuti dynasty and the other was Kanauj (Kanyakubja) of Maukhri dynasty. Two kingdoms became friendly by the marriage of Grahavarma, the king of Maukhri with Rajyasri, the daughter of Pravakar Vardhana of the king of Pushyabhuti dynasty. At first Sasanka wanted to proceed to crush the Maukhris, the eternal enemy of the Gupta. For this he made an alliance with Devgupta of Malaba.

Malaba also wanted to establish its influence over north India. Therefore, Devgupta proceeded to Kanauj, defeated and killed Grahavarma before Sasanka reached northern India. Devgupta made Rajyasri captive and proceed toward Thaneswar. The ruler of Thaneswar was the Rajyavardhana, brother of Rajyasri. He was preparing to oppose Sasanka. However, he changed his mind and opposed Devgupta first on the way. He killed Devgupta, and then proceeded toward Kanauj to rescue his sister Rajyasri. On the way Rajyavardhana was defeated by Sasanka and became a captive of the latter. Later he was killed in 606. How he was killed is still a matter of controversy. The Buddhist writers are of the view that Sasanka killed him by conspiracy. However, it was not proved.

After the death of Rajyavardhana Sasanka became an unparallel ruler of the east who could easily subdue the whole of north India. But wise Sasanka did not do that. His aim was to crush Maukhri power and he successfully did it. He did not want to advance more. Therefore, he returned to his capital and consolidated his energy.

After the death of Rajyavardhana, his younger brother Harshavardhana became the ruler of both Thaneswar and Kanauj. He arranged a big army and advanced against Sasanka to take revenge. On the way, he rescued his sister Rajyasri and then proceeded toward

Gaur. He also made friendship with Vaskarvarma of Kamrupa (Assam). By the time Harshavardhana became the most powerful king in north India. However, evidence shows that he could not succeed to fulfill his desire to take revenge against Sasanka.

Sasanka was alive up to 637 AD. According to Hu en Tsang, Sasanka died of disease. So, it is clear, Harshavardhana could not able to defeat him or crush his kingdom. After the death of Sasanka Gaur became a place of chaos and anarchy. It became divided into many parts. Therefore, some parts went under the rule of Harshavardhana, some parts went under Kamrupa, in some parts rulers were changed frequently.

Sasanka was, in fact, an ancient Bengali Hero. He started his life as a small feudal lord. But he became the king of Gaur and was able to expand the domination of Gaur up to north India. It's really a great achievement.

### **3.2.8 Matsyanayam**

Matsyanayam is the term that describes the situation in Bengal after Sasanka. We do not have evidence what had happened in the period between the death of Sasanka and the emergence of Pala rule. It is said that during this hundred years Bengal (Gaur) experienced frequent anarchies. There was no single prominent power to establish law and order situation. Only the might used to enjoy the rights. In Sanskrit language this situation is termed as 'Matsyanayam'. According to the *Arthashastra* of Kautylla the term 'Matsyanayam' refers to the situation as:

When the law of punishment is kept in absence, it gives rise to disorder as is implied in the proverb of fishes, i.e. the larger fish swallows a smaller one, for in the absence of law-enforcing authority, the strong will swallow the weak.

Tibetan writer Lama Taranath wrote a book on the history of the Buddhists in India in 1608 AD. In his book he described the situation of Bengal during 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century as Matsyanayam. He wrote: 'There was no king in the whole country. Every Kshatriya, aristocrats or feudal lords, Brahmin, merchant ruled over the territory adjacent to their houses.' In fact in Bengal there was no rule at all.

This unstable political situation occurred due to frequent foreign invasions. In the first half of eighth century AD a king of Sailo family of north India conquered Pundravardhana. Soon after Jeshovarma of Kanouj invaded Gaur and subdued it. But his rule did not last long. According to *Rajtarangini* written by Kahlan Lalitaditya of Kashmir invaded Bengal during this time and defeated five kings of Bengal. According to the stone plate inscription of Joydev of Nepal Sri Harsha of Kamrupa attacked Gaur at the same time. So it is clear that after Sasamka Bengal became a chaotic place due to both internal conflict and external invasion.

The Khalimpur copper plate inscription of Dharmapala also described the situation of Bengal as Matsyanay and claims that Gopala had ended this situation.

### **3.2.10 Pala Dynasty**

The Pala dynasty emerged as the savior of Bengal. The hundred years of chaotic political situation frustrated the people. They became tired of instability. Finally, the leading members of the society met at an assembly and elected Sri Gopala to be their king. Soon Gopala wiped out all anarchies with iron hand. Again, law and order situation was established. This way, Pala dynasty started to rule Bengal as soon as Gopala ascended the throne. The rule continued to four hundred years.

#### **• Gopala(756-781)**

Gopala was the founder of Pala dynasty. However, nothing was known about the early life or family identification of Gopala. According to the Khalimpur copper plate inscription, his father was Bappyat (enemy destroyer) and grandfather was Daitavishnu (master of all knowledge).

According to Khalimpur copper plate inscriptions of Dharmapala, Gopala who was the supreme ornaments of all kings was given the kingship by 'Prakriti'. Lama Taranath gave a mysterious description of the accession of Gopala on the throne. According to his narration, people used to elect a man as their king every day to re-establish order in the country. But every night he was killed by a female snake-demon (Naga-Rakkhasi). Some years passed by. One day a devotee of Chundadevi came to a home whose members were disappointed

because that day a male member of that family was elected as king. The devotee of Chundadevi offered himself to be the king instead of that person. People accepted his offer and elected him king. When the demon came to kill him that night he stroke the demon with a stick empowered by chundadevi and killed her. Next morning everybody astonished to see him alive. Then he was elected as their permanent king.

Lama Taranath did not give clear definition of Prakriti. To some historians (suppose, Rames Chandra Majumdar) Prakriti refers to ‘people’ or ‘high officials’. Therefore, they argued that Gopala was elected by the people. The imagination of election during such a chaotic situation might be an exaggeration. However, it might be possible that Gopala occupied the throne with the help of some high ranked officials and feudal lords and the rest might bow to him least they should be humiliated. One of the later copper inscriptions of Pala Empire also told, ‘Gopala re-established eternal peace by subduing and crushing those who were working autocratically. A Tibetan historian Bustan also remarked that Gopala ascended on the throne by his quality.

#### ● Achievements of Gopala

Gopala’s first and foremost achievement was the overthrow of hundred years’ chaotic situation and establishment of a new rule. Secondly, he expanded his kingdom by occupying the adjoining areas of his fatherland. Thirdly, he was able to rule long years and made strong foundation for the later Pala rulers.

After ensuring peace and stability in the country Gopala paid attention to its expansion. According to *Ramacharita* of Sandhakar Nandi, Varendra was the Janakavu (fatherland) of the Palas. So Gopala’s early area was a part of north Bengal. Starting from this he annexed the whole of North and East Bengal. However South-east Bengal remained outside of his rule. The modern researchers think that Gopala ruled the country from 756 AD to 781 AD.

The Pala ruled approximately four hundred years in Bengal. This long tenure of ruling can be divided into three phases:

- i. The era of Ascendancy (781-861AD)
- ii. The era of decline and recovery (861-1043 AD)
- iii. The era of decline, recovery and fall (1043-1161 AD)

## The era of Ascendancy (781-861AD)

### ● Dharmapala (781-821)

Dharmapala ascended the Pala throne after the death of Gopala in 781. His mother's name is Deddadevi. He was the greatest Pala ruler. As his father established and consolidated Pala dynasty over Bengal and Bihar, he got opportunity to take part in North Indian politics because to become the ruler of North India (Kanauj was its center) was regarded as prestigious.

As a result, Pala dynasty wrote its name in the race of conquering North India. Other two rival dynasties were Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty of Rajputana and Rashtrakuta dynasty of Deccan. The war that followed among the three dynasties is known in the history as 'Tripartite War'. The war started at the end of eighth century.

At the first war, Dharmapala fought against Vatsharaja of Pratihra and was defeated. After some time, the powerful Rashtrakuta king Dhruda Dharavarsha attacked both Vatsharaja and Dharmapala one after another and defeated both of them. However, two subsequent defeats did not decrease the power of Dharmapala. His defeat did not incur much loss to him as Rastrakuta king returned to the Deccan. Therefore, he continued to conquer many territories outside Bengal during this time. He conquered Varansi and Prayaga and extended his kingdom up to the region between the Ganga and the Jamuna rivers. Then he occupied Kanauj, the center of North India with the absence of Dhruda Dharavarsha and put his representative Chakrayudha on the throne. According to Khalimpur copper plate inscription, he also called for an assembly of various kings at Kanauj such as Bhoja, Matsay, Madra, Kuru, Kiri, Jadu, Jaban, Avanti and Gandhara for his coronation. But he could not able to hold his control for a long time. Soon Gurjara-Pratihara king Nagabhatta II occupied Kanauj and locked in clash with the Pala. Dharmapala was defeated at Munghyr by Nagabhatta II. His representative Chakrayudha also was chased by Nagabhatta II. But no harm affected Dharmapala as Rashtrakuta king Govinda III came to North India like his predecessor and defeated Nagabhatta II viciously. To avoid humiliation Dharmapala surrendered to Govinda III. Rashtrakuta king returned to his kingdom

at the Deccan as usual. However, Dharmapala did not give up hope to establish his supremacy over Kanauj. He further occupied Kanauj for the second time. But his occupation did not last long as the Gurjara-Pratihara became the paramount power in the north at the advent of nine century.

Though he was defeated in North India, he had some achievements. He was able to keep his own kingdom apart from the war. Both the Gurjara-Pratihara and Rashtrakuta dynasty realized the strength of the Kingdom of Dharmapala, therefore, dared not attack Bengal. He also conquered Nepal. He reigned at least forty years. His capital was Patliputra. During his time, Pala kingdom turned into Pala Empire. Among the Pala kings he first took the title “Parameshwar, Paramvottarak, Maharajadhiraj”.

Dharmapala practiced Buddhism. He established Vikramshil Bihar at Bhagalpur and Sompur Bihar at Varendra. Perhaps, Sompur Bihar was the largest Bihar in India. According to Lama Taranath, he also established 50 schools for educating Buddhist religion. However, he was liberal to other religion also. His chief minister was a Hindu. Lots of examples were available that he granted villages to many Brahmins.

### • **Devpala (821-861 AD)**

After the death of Dharmapala his son Devpala ascended the Pala throne. He also took the title “Parameshwar, Paramvottarak, Maharajadhiraj”. He inherited a large empire and he not only kept his father’s empire intact but he added some other territories. Pala inscriptions highly praised Devpala.

Devpala had two famous Brahmin ministers namely, Darvapani and Kedermisra. With these two efficient ministers Devpala was able to continue his father’s policy. He took the opportunity of the weakness of Nagvatta’s successors and the indifference of Rashtrakuta king Amoghvarsha and expanded his empire to the north. He successfully made expeditions and conquered Orissa. According to the Mungyer copper plate inscriptions his army wandered around Bindhya Mountain and Kamboj on the occasion of his conquests. His empire was extended in the north from the Himalayas to Setubandha of

Rameshwari; and in the lands between the east seas shores to west sea shore. Kanauj might come under his control. Assam also made friendship with him. In fact, he was able to occupy vast areas of the North India. During his time Pala empire reached its highest glory of expansion.

Like his father Devpala also a great patron of Buddhist religion. He granted five villages to the Nalanda Mahabihar at Bihar which was built by the king of Java and Sumatra. It also indicates that during his reign Bengal had warm relations with these two south-east Asian countries. It also proves that the glory of Nalanda Bihar remained continued up to 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Devpala ruled long years and died in 861 AD.

### **The era of decline and recovery (861-1043 AD)**

After the death of Devpala his successors were weak enough to maintain the vast Pala Empire. During this period Rashtrakuta king Amaghvorsa became prominent in North India. His copper plate inscription claims that he defeated the kings of Anga, Banga and Magadha. On the other hand, six inscriptions of Gurjara-Pratihara king Mahendrapala found in Bihar claims that he conquered Magadha and north Bengal. Some historians also presumed that there was a succession war held in Pala Empire after the death of Devpala. All these prove that after Devpala, Pala Empire was reduced to a small territory. The weakness was prevalent mostly from the reigns of Vigrahapala I to Vigrahapala II (861-969 AD). However, Mahipala I succeeded to restore the lost territory of Pala empire and gave a new birth to the Pala Empire.

In the declining period of Pala Empire, the rulers were:

Vigrahapala I	}	861-866 AD
Surpala		
Narayanpala		866-920 AD
Rajyapala		920-952 AD
Gopala II		952-969 AD
Vigrahapala II		969-995 AD
Mohipala I		995-1043 AD

The historians were confused about Vigrahapala I and Surpala. Some believe that they were the same persons. Others are of the view that they ruled jointly. However, it is known that Vigrahapala I was peace-loving and reluctant to conquests. Therefore, he left the throne to his son Narayana pala and went to Banprastha (living in forest).

Narayana pala ruled the longest period (866-920 AD) but he was weak and inactive. As a result, he was unable to defend Rashtrakuta and Pratiharas. Therefore, Magadha and North Bengal were conquered by the Pratiharas.

The successive ruler of Narayana pala was Rajyapala. But he could neither restore Magadha and North Bengal nor add any new territories to Pala Empire.

Then there came the period of Gopala II and Vigrahapala II. During these two reigns Pala Empire further faced foreign invasions. During this period Chandella and Kalchuri kings invaded Bengal. In north and west Bengal a new kingdom named 'Kamboja' emerged at the same time.

Mohipala I was succeeded by Vigrahapala II. He came as a savior of Pala Empire. He was an active, powerful and promising king. He overthrew the foreign rulers from north and west Bengal and restored Pala domination over Bihar and Magadha. Some believe that he also succeeded to restore Pala Empire up to Mithila and Varansi. However, his main contribution was to check the downfall of Pala Empire.

Mohipala I had done many charitable works too. Mahigonj in Rangpur district, Mohipur in Bogra district, Mohisantosh and Mohpaldighi in Dinajpur, Mohipal cit and Mohipal Sagordighi in Murshidabad are some of the examples. Numerous folk songs were composed in commemoration of the charity of Mohipala. He also did many works for the welfare of Buddhist religion. He constructed two temples in Buddhu- Gaya and took proper steps to repair Paharpur ruins. He also built temples there. However, he could not leave behind an able successor who could continue his efforts and restore the Past glory of the Pala Empire.

### **The era of fall (1043-1161 AD)**

The re-occupying efforts that started Mohipala I did not last long due to his death. Thereafter the Pala Empire faced a century long foreign invasions and internal conflicts which weakened its strength. This weakness led to its collapse. Among the later Pala Emperors only Rampala succeeded to hold the acceleration of decline to some extent. However, after his demise no one could stop the downfall of Pala dynasty.

The kings who ruled during the declining era to downfall of Pala Empire after Mohipala I were as follows:

Nayapala II	1043-1058 AD
Vigrahapala III	1058-1075 AD
Mohipala II (killed)	1075-1080 AD
Surpala II	1080-1082 AD
Rampala	1082-1124 AD
Kumarpala	1124-1129 AD
Gopala III	1129-1143 AD
Madanpala	1143-1161 AD

The Ramacharita of Sandhakar Nandi left detailed accounts of Pala Empire from Vigrahapala III to the last Pala king Madanpala. We have also lots of Pala inscriptions to reconstruct the history of Pala reign during this period.

From the above sources, we came to know that Nayapala II and Vigrahapala III were very weak ruler. During their reign the king of Kalchuri, the Chalukya king of Karnata and the soldiers of Orissa attacked Bengal and weakened the strength of Bengal. Taking advantage of the weakness of Pala administration some small independent kingdoms emerged in different parts of Bengal. Gradually Pala administration lost its control over other territories outside Bengal. Bihar is one of them.

Mohipala II ascended the throne after the deat of Vigrahapala III. During his tenure, a revolt took place in Varendra. Its known as Kaivarta rebellion. He tried to crush the rebellion but he was killed. Later his younger brother Surpala ascended the throne. However he ruled only two years. Then his younger brother Rampala ascended the

throne of Pala Empire. According to Sandhakar Nandi, he was a successful rulers. He recovered Varendra from the hands of Kaivarta with the help of fourteen kings including those of Rashtrakuta, Magadha and Radha. He tried to recover the past glory of Pala Empire and set his capital at Ramavati (present Maldah). He also succeeded to establish his authority in Magadha and in Kamrupa. However, he could not leave an able successor. His descendants were weak and inactive. Kumarpala, Gopala III and Madanpala ascended the throne one after another. During their reign Pala Empire faced frequent foreign attacks. Gradually they lost control over the territory outside Bengal. At last, during the reign of Madanpala Bijoysena conquered Pala Empire and started the rule of a new dynasty in Bengal from 1161 AD. Madanpala was the last Pala king.

### **3.2.11 Kamboj Kingdom**

During the first portion of tenth century, when the Pala administration lost its strength a new dynasty emerged in the North and West Bengal. They are named as Kamboj. Belwa and Bungarh copper plate inscription of Mohipala I, Paschimbhag copper plate of the Chandra dynasty and Yerda copper plate are different sources from where we know about the Kamboj dynasty. Perhaps the Kamboj established their rule in North Bengal after the sixth year of the accession of Gopala II. Later they could expand their rule to the west Bengal. There found very little information about the Kamboj. Some believe that the name ‘Kamboj’ was derived from ‘Koch’. Others believe that ‘Kamboj’ refers to the ‘Kamboj nation’ of North-West Frontier province. In some books, Tibbetan were recognized as Kamboj who lived in the area beside Banga and Brahmaputra adjacent to Lusai Mountain.

From the Yarda copper plate inscription three names of Kamboj kings are found. They ruled one after another. They are: Rajyapala and his two sons Narayana and Naypala respectively. Kamboj dynasty emerged at the first years of 10<sup>th</sup> century, established their rule in the middle of that century. Perhaps, their kingdom fall down by the attack of Chol king Rajendra Chol during the first half of eleventh century (1121- 1124 AD).

### **3.2.12 Varendra Rebellion**

Varendra Rebellion or ‘Kaivarta Bidraho’ is one of the most significant events in ancient Bengal. During the reign of Mohipala II(1075-1080 AD) internal conflict arose and weakened the strength of Pala Empire. As a result, Kaivarta community of North Bengal revolted against Pala Pala administration under the leadership of Divya and established Kaivarta rule in North Bengal for a couple of years.

We came to know about the rebellion from the equivocal story of *Ramacharita* written by Sandhakar Nandi. According to *Ramacharita* Mohipala imprisoned his two younger brothers Surpala and Vigrahapala, therefore, a rebellion occurred in North Bengal. Mohipala wanted to crush the rebellion but he was killed by the rebel Divya. Sandhakar Nandi, called Divya as ‘Upadhibrati’ which refers to the person who cheat his master hiding his blue-print. However, the historians believe that Divya was a royal servant of Pala administration. Taking advantage of the internal conflict of Pala royal family, he consolidated his power by getting help from other Pala officials who were displeased with Mohipala and revolted. Mohipala might advance against Divya but defeated and killed. After the death of Mohipala, Divya established Kaivarta rule in North Bengal.

Divya and his successors ruled for a couple of years. After Divya ruled Rudok and Bhim respectively. However, Divya did not able to rule in peace. He was killed by the attack of Jatbarma of Barma dynasty in South-east Bengal. Ramcharita praised the rule of Bhim, the grandson of Divya. During Bhim’s rule Kaivarta dynasty became wealthy and powerful. The Kaivarta pillar at Dinajpur still bears the testimony of Kaivarta dynasty. He was also able to fight Rampala. But at last he could not withstand against the combined attack of Pala and its alliances. Forteen feudal kings and even the Rashtrakuta helped Rampala to recover Varendra, the fatherland of Pala. Later Bhim was killed along with his family members.

### **3.2.13 Importance of Pala rule in Bengal**

Pala rulers ruled four thousand years in Bengal. It’s rare in the history of human civilization that a single family ruled so many years continuously without any break. Though the size of the empire

reshaped several times-sometimes it became expanded, sometime it was reduced, it sustained for a long time. This long tenure of consistency had a great impact on every spheres of life of the people of this area. In fact, during this period Bengal became distinct in the field of administration, economy, education and literature, art and architecture.

Bengal for the first time became the paramount power up to Kanauj (Kanyakubja) under Pala dynasty. The Palas successfully took part in the politics of North India and occupied Kanauj several times. For a long time they succeeded to war out the natural boundary of Bengal and Bengal remained uninvaded.

One of the most important contributions of Pala dynasty is its efficient administration. The copper plate inscriptions gave testimony of its efficiency. During Pala rule the administration was organized from capital to the remote villages in systematic way. However, Palas followed the system of Gupta administration but they jused the system through an effect way. Taxes, levys, customs or tarrifs were fixed, circulated, imposed and collected through a systematic way. The monitoring system was strict. In the copper plates long lists of royal officials were found. Those names indicate that not a single human activity was out of governmental monitoring. There were officials for maintaining law enforcing, toll house of river port, highway, river way, trade and commerce even for the forests. The land system of Pala was very dynamic.

The pala were Buddhists but they were liberal. They used to keep communal harmony. They considered a man by his quality, not his religion. Therefore, Dharmapala appointed Hindus as his ministers. The family of this Brahmin minister served the Pala for three generations. Narayanpala, Mohipala I and Naypala granted villages and built Shiva temples. Communal harmony was the significant social characteristics in Pala Empire.

The Pala kings did many charitable works. They dug ponds and canals for the irrigation and supply of fresh water. Emperor Dhamapala dug many large pond(Dighi) by spending huge money. According to Lama Taranath, he also established 50 schools for educating Buddhist religion. Mahigonj in Rangpur district, Mohipur

in Bogra district, Mohisantosh and Mohpaldighi in Dinajpur, Mohipal cit and Mohipal Sagordighi in Murshidabad are some of the examples. Numerous folk songs were composed in commemoration of the charity of Mohipala. The Buddhists religion got royal patronizing during Pala rule and practiced significantly. During this period Buddhists religion spread to Tibet, Java, Sumatra, Malayasia etc. As many as 114 Professors used to teach in Vikramshila Mahabihar during Pala Empire.

Pala period was the golden age of sculpture. Numerous statue of touchstone of Pala period have been found, which show the development of the art of sculpture of this age. Art of painting also was also developed in this period. At least 24 manuscripts of Buddhist paintings of 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century were found. Among them Pancharokkha, Austrasahasrika, Pragyaparomita, Panchabingsati Sahashrika etc. prove the paramouncty of Pala art. In literature, Ramacharitama of Sandhakar Nandi is masterpiece for its equivocal narrative way. In fact, the long period of Pala Empire nourishes every human activity in a liberal way.

### **3.2.14 Sena Dynasty (1097-1204 AD)**

The Sena Dynasty was the last ancient dynasty in Bengal. The Senas originated in the Karnata of Deccan. They were considered as ‘Brahmanksatriyas’ because they entered into Bengal as ‘Brahmins’ and later on, being experts in warfare, they got the title of ‘Ksatriya’. According to Vandar Kor, in the Deccan, those who were Brahmin at the earlier stage and later turned into ‘Ksatriya’ were called ‘Brahmanksatriyas. The Senas claimed that their ancestor were ‘Virsen’ mentioned in *the Purana*.

At the beginning they first settled down in Radha on the banks of the river Ganges. Later, they occupied East and South-East Bengal by defeating Varma king. The Senas helped Rampala during Kaivarta rebellion and, as a reward; they were able to establish a feudal kingdom under the Palas. Finally, during the weakness of last Pala rulers, they attacked Madan Pala, defeated him and annexed North-West Bengal with their kingdom. During the Sena rule Bengal went under Hindu age again for more than a century.

The founder of the Sena kingdom was Samanta Sena. This great warrior of Karnata came to Bengal at his old age and settled down at Radha at the Banks of the river Gamges. His son Hemantasena was regarded as the first king of Sena dynast. However, he started as a feudal king of Pala Empire. Let us see the genology of Sena dynasty:

1. Samanta Sena
2. Hemanta Sena
3. Vijoy Sena (1098-1160 AD)
4. Vallal Sena (1160- 1178 AD)
5. Laksman Sena (1178- 1206 AD)
6. Viswarup Sena (1206- 1220 AD)
7. Keshava Sena (1220- 1223 AD)
8. Sury Sena
9. Madhu Sena (?)
10. Purusottam Sena

#### ● **Samanta Sena**

Nothing is known about the early life of Samanta Sena. However, according to some sources, he was a famous warrior in Karnata of the Deccan of India. He came to Rada in his old age and settled on the banks of the river Ganges. According to the Deopara pillar inscription of Vijoy Sena, Samanta Sena launched many expeditions up to Setuwandha of Rameshwari and destroyed the enemies of Karnata. Then he took a pastoral life at the bank of the Ganges. Perhaps, he could not establish any kingdom in Radha or other areas as he has no royal title.

#### ● **Hemanta Sena**

Hemanta Sena, the son of Samanta Sena, was the first king of Sena dynasty. He was able to capture the political power of Radha and took the title ‘Maharajhadhiraj’. He became a feudal king under Pala dynasty.

#### ● **Vijoy Sena (1098-1160 AD)**

Bijoy Sena, the son of Hemanta Sena, was the first independent king of Sena dynasty. During his first twenty five years’ rule, he was a feudal king of the Palas. He helped Rampala to restore his fatherland at North Bengal during Kaivarta rebellion. During the eleventh century, he married the Princess Vilasa Devi of Sura dynasty of south Radh; therefore, Radh came under his control.

Then he defeated the Varma king and occupied East and South-East Bengal. This time, the Pala Empire became weak due to inefficient rulers. Pala king Madan Pala was neither able to consolidate the territories outside Bengal nor control his own administration. Bijoy Sena took the advantage and attacked Pala Empire. He defeated Madan Pala, forced him to flee from Gaur and occupied vast areas of Pala Empire. This area was included into Sena kingdom during the middle of the twelfth century. Then he attacked Kamrupa, Kalinga and Mithila. According to Deopara pillar inscription, Vijoy Sena defeated Nanyadeva of Mithila, Raghav of Kalinga and Orissa and, perhaps, Boydyadeva of Kamrupa. According to Bayrakpur copper-plate inscription, Vijoy Sena wiped out Varma and Chandra dynasty from the south-east Bengal and set his capital at Vikramapur which was the capital of Varma dynasty. Thus, he became the king of a vast kingdom. Then he sent out a powerful naval fleet against the king of ‘Gaharbal and the Palas’ recognized as ‘Paschatta Chakra’. According to Deopara inscription his fleet advanced through the Ganges.

Bijoy Sena was a great conqueror. At the beginning his surname was Dheesena. But when he defeated his enemies and turned the small kingdom of Radh into an empire, he was named as Vijoy Sena. During his rule, for the first time the whole Bengal came under a single dynasty. This was the greatest achievement of Bijoy Sena.

The period of Bijoy Sena was marked as a glorious chapter in the history of ancient Bengal. He started his life as a simple feudal king but he established a vast independent empire and ruled for 63 years with iron hand. Unless he was able to rule the whole Bengal in iron hand, the *Matsanayam* might occur again because during the later part of Pala rule every feudal lord in Bengal started behaving independently like the time after the death of Sashanka. But Vijoy Sena established the law and order situation strictly. During his reign people enjoyed a peaceful life. Bijoy Sena assumed the title of *Paramvattarak*, *Maharajadhiraj* and *Parmeshwari*. He was also recognized as ‘Auriraj-Breshavosankar’.

Bijoy Sena was the follower of Shiva. Therefore, he built some Shiva temples.

### ● **Vallal Sena (1160- 1178 AD)**

After the death of Bijoy Sena, Vallal Sena ascended the throne. As he inherited a peaceful and secured vast empire, he paid less attention to warfare and more attention to other fields i.e. literature, social reformation etc. However, like his father he was also a great warrior. He conquered Mithila and Magadha. According to contemporary saying, he divided his kingdom into five parts: Radh, Varendra, Bagri, Banga and Mithila. He also annexed Bihar as well to Sena Empire.

Vallal Sena married Rama Devi, the daughter of Jogotekamalla, the king of Chalukya which increased his strength. This marriage proved that during his time the name and fame of Sena dynasty spread outside Bengal. He also continued good relations with Karnata, the fatherland of Senas. Along with other titles, he assumed the title of ‘Auriraja Nishanka Shamkar’.

Vallal Sena was a great scholar. He wrote two renowned books *the Daansagar* and *the Audbhutsagar*. *TheDaansagar* is about the law code of *the Purana* and *theAudbhutsagar* is about astrology. However, he could not complete *theAudbhutsagar*. His son Lakhman Sena completed it later. Vallal Sena also patronized the scholars. The Sanskrit literature developed magnificently during his time. Therefore, it was considered as the golden age of Sanskrit literature. Bhabadeva Bhatta, Halayudh Misra, Aniruddha were some names of scholars of this age. During Vallal Sena’s living, Ananda Bhatta wrote *Vallalcharita* (the history of Vallal Sena).

However, according to Nihar Ranjan Roy, Vallal Sena was very much conservative. He is considered the pioneer of caste system (Kaulinny Pratha) in the Hindu community. He divided the Hindu community into three: Brahmin, Baydy and Kayasta. According to this system, only the king can recognize a person as Kulin (aristocrat) and he became socially honorable person. Thus he enjoyed some social privilages. Other persons of any caste become non-kulin (non-aristocrate). However, scholars think that Vallal Sena introduced Kaulinya system to gain over the Brahmins.

Like his father Vallel Sena was the follower of Shiva. He nourished Shivaism. During his reign Shivaism spread to in Nepal, Bhutan, Arakan and Barma.

When he grew old, Vallal Sena abdicated the throne in favor of his son Lakhmon Sena. Then he and his wife took *Banprostha* (devotee of religion) and passed their rest of life away at Triveni moving along the confluence of the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Sarawati.

#### ● **Laksmana Sena (1178-1206)**

Laksmana Sena was the last king of Sena dynasty as well as ancient Bengal. He earned fame as a gallant warrior during the reign of his father and grandfather. When he ascended the throne he was an old man. However, he annexed Gaur, Kalinga, Kamrupa, Khashi, Prayaga and Magadha to his empire. After the conquest of Gaur, he established a new capital there and named it *Laksmanavati*. He took the title of *Goureshwer*. He had also a capital at Bikrampur pargana of South West Bengal and a temporary one at capital at Nadia.

Laksmana Sena was not only a great warrior but a Sanskrit scholar. He completed his father's unfinished book *theAudbhutsagar*. He was a great patronizer of learning and literature. His royal court was adorned with great Sanskrit scholars namely Halaudh, Dhoyee, Sharon, Umapatidhar, Joydeva, Goborwana, Purushattam, Pasupati and Ishan. His chief minister Halaudh was renowned all over India. Joydeva is still world-famous for his Vaishnava padaboli.

Laksmana was a Vaishnava (the follower of Vishnu). However, he continued to use Sadashiva coin. He used to take the title 'Param Vaishnava' instead of his father's title 'Param Maheshwer'.

Laksmana took the throne at sixty and reigned twenty years. At the age of eighty, he became feeble. Like his father he also wanted to take Banprashtha and went to the river banks of the Ganges to spend the rest of his life. For this he was staying at Nadia, the temporary capital of the Senas. All on a sudden, his palace was attacked by Afghan invader Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad Bin Bakhtiyar Khalji and his soldiers. The royal guards could not prevent Bakhtiyar; therefore, Laksmana Sena escaped through backdoor to East Bengal through river route where his son Vishawrupsena was ruling. Nadia was captured by the Muslims and gradually Bengal went under Khilji rule.

Perhaps, Laksmana Sena died in 1206. After his death two of his sons ruled the rest of Sena kingdom and tried to stop Muslim expansion. Vishawrupsena ruled East Bengal from his capital somewhere in Vikrampur in Dhaka district. Later he was succeeded by his brother Keshavsena. Vishawrupsena had three sons namely, Sury Sena, Madhu Sena and Purusottam Sena. However, we do not know much about them. Perhaps, the Muslims pushed them eastward and southward and established their rule in Sonargaon in South East Bengal and Saatgaon in South West Bengal.

### **3.2.15 Administration System of Ancient Bengal**

A sound administrative system of ancient Bengal was gradually developed before 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. During Pala rule, this system got a strong foundation. Later, it was followed with some modifications. However, it is not certain whether there was any foreign influence on the system.

#### **● Pre-Gupta period**

We do not have any authentic source to conclude on the administration system of Bengal in the pre-Gupta period. However, some ancient literature mention some small kingdoms such as Summa, Pundra, therefore, it is believed that like the north India there lived some united races in the ancient Bengal. May be their living was very simple.

From the Greek description of ‘Gangaridai’ kingdom, it is assumed that a dynastic system was developed fully in Bengal before 4th century BC. This is because a powerful kingdom is not possible without having strong administration of its own. *The Mahabharata* also mentions that in the ancient Bengal there were some small kingdoms, which used to be united to deter foreign invasions.

According to the inscriptions found in Mahasthangarh, Bengal was administered finely during Morya era. Those inscriptions mention some administrative ‘titles’ (such as: Mahamatra) which indicate that the Morya administrative system was also followed in Bengal.

#### **● Gupta period**

The Guptas established a strong dynasty in India after the Morya and most parts of Bengal went under Gupta rule. The rulers of Bengal who were out of Gupta influence used to take the title of ‘Maharaja’. Perhaps, these kings were once the feudal lords under Morya dynasty. Shasanka, Rudradatta, Bijoysena were prominent among them. They ruled their kingdom through some royal representatives such as ‘Dutak’, ‘Purapurik’, ‘Uparik’, ‘Poti’, ‘Purapal’ etc. Dutak was a royal representative. ‘Mahapratihar’ was responsible for warfare. They also looked after the law and order situations in the kingdom.

The territories under Gupta rule were ruled under some administrative units. They were Bhukti, Bisoy, Mandal, Bithi and Gram. Each of those administrative units had a center or office named ‘Adhikaran’.

Bhukti or Bisoy was like modern ‘division’. Initially the chief administrator of a Bhukti was entitled as ‘Uparik’. Later, they were addressed as ‘Uparik Maharaj’. They were appointed by Gupta emperors. Sometimes, the Princes of Gupta emperor or other members of the royal family was also appointed as the chief of a Bhukti. Sometimes, they were also addressed as ‘Kumaramatty’, Ajuktak, and even as ‘Bisoypati’.

The next descendent administrative unit was ‘Bisoy’. ‘Bisoypati’ was the administrator of ‘Bisoy’ and he was appointed by ‘Uparik Maharaj’. In the office of a ‘Bisoy’ there were other officers also, such as: Nagarsresthi, Pratham Sarthabaha, Pratham Kulik, Pratham Kayastra. Perhaps, these officers were the representative of a certain community, such as rich aristocrat, business community, artists etc. Perhaps they used to take part in the administrative activities as a ‘body’. ‘Pustapal’ was a name of an officer who was responsible for collecting data regarding land, its valuation, its productivity etc. There is not much information available about other descendent administrative units of Gupta administration.

### ● Pala Period

The Palas ruled the Bengal for four hundred years. During this time, the Palas established a state-system on the foundation of Gupta administration. Like the Guptas, the Palas had also divided their empire into Bhukti, Bisoy, Mandal etc. Therefore, we see different

Bhukti names in the Pala copper-plate inscriptions, such as: Pundrabardhan Bhukti, Bardhawanbhukti, Dandabhukti, Srinagarbhukti, Praygotishbhukti etc. The Pala emperors used to take titles as Parameshwar, Param Vattarak, Maharajadhiraj etc. In the central administration, there were chief ministers or chief secretaries. ‘Garga’ was the chief minister of Dharmapala. Darvapani was another influential minister of Devapala. Chief Ministers were very powerful and influential. Baidyodeva and Yugadeva were two other powerful Chief Ministers of Pala Empire.

The Pala emperors divided their empire into kingdoms and appointed feudal lords as the chief administrator of those kingdoms. These feudal kings were entitled as Raja, Rajannyak, Ranok, Shamanta, Mahashamanta etc.

The Palas were Buddhists but they ruled their Hindu subjects according to Hindu customs. The Pala Chief Ministers were Brahmans. This means the Palas were liberal.

The Pala kings followed the administrative system stated in *the Arthashastra* of Kautilya. The central administration was run by King, his ministers and other royal officers. The chief royal officer was Mahasandhibigrahik. He looked after foreign relations. The chief representative of the king was ‘Rajsthanio’ and the chief of bodyguard team of the king was ‘Aungarakkhak’.

There were different officers for revenue administration also. The Palas introduced different taxes on different types of crops. Such as: bhag, bhog, kar, hironnyo, uparikar etc. Grampati and Bisoypati used to collect the taxes. There was another officer for tax collection named ‘Shasthadhikrit’. Mahadandanyak or Dharmadhikar was the officer of judiciary. The chief officers of police department were Mahapratihar, Dandik, Dandapashik and Dandashakti.

The chief of military department was Senapati or Mahasenapati. Army was divided into some divisions, such as: infantry division, knight division, elephant division, camel division or fleet division. There was a chief called ‘Addhakhya’ in each division. Kattopal was responsible for the security of forts and ‘Prantopal’ was responsible for border security.

### **● Sena Period**

The Senas also followed the Pala administrative system. However, there were some differences also. Sena kings used to take Ashwapati, Gajapati, Narapati, Rajatroyadhipati etc. as their titles along with their traditional titles Parameshwar, Param Vattarak, Maharajadhiraj.

During Sena rule, we also see some new administrative units- Patak, Chaturak and Abritti. The names of the chiefs of the three administrative divisions were Bhuktipati, Bisopati and Mandalpati. During Sena rule names of two more new royal officers were found: Mahasamudradhrikrit and Mahasarbadhrikrit. Chief of judiciary was Mahadharmadhakhy, chief of revenue department was Hattapati, and army officers were Mahapilupati, Mahaganastha, and Mahabujyapati.

### **3.2.16 Socio-Economic Conditions of Ancient Bengal**

#### **● Economic condition**

Bengal is always an agrarian country. The main profession of the people of ancient Bengal was agriculture. In each village, there were pasture-lands along with cultivable lands. Rice, jute, sugarcane, cotton and indigo was the main crops. Betel leaf was also widely cultivated. People used to plant fruit trees. Mango trees, jackfruit trees, coconut trees, banana trees, betel-nut trees, lemon trees were widely planted. They were also widely engaged in livestock rearing. Cows, goats, sheep, elephant were main livestock. Poultry raising was also favorite.

The king was the actual owner of the lands. The cultivators or the users of lands for other purposes had to give certain taxes to the king for using the land. However, the Brahmins and the religious institutions enjoyed non-taxable lands. Sometimes, the wealthy persons bought lands from the king and donated to the Brahmins which were declared as non-taxable lands.

Along with the agriculture, industry also played vital role in ancient economy of ancient Bengal. Bengal was rich in cottage industries. Every village was self-sufficient. People of a village could make everything they need for their daily life. Cotton industry, leather industry, metal industry and pottery were famous cottage industries.

Bengal was famous for its cloths. Muslins earned world-wide fame for its magnificence. Carpenter, blacksmith could supply necessary utensils. In ancient Bengal different types of boats were built. Goldsmith made different types of luxurious ornaments with valuable stones. Wooden crafts and utensils made of the teeth of elephants were highly praised.

‘Ganja’ was the main center for business. Markets, marts and towns were set up at the river banks, which were called as ‘ganja’. Numerous rivers and canals joined the ganjas thus flourished internal commerce in ancient Bengal.

In the ancient period, Bengal used to earn huge money from trading with other areas of India through both lands and waters. Tamralipti, Sripur, Saptagram were main trading ports through which Bengal traders exchanged their commodities with the foreign traders. Ancient Bengal had also trade links with Sri Lanka, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Jabdhip. Bengal traders also traded with Tibbet, Nepal, Bhutan through rough Himalayan ranges. Muslin cloths, pearls, and various kinds of spices, harbuls were exported to the foreign countries.

From the very ancient times, the Muslim traders used to come to Bengal for trading. They used to give Dinar (gold coins) in exchange of commodities. However, in the internal trade, ‘kori’ was widely used as ‘money’.

### ● Social condition

People in the ancient Bengal used to lead a very simple life. Society used to run through class-system. The Aryans introduced class-system in ancient Bengal. Later, the Senas introduced Koulinya system. Society was divided into four sections: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The professions were also fixed for each caste. There were other people who were out of these four classes. They were regarded too impoverished to include in the classes. However, according to *Vallalcharita*, the king had the right to upgrade or downgrade any person of any class within the society. Social communications and relationship were dependent on the identity of class. Inter-class marriages were prohibited; however, some inter-class marriages were also seen.

Rice, fish, meat, vegetables, milk and milk-made foods, fruits were main foods. Although hot-drinks were prohibited, people used to enjoy these on the occasions.

In the ancient Bengal there were lots of functions and festivals. This means, generally, people used to lead a happy life. It is said that people used to observe thirteen festivals within twelve months. In those occasions, people used tp prepare delicious dishes and cakes. They also wore colorful dresses and had lots of funs. Different types of musical instruments such as Bina, Bashi, Mridanga, Karatal, Dhak, Dhol etc. were used in singing and dancing in those occasions.

However, women in the ancient Bengal suffered much. They had no right to education or free movement. From dawn to dusk they worked hard, but there was no economic value of their works. They had no right to transfer or sell their possessions. Widows lead a very painful life. They had to take little food and give up all funs and luxuries. They had to busy for praying for the welfare of their husbands. Even, their husbands had the right to lie with the prostitutes and female-servants, but they had to serve their husbands with smiling face. Females having no male children and the widows had no social honor.

### **3.3 Medieval Period (1204-1765)**

#### **3.3.1 Rule of the Sultanate**

##### **• Invasion of Bakhtiar Khilji and Khilji Era**

The only source of knowing about the conquests of Bakhtiyar Khilji in Bengal is *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, written in Persian language by Minhaj Uddin Siraj. The book was written sometimes after 1260 AD. The history of Bengal during Bakhtiyar Khilji was reconstructed on the basis of this book as there is no other source.

According to *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, Ikhtiyar Uddin Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji was the founder of Muslim Kingdom in Bengal. He was inherited Turkic line and born in Garamshir (modern Dast-e-Marga) of Afghanistan.

On the eve of thirteen century, there was a severe crisis of living in Afghanistan. People left their homes in groups to make fortune.

Bakhtiyar was very poor. He had neither a horse nor a sword, which were minimum requirements of a person who would want to be a soldier. However, finding no other way to make fortune, he went to Gazni, the court of Sultan Muhammad Ghuri to find a job. But he failed to draw the attention of the commander of Ghuri. Then he left Gazni and turned to Delhi, the court of sultan Qutb al din Aibak. Again he failed to draw the attention of the army commander of Qutb al din Aibak for his ugly appearance. He was physically unfit for the military. He was short in size, ugly faced and his hands were unusually long down to the knee. As he was a determined adventurer, he did not loss hope. He wandered many places to find a job but his unusual body structure did not allow him to find any job. At last he went to Bodayun. There he found a military job under Malik Hizbar Uddin for monthly payment. However, he was not satisfied with the job, therefore, left the job after sometimes and went to Oudh. He succeeded to win the heart of Malik Hushamuddin, the ruler of Oudh. The latter granted him two parganas- Bhagabat and Bhuili of present Mirzapur district of West Bengal as jaigir. He took the opportunity as a chance to make his fortune. About eleven miles due east of Chunar and some thirty miles from Mirzapur, the village of Bhuili and Bhagabat became the cradle of Muhammad Bakhtiyar's power and ambition. Then he started to invade the small Hindu kingdoms adjacent to the borders of Oudh and Bihar. He took the policy of plunder and gathered huge wealth from plundering the small Hindu kingdoms nearby his jaigirs. He wanted to build a big army. Therefore, his object was to secure a maximum of booty at a minimum of risk and bloodshed. So he confined himself to scouring the open country undefended by the field army of any organized State. Soon his fame spread everywhere.

Bakhtiyar succeeded to collect some soldiers by investing the looting money. Soon he attacked Udantapur Vihara which he thought to be a fort. From this Vihara Bakhtiyar collected huge wealth. He again attacked Vihara and plundered one year after. Later this area was known as Bihar. After the conquest of Bihar, Bakhtiyar went to Delhi to meet Qutb al din Aibak and gave him huge tribute. Qutb al din Aibak already had heard about his fame. He praised him and gave him a 'khilat'.

Qutb al din Aibak's praise made Bakhtiyar accepted among the Muslim warriors. Groups of Muslim soldiers then started to join him. Thus he was able to build an army of 10,000 soldiers. At first, he established a strong Muslim administration in Bihar. Bakhtiyar's success created a panic among the neighboring Hindu kingdoms.

Then he planned for a bigger invasion. Bakhtiyar's ambition was to build a Muslim Kingdom in Gaur.

At this time the eastward expansion of the Muslim power through North Bihar was not possible due to the powerful Hindu kingdom of Mithila under the Karnataka dynasty. Therefore, he acquired a greater driving force in South Bihar.

Bakhtiyar got the news that the King of Gaur, Lakshmana Sena, had been staying at Nadia. He decided to attack Nadia.

At that time, there were two passes to enter Nadia from the North—one is Teliagiri pass and another Shikrigali. Bakhtiyar's informers let him know that these two passes were well guarded. That's why he took a different path which was unusual for an invasion. It was the tough jungle of Jharkhand through which he marched his army to give Lakshmana Sena a surprise hit. He launched his army so swiftly that only 18 soldiers could keep pace with Bakhtiyar to reach Lakshmana's the capital. The rest of his army followed him behind. During the dry season of the year 1204 AD, Bakhtiyar and his troops were riding with loose reins towards the city of Nadia. When the sun was at the meridian these men, only 18 in number, drove their ride before the city-gate gently and assumed the tranquil manner of merchants. The strangers slowly proceeded unchallenged through the city to the palace of King Lakshmana Sena where all of a sudden they drew their swords. According to the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*,

When he reached the gate of the residence of Rai Lakhmaniya, he drew his sword and began the slaughter of infidels....Muhammad Bakhtiyar had run into his palace and harem and cut down a number of people.

Lakshmana Sena was then seated at his meal. When he learnt that the Turkish invaders had already entered into his palace and the inner apartments he thought his army in the city might be defeated. He

hurriedly took to flight and got into a boat which sailed down the river en route to Vikrampur in South-West Bengal where his sons were ruling. The victory of Bakhtiyar was completed “when his whole army arrived and the entire city was brought under control.” According to *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, while Bakhtiyar’s army was invading Nadia, there was no sign of Sena Army. Perhaps, Lakshmana’s army lost hope when they heard the palace of Lakshmana Sena was attacked and the emperor fled. Earlier this incident, the Brahmins predicted that a Turkey warrior might defeat Sena Kingdom in future. Therefore, there was a general concern among the people about the Turkish army. So, when the Sena soldiers saw the Turkey soldiers in the city, they might think that their main army at the Teliagiri and Shikrigali passes might be defeated. As a result, they lost hope and left fighting. Then he started for Lakshmanabati, the capital of Sena kingdom.

It was on the other side of the Ganges, many miles north from Nadia. Bakhtiyar’s army might choose a suitable place to cross the river with less hardship. He attacked Lakshmanabati, conquered it and rushed to Gaur. Both Lakshmanabati and Gaur were conquered without any opposition. Perhaps, the fall of Nadia had broken the heart of Sena army since the Brahmins predicted earlier that Sena kingdom would be crushed by a Turkey warrior. Bakhtiyar’s face was similar to the descriptions of the Brahmins. So they left the two cities to join King Lakshmana at Vikrampur, the traditional capital of Sena dynasty. Therefore, Bakhtiyar easily captured the two cities. For seven days Bakhtiyar’s army looted and burned down the cities. Bakhtiyar captured vast amount of wealth from the two cities and distributed the booty among his soldiers. Then he renamed Lakshmanabati as Lakhnauti.

After conquering Gaur, Bakhtiyar proceeded toward further east and captured north Bengal or Varendra. He then consolidated his power within his captured territory and introduced good governance. He divided his newly established Muslim kingdom into three divisions and appointed three of his great generals as the head of those regions. Ali Mardan Khilji became the ruler of Barsoul (present, Dinajpur, Rangpur etc.). Hushamuddin Iyouj Khilji was appointed to the areas on the bank of river Ganges and Shiran Khilji got the areas adjacent to the river Padma.

The area of Bakhtiyar's kingdom could not be identified accurately. However, it was mentioned in the writings of many historians that his kingdom was located between the river Teesta-Karatoa in the east, the Padma in the south, in the north up to Devakot of north Dinajpur to Rangpur city and in the west up to Bihar.

After completing administrative settlements, Bakhtiyar decided to proceed toward Tibet. It was the last expedition of his life. However, it was astonishing why Bakhtiyar decided to attack Tibet whereas the larger parts of Bengal remained unconquered. Historians say, perhaps, he wanted to link his kingdom with Turkistan through Tibet.

In those days, different tribal groups of Tibetan hill tracts used to sell horses in the markets of north Bengal. Ali Mech was one of them. Bakhtiyar came in contact of Ali Mech. The latter was overwhelmed by Bakhtiyar's sweet behavior and accepted Islam. When Bakhtiyar disclosed his desire to Ali Mech, he agreed to be a guide. Ali Mech supplied information of the roads and conditions of Tibetan hill tracts; and Bakhtiyar made a plan to attack Tibet. Before started for Tibet, he sent Muhammed Shiran Khilji and his brother Ahme Shiran Khalji to attack Lakhnaur (the present Nagour of Birbhum district). However, nothing was mentioned about the fate of this expedition in *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*.

After taking all necessary preparations Bakhtiyar proceeded towards Tibet with an army of ten thousand soldiers. He marched towards north-east and reached a city named Bardhwankot after some days. There was a river named Begmoti, three times bigger than the Ganges at the north of this city. Bakhtiyar dare not to cross the river and followed the northern course. After ten days, he reached to a stone bridge and crossed it. He deployed two of his soldiers to guard the bridge and continued advancing. Ali Mech left Bakhtiyar at the bridge. This time Bakhtiyar got a message from the king of Kamrupa indicating a request to go back. The King of Kamrupa informed that the expedition to Tibet would not be fruitful at this moment and if Bakhtiyar went back and would come the next year, he might help him. However, Bakhtiyar did not pay heed to the suggestion and continued his journey. After fifteen days of journey Bakhtiyar reached to a corn field where he locked in clash with the local soldiers. He won the fight but it cost him a lot. He learnt from the

captured soldiers that some lacs of soldiers were waiting at ‘Karambattan’ to prevent him a few miles ahead. Bakhtiyar changed his decision and returned. While returning, his soldiers faced untold miseries. When they reached the bridge, they saw the guards were left and the bridge was destroyed. The tribal soldiers attacked his army from all sides. Bakhtiyar was able to cross the river by swimming with few of his soldiers. The remaining soldiers of his army were killed or drowned into the river. He, accompanied by very few of his soldiers, reached Devakot at last with much pain.

He could not bear the pains of the destruction of his vast army. The widows and the orphans of lost soldiers blamed him for their sufferings and cursed him a lot. He became mentally upset. Moreover, this failure created an internal conflict among the Khilji Maliks of Lakhnauti kingdom. He became sick and died at Devakot in 1206. Some believed that Ali Mardan khilji was responsible for his death.

The life of Bakhtiyar is like a fable. From a poor fortune searcher, he became the ruler of a kingdom. The short span of his reign left a permanent spot in the history of Bengal. He was the pioneer of more than five hundred years Muslim rule in Bengal. Along with good governance, he also built many mosques, established madrasas and khankahs. Perhaps, he was independent from the rule of Delhi.

### **3.3.2 Bengal after Bakhtiyar Khalji**

After the death of Bakhtiyar, the Khilji Maliks locked in clash for supremacy. Shiran Khilji, Ali Mardan Khilji and Hushamuddin Iyouj Khilji competed each other for the throne of Lakhnauti. This chaos lasted up to 1227 AD when Nasiruddin Mahmood, son of Iltutmish, the sultan of Delhi became the ruler of Bengal. Between 1227 AD and 1281AD, fifteen rulers appointed by Delhi ruled Bengal. However, the rulers of Bengal always tried to act independently. During these sixty years, the rulers of Bengal became independent as soon as they saw the weakness of Delhi. Finally, in 1281 Gias Uddin Balbon crashed the ambition of Bengal and appointed his son Bogra Khan, the ruler of Bengal. Later Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah ascended the throne of Bengal in 1301 and ruled up to 1322 independently. During his time the area of Muslim Bengal had been

expanded at its highest. After his death Bengal again went under Delhi. In 1324 Sultan Giusuddin Tughlok conquered Bengal and divided it into three administrative units: Lakhnouti, Sonargaon and Satgaon. He then appointed three administrators along with three vice administrator to check the rebellion of the rulers. Up to 1338 AD, the Tughlok dynasty of Delhi reigned Bengal.

### **3.3.3Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah**

In 1338 after the death of Bahram Khan, the ruler of Sonargaon, his arms bearer Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah declared himself as the independent ruler of Sonargaon and started the independent sultanate in Bengal. Up to 1349 AD he ruled Sonargaon. During his reign approximately within the year of 1344-46, a Moroccan Muslim traveler Ibn Batuta visited Bengal. He left many accounts of then Bengal.

### **3.3.4Accounts of Ibn Batuta**

Ibn Batuta came to Bengal during the reign of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. He wanted to visit the mazar of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R.) at Sylhet. He came to Sonargaon from Delhi through river way and then left Bengal to Java by Steamer. He landed Chittagong from Satgaon port, and then started for Sylhet. His accounts convey the economic and social conditions of the then Bangladesh. He also describes the climate and human nature of Bengal.

Ibn Batuta told that the abundance of rice production and its cheap rate astonished him because never saw such rate and abundance of production anywhere he travelled. He gave the following description of the commodities of Bengal:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity/Number</b>	<b>Cost (Tk.)</b>
Rice	8.75 mound	7
Paddy	28 mound	7
Ghee	15 Sheer	3.50
Teel Oil	14 Sheer	1.75
Sugar	14 Sheer	3.50
Hen	8	0.90
Sheep	1	1.75
Cow (giving milk)	1	21
Pigeon	15	0.90

Fine Cotton cloth	15 yard	14
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In the accounts Ibn Batuta wrote that during that time slave trading permitted in Bengal. Both male and female slaves were bought and sold in the markets. He himself purchased a beautiful female named ‘Ashura’ that cost one gold dinar (equal to 10 Taka). His companion bought a male slave with two gold Dinars. He also wrote that he knew from Muhammad Al Mashadi, a Moroccan that a family of husband, one wife and a slave could maintain one year living in Bengal with only 7 Taka. However, he also wrote that though the price of commodities in Bengal was very low, people could not buy their daily needs due to extreme poverty. They have very limited purchasing capacity.

Ibn Batuta wrote that the naval trade of Bengal was very rich. He saw many giant trade-boats, while traveling through rivers. He wrote boats passed through the rivers in groups. When they passed each other they used to give whistle to prevent pirating.

During his visit he saw the prestigious position of Sufis and Fakihs (learned religious persons). They could cross the river with boats without payment. When they reached any city, they were welcomed and they were given half dinar. The Hindus were to give half of their production as tax to the king. They also had to pay other taxes. However, Ibd Batuta was displeased with the damp weather of Bengal. He addressed Bengal as ‘Dojokhpur-aj Niamot’ means a hell full of wealth.

### **3.3.5 Shamsuddin Illius Shah: Shah-e-Bangalah**

According to Tabakat-e-Akbari, in 1341-42 Haji Illius killed Alauddin Ali Shah, the sultan of Firozabad and ascended the throne. In 1346 he conquered Satgaon and in 1352 he grabbed Sonargaon. This way he reunited the Bengal and completed the establishment of two hundred years of the independent sultanate of Bengal. Henamed himself as Shamsuddin Illius Shah. Shams-e- Siraj Afif addressed him as *Shah-e-Bangalah or Shah-e-Bangalian*.

Shamsuddin Illius Shah not only united Bengal, he expanded its territory also. In 1350 he launched an expedition toward Nepal, reached Kathmandu and looted Pashupati temple.

Then he attacked and conquered up to Chilka lagoon of Orissa. He also conquered Bihar. This way, he became very powerful owner of a big kingdom. He transferred his capital from Lakhnauti to Pandua. The Sultan of Delhi Firoz Shah Tughlak did not take it easy. He attacked Bengal, conquered Gaur and Pandua but Illius Shah took shelter in Ekdala fort in Dinajpur. Sultan Firoz Shah besieged the fort for 22 days but unable to make Illius surrender. Then he withdrew the blockade and took position seven miles away from Ekdala fort. Illius Shah came out of the fort and attacked Firoz Shah. Firoz Shah was ready. Illius Shah could not defeat Firoz Shah and again took shelter in Ekdala fort. Firoz Shah again besieged the fort. In the mean time, rainy season started and Firoz Shah was compelled to withdraw the blockade. Thus Illius Shah remained undefeated against the Sultan of Delhi. This was a glory of Bengal.

### **3.3.6 Raja Ganesh**

The reign of Hindu Raja Ganesh is considered a short break of continuous Muslim independent sultanate rule in Bengal. Muslim historians called him as 'Kans'. He was a big zamindar at Bhaturia (Dinajpur). He became the king of Bengal by seizing power from the weak Iliyas Shahi sultans in the early 15th century. Nothing was known clearly about his early life. Perhaps, he was a noble at Iliyas Shahi court of Firuzabad.

He was a great intriguer in Bengal politics during the slave dynasty in Bengal. From 1410 to 1414 he was able to concentrate power in his hands and became the de facto ruler. He took the opportunity of the state of confusion and political turmoil and perhaps killed Alauddin Firuz Shah, the ruler of Bengal and assumed the throne of Bengal in 1414.

Raja Ganesh was very ruthless. After ascending the throne he started to eliminate Muslim Power in Bengal. He killed many influential Muslims. During his short span of rule, it became difficult for the Muslims of Bengal to survive. Therefore, they rallied round Shaikh Nur Qutb Ul Alam who sought help to the Jaunpur sultan, Ibrahim

Shah Sharqi to come to the rescue of the Muslims. Ibrahim Sharqi marched with his army into Bengal and took position at Sarai Firuzpur. Ganesha did not dare to face Ibrahim Shah Sharqi and submitted to Nur Qutb Alam, who demanded his conversion to Islam. He offered his son Jadu to be converted instead. Jadu embraced Islam and was placed on the throne. Jadu was renamed as Jalaluddin Jadu Shah.

After the departure of the Jaunpur forces, Ganesha dethroned and confined his son and began to exercise royal power by issuing coins in his newly assumed title of 'Dhanujamardanadeva'. He again started persecuting the Muslims, put Shaikh Anwar to death and banished Shaikh Zahid to Sonargaon. But soon, Ganesha was overthrown and probably killed (1418 AD) by his son Jalaluddin. Thus, a short span of Hindu rule ended in Bengal.

### **3.3.7 Husseinshahi Era**

The reign of Hussain Shah is considered as the glorious period of Bengal. He ruled more than a quarter of a century. His reign is full of peace and prosperity, which was strikingly contrasted to the period that preceded it. The liberal attitude of Husain Shah toward his Hindu subjects was also an important feature of his reign.

Hussain Shah, the original name Sayeed Husain, was an inhabitant of Tirmiz (Turkistan). He was a minister of sultan Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah. Perhaps he killed the sultan with the help of the paiks(the palace guard) and ascended the throne.

After ascending the throne, he executed twelve thousand soldiers, removed all slave officers (Habshi officers) from administrative posts and appointed Turks, Arabs, Afghans and local people in those positions.

He gave dethroned sultan Bahlul Lodi shelter who was defeated by Sikandar Lodi and fled to Bengal. As a result, Sikandar Lodi led an expedition against Bengal. Hussain Shah also sent an army under his son against Delhi. Both the army met at 'Barh' near Patna. Sikandar Lodi halted advancing his army towards Bengal and made friendship treaty with Hussain Shah and returned to Delhi.

From 1499 to 1502 Hussain Shah's army led expeditions against Kamata kingdom of Kamrupa and annexed the territory up to Hajo.

From 1508-1509 Hussain Shah locked in clash with Orissa. He also led expedition to Tripura and Arakan kingdom.

During his reign a diplomatic relation was established with the Portuguese because the Portuguese explorer Vasco D Gama arrived in India by sea in 1498 and sent a mission to Bengal.

Hussain Shah not only expanded the territory of Bengal but built numerous mosques. Choto Sona mosque of Gaur (Chapainababgonj) is the example of his age. Wali Muhammad built the mosque.

During the reign of Hussain Shah Bengal literature developed remarkably. Under the patronage of Paragal Khan, Husain Shah's governor of Chittagong, Kabindra Parameshvar wrote his *Pandabbijay*, a Bengali adaptation of the *Mahabharata*. Similarly, under the patronage of Paragal's son Chhuti Khan, Shrikar Nandi wrote another Bengali adaptation of the *Mahabharata*. Bijay Gupta wrote his *Mansamangal Kavya* during his reign. He praised Husain Shah by comparing him with Arjuna. He mentioned him as *Nrpatis-Tilak* (the tilak-mark of kings) and *Jagat-bhusan* (the adornment of the universe) as well. An official of Husain Shah, Yashoraj Khan, wrote a number of *Vaishnava Padaboli* and he also praised his ruler in one of his pada.

The reign of Husain Shah is also known for religious tolerance towards his subjects. The celebrated medieval saint, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his followers preached Bhakti (Nath-Gopi) throughout Bengal during his reign. When Husain Shah came to know about Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's huge following amongst his subjects, he ordered his qazi not to injure him in any way and allow him to go wherever he liked. Later, two high level Hindu officers in Husain Shah's administration, his Private Secretary, (*Dabir-i-Khas*) Rupa Goswami and his Intimate Minister (*Saghir Malik*) Sanatana Goswami became devoted followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

### **3.4 Rule of the Mughals**

After the defeat and killing of Daud Khan Karrani in 1576 in the battle of Rajmahal, the Mughals captured the political power of Bengal. However, the Mughals did not able to establish their total domination over whole of Bengal because of the vigorous resistance

of some powerful local independent zamindars. They are called Bara Bhuiyans.

### **3.4.1 Barabhuiyans**

During the Muslim rule in Bengal, the military service holders were given jagirs (fiefs) instead of wage in cash. Sometimes, the Muslim rulers appointed leaseholders to collect revenues. Some of these tenants used to enjoy their jagirs or lease property. This way, during Muslim rule in Bengal some prominent landlords, both Hindu and Muslim, were able to establish powerful estates in the ‘Bhati’ areas in Bengal. According to *Akbarnamah* of Abul Fazal and *Baharistan-e-Ghaibi* of Mirza Nathan, the ‘Bhati’ areas were the watered areas of three great rivers: the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna which include greater Dhaka, greater Mymensingh and the southern part of Sylhet. These estates became influential and independent within their territory during the weak periods of central power. They had own military, own administration, even strong naval power. These landlords denied to accept the Mughal rule and resisted them collectively. The Mughal historian Mirza Nathan, the writer of *Baharistan-e-Ghaibi* and Abul Fazal, the writer of *Akbarnamah* mentioned them as ‘Bara Bhuiyan’.

Generally ‘Bara’ means ‘twelve’ and ‘Bhuiyan’ means ‘landlords’. So, ‘Bara-Bhuiyans’ indicates ‘twelve landlords’. However, the writings of the middle ages did not give unanimous twelve names. *Akbarnamah* mentioned thirteen names of zamindars during the reign of Akbar. Henry Blokhman, Bevereze and Welford mentioned twelve names in their writing whereas Dr. Wise mentioned only seven names. Moreover, some Hindu historians mentioned more Hindu names than the Muslims although most of the Bhuiyans were Muslims. Therefore, some argue that ‘Bara’ does not indicate ‘twelve’, it means ‘big’. So, they translate the term ‘Bara-Bhuiyans’ as ‘big zamindars’.

According to *Akbarnamah*, the names of Bara-Bhuiyans during the reign of Emperor Akbar were as follows:

Leader: Isha Khan (Masnad-e-Ala of Sonargaon)

1. Ibrahim Naral (Kishorganj)
2. Karimdad Masudzay (Kishorganj)

3. Majlis Dilawar (area unknown)
4. Majlis Pratap (Mymensing)
5. Tila Gazi (area unknown)
6. Kader Rai (Sripur)
7. Sher Khan (area unknown)
8. Bahadur Gazi (Bhawal)
9. Chand Gazi (Chand Pratap pargana)
10. Sultan Gazi (Sultan Pratap pargana)
11. Selim Gazi (Selim Pratap Pargana)
12. Qasim Gazi (Qasimpur and Telipahad)

According to *Baharistan-e-Ghaibi*, the names of Bara-Bhuiyans during the reign of Emperor Jahangir were as follows:

Leader: Musa Khan (Masnad-e- Ala of Sonargaon)

1. Alaul Khan (area unknown)
2. Abdullah Khan (area unknown)
3. Mahmud Khan (area unknown)
4. Bahadur Gazi (Bhawal)
5. Sona Gazi (area unknown)
6. Anwar Gazi (area unknown)
7. Sheikh Peer (area unknown)
8. Mirza Momin (Pabna)
9. Modhu Roy (Manikgonj)
10. Bonod Roy (Manikgonj)
11. Pahlwan (area unknown)
12. Haji Shams-ud-din-Baghdadi (area unknown)

There were also many other big zamindars in Bengal. They were Vir Hamir of Bishnupur (Bakura district), Paramananda Roy of Chandradip (Barisal), Lakshman Manikya of Bhulua (Noakhali), Mukunda Ram of Bhusana (Faridpur), Pratapaditya of Jessore. However, they were not the member of Bara-Bhuiyans because they submitted themselves to the Mughals either at the appearance of the latter or, after a short fighting. On the other hand, the Bara-Bhuiyans were united in the ‘Bhati’ area and fought against the Mughals to the last to sustain their independence. Therefore, the modern historians of Bengal praised their patriotic zeal and gave them credit for their relentless resistance against the Mughals. However, Sir Jadu Nath Sarker opposed the idea. He wrote:

A false provincial patriotism has led modern Bengali writers to glorify the Bara-Bhuiyans of Bengal as the champions of national independence against foreign invaders. They were nothing of the sort.<sup>33</sup>

### **3.4.2 The Conflict between the Mughals and Barabhuuyans**

Among the Mughals, Emperor Humayun first tried to conquer Bengal but he was defeated by Sher Khan and was expelled from India. Sher Khan conquered Gaur, the capital of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah and ended the 200-year-old independent sultanate in Bengal (in 1538). He divided Bengal into some small units and placed his governors as the head of those units. This way, he thought, he could ensure the domination of central government over Bengal. However, he could not consolidate his power throughout Bengal. Consequently, after the disruption of the two-hundred-year old independent sultanate in 1538 AD, eastern Bengal went into a chaotic condition. The Bara-Bhuiyans gained strength during this chaotic condition.

After the reign of Sur Afghan dynasty, established by Sher khan, Bengal went under Kar Rani Dynasty. In the mean time, Humayun was able to restore the throne of Delhi (in 1556 AD) by the help of Persian Emperor. But he died in the same year. During the reign of Emperor Akbar, Bengal again went under the Mughal rule in 1576 when Daud Khan Kar Rani was defeated by the Mughal general Khan-e-Jahan at the battle of Rajmahal. Then Khan-e-Jahan rushed to East Bengal to subdue all anti-Mughal forces. This way, the conflict between the Mughal and the Bara-Bhuiyans started.

When Khan-e-Jahan reached Bhawal, the ‘vati’ areas of Bengal, some zamindars, i.e. Tilla Gazi, Ibrahim Morol, Karimdad bowed their head to Emperor Akbar; but Isha Khan, the leader of Bara-Bhuiyans, did not accept Mughal dominance and challenged the Mughals. However, he was defeated by Khan-e-Jahan at the battle of ‘Egarosindhur’. However, Other zamindars of this area, i.e. majlis Dilwar and Majlis Kutub succeeded to outdo the Mughal fleet. Khan-e-Jahan returned to his capital ‘Tanda’ and all other subdued zamindars again became independent. Mughal rule became confined to some areas in North-West Bengal. Emperor Akbar sent his

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<sup>33</sup> J. N. Sarker, *History of Bengal, Vol. II* (University of Dacca, 1948), p. 226

generals one after another to subdue the Bara-Bhuiyans but he did not succeed. He sent Shahbaz Khan (1583 AD), Syed Khan (1587 AD), Maan Singh (1594 AD) one after another. However, the Bara-Bhuiyans fought against the Mughals successfully under the leadership of Isha Khan.

During the reign of Emperor Jahangir, the Mughals tried utmost to subdue the Bara-Bhuiyans. He sent Maan Singh to Bengal again to subdue the Bara-Bhuiyans but did not succeed. In the meantime Isha Khan died and his son Musa Khan took the lead.

### **3.4.3 Islam Khan Chisti and the defeat of Bara Bhuiyan**

In 1608 Islam Khan was sent to Bengal as the Subadar (provincial head). During this time the Mughal dominance was confined to the adjacent territories of the Mughal capital, Rajmahal. All other territories were captured by the local zamindars and were ruled independently. After reaching Rajmahal, Islam Khan heard that Pathan Usman Khan had captured Mughal thana Alapsingh with a sudden attack and killed all the Mughal soldiers there. He immediately sent his force and recaptured Alapsingh thana. Then he decided to subdue Bara Bhuiyan with tight fist.

At first he made a large-scale plan to subdue Musa Khan. In the meantime, King Pratapaditya accepted Mughal dominance and as a symbol, he sent his younger son with huge gifts to the court of Islam Khan. He also promised to join with the Mughals in their effort to subdue Musa Khan. Islam Khan kept Sangramaditya, the son of Pratapaditya in his custody as a guarantee. When the rainy season ended, Islam Khan advanced toward Bengal with a large army and a number fleet full of cannon and rifles from Rajmahal. When he reached Gaur of Maldah district, he sent his army against Vir Hambhir, Selim Khan and Shams Khan. Vir Hambhir and Selim Khan surrendered to the Mughals without fighting, whereas Shams Khan fought for fifteen days. At last the latter also accepted the Mughal dominance. Islam Khan advanced along the south of Maldah through Murshidabad and crossed the river Padma. When he reached Alaipur on the bank of the Padma, Pitambar (zamindar of Puthia),

Ananta (zamindar of Chilazua of Bhaturia-raj pargana) and Elahi Bakhs of Alaipur submitted themselves under Mughal dominance. Islam Khan stayed at Alaipur and sent his army against King Satrajeet of Bhusona. Satrajeet fought gallantly against the Mughals; however, he accepted the Mughal dominance at last. He then joined the Mughal army and fought against other zamindars of Pabna district.

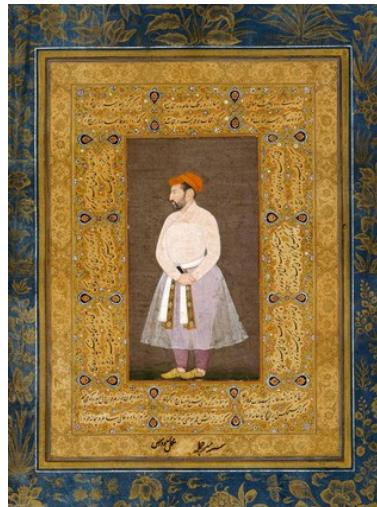
Islam Khan reached Katasgarh in October, 1609. His plan was to attack the fort of Musa Khan at Jatrapur on the bank of Ishamoti River. However, Islam Khan made a trick to make Musa Khan fool and sent a small army toward Dhaka. However, he made a war plan with King Pratapadditya when the latter met with Islam Khan at Atrai. The plan included:

- a. Islam Khan would attack the kingdom of Musa Khan through Ghoraghat, the western side of Musa's kingdom;
- b. At the same time, Pratapadditya would cross the Arial Kha River with 20,000 infantry, 1000 knight and 100 fleets and attack Sripur and Vikrampur, the eastern part of Isha Khan's kingdom.

At first, Islam Khan secured Jatrapur and attacked Musa Khan's camp at Katasgarh with 700 fleets. After the battle of first day, Musa Khan took shelter at 'Dakchera'. Musa Khan attacked the Mughal army valiantly for the next two days. Huge number of soldiers of the both sides died at the battle. However, the army of Musa Khan could not withstand and took shelter in the fort of Dakchera and Jatrapur. The Mughal army tried to capture Dakchera fort several times, but could not succeed. When Musa Khan was busy protecting Dakchera fort, Islam Khan captured Jatrapur fort with a sudden attack. Then he dug a canal from Jatrapur to Dakchera and besieged the Dakchera fort from both land and water way. After a bloody battle of one month, the Mughal army succeeded to break the wall of Dakchera fort and captured it on July 15, 1610. Then Islam Khan entered Dhaka city and sent army to Sripur and Vikrampur. On the other hand, Musa Khan secured his capital at Sonargaon and reached on

the river Shitalakkha with Mirza Munim, Shamsuddin Bagdadi, Bahadur Gazi and other zamindars. Musa Khan protected the forts at the eastern side of the river. On the other hand Islam Khan secured the forts at the western side of Shitalakkha. On March 12, 1611 the war between the Mughal army and the Bara-Bhuiyans led by Musa Khan started. The Mughals succeeded to capture ‘Katravu’, the parental residence of Musa Khan with a surprising attack at night. They also succeeded to capture several forts there. Then Musa Khan could not withstand and fled away. The Mughal army easily captured Sonargaon, the capital of Musa Khan. Afterwards, Musa Khan attacked several Mughal thanas, however, he could not recapture his capitan and took shelter at the islands of the river Meghna. Other zamindars also were defeated by the Mughals. When the zamindar of Bhulua, Anantamanikya was defeated by the Mughals and fled to Arakan, Musa Khan became disappointed. At last he left his sword and bowed his head under Mughal dominance. Musa Khan’s surrender ended up the struggle of independent Bara-Bhuiyans against the Mughals.

### 3.4.5 Subadar Mir Jumla



Mir Jumla

Mir Jumla was a renowned Subadar of Bengal under Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. He ruled only three years (1660-1663 AD) but became famous in the history for his successful invasion in Assam and Koch Bihar.

#### • Early Life

Mir Jumla's original name was Mir Muhammad Said but he became more popular in the history of Bengal as Mir Jumla.

He was the son of a poor oil merchant of Persia. He was born in about 1591 AD at Ardistan in Ispahan.

However, he acquired some knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic through which he was able to enter the service of the sultan of Golconda and rose to the position of Wazir or prime minister of the kingdom. His rapid development made some of the royal officers of the king of Golconda envious. The king started to distrust him for the conspiracy of those officers. Mir Jumla left Golconda and joined Prince Aurangzeb, the Mughal viceroy in the Deccan.

By the charity of Aurangzeb, he was able to catch sight of Emperor Shahjahan for his efficiency and got shelter in the Mughal court. He took Aurangzeb's side during the conflict among the four princes of Shahjahan for the accession to the throne. When Aurangzeb won the war of accession, he received the imperial farman (royal order) appointing him Subahdar of Bengal. Emperor Aurangzeb also honored Mir Jumla with titles, rewards and increment of mansab (rank of wage).

Being appointed as the Subadar of Bengal, Mir Jumla shifted his capital from Rajmahal to Dhaka and restored administrative

discipline in Bengal strictly. Then he gave attention to subdue the frontier kingdoms. The most important aspect of his short term rule in Bengal was his North-Eastern frontier policy, by which he conquered the frontier kingdoms of Kamrupa and Assam.

#### • **Expedition of Kamrupa and Assam**

Kamrupa was a part and parcel of Koch Bihar kingdom which had earlier been integrated with the Bengal Subah in 1612 AD. It was, therefore, a vassal state, but Raja Pran Narayan took advantage of the war of succession and did not give due homage to the Mughals. However, the king of Assam, Jayadhvaja Singh, occupied Kamrupa. That's why, Mir Jumla decided to conquer Assam and subdue Kamrup.

He advanced with a large army and navy against both the enemies. He sent the main body of the troops and the navy towards Kamrupa, while he himself proceeded against Koch Bihar with 12,000 knights and 30,000 infantry including a large navy. Koch Bihar was occupied easily in about one month because Pran Narayan, the king of Koch Bihar evacuated the country and fled towards the hills. Mir Jumla renamed the capital of Koch Bihar as Alamgirnagar. He also made necessary administrative arrangements there.

Then he proceeded to join the advance party towards Kamrupa. The king of Assam wanted to evacuate Kamrupa, but Mir Jumla decided to conquer Assam. However, it was not easy to conquer Assam due to the size and distinct physiography of the country.

Mir Jumla started from Gauhati with a large army and navy and conquered up to Ghargaon, the capital of Assam. The Mughal army captured huge possessions and armaments from this invasion. Jayadhvaja Singh took shelter behind the high hills and mountains of the country and patiently waited for the rain. The Mughal horses and troops could not reach the king.

When the rain came, the roads were submerged, the streams and even the nalahs (drains) swelled up to become big rivers. The Mughal army remained locked in few raised lands. Their supply of rations was cut off as they could not move through the inundated roads. Severe shortage of food and medicine and unusual attacks of the

Assamese during nights caused the Mughals huge human tolls. It was estimated that Mir Jumla lost almost two-thirds of his army, and worst of all Mir Jumla himself became sick. But he did not lose heart. Only his personality kept the confidence of the Mughal army strong.

After the rain was over, Mir Jumla consolidated his army and took vigorous actions against the Assamese who harassed the Mughals. At last, the king of Assam accepted the Mughal domination and offered to sign a peace treaty. Mir Jumla also agreed to sign a peace treaty in return of the king's submission to the Mughal dominance. The conditions of the treaty were as follows:

- a. The king of Assam will give the Mughal Emperor 20,000 Tola of Gold and 1,20,000 Tola of Silver including 20 war elephants instance as a reparation of the war;
- b. Within next twelve months he will have to give the Mughals the rest 30,000 Tola of Gold and 90 war elephants in installment as a reparation of the war;
- c. The territories of the western side of the river Voral located at the north bank of the river Brahmaputra and in the south, the territories of the western side of the river Kolong will go under Mughal Empire;
- d. King Jayadhvaja will send one of his daughters to the Mughal Harem of Delhi;
- e. From the next year of signing the treaty onwards the king will send twenty war elephants to Delhi court as a tax;
- f. The Assamese will set the Mughal soldiers free whom they arrested during the battle;
- g. To make the conditions effective, four sons of the Assamese king will have to surrender to Mir Jumla and they will be in his custody as an undertaking.

In this way, the Assamese king became a vassal king of the Mughal Empire. However, the occupied Assamese territory was retaken as soon as Mir Jumla left Assam and died in March, 1563.

### ● Achievement

Mir Jumla was a great general, wise politician and skilled ruler. With hard work and efficiency, he rose up to higher position from a very vulnerable life. During the viceroyalty in Deccan, Aurangazeb was

greatly impressed by the trustworthiness of Mir Jumla both in warfare and administrative purposes. Mir Jumla defeated and expelled Shah Suja, a great rival to Aurangazed. For his wise effort, Aurangazed succeeded to win the war of accession. Therefore, he appointed Mir Jumla as the Subadar of Bengal and Orissa. He controlled the local zamindars of Bengal who were unabated and disloyal to the Mughal rule during the war of accession. Within a short time he managed to restore administrative discipline in Bengal and then pay attention to the frontier states. Conquering Koch Bihar and Assam was his great achievement. He was the first Mughal Subadar who conquered the whole Koch Bihar and made it a part of Mughal Empire. Mir Jumla conquered Assam but did not stay there; instead he returned Bengal with a favorable peace treaty. Most historians praised this decision. Renowned historian John Stewart remarked, "Mir Jumla was one of them who succeeded in life not by fate but by own efficiency. He was intelligent, unusually cool in thinking and dauntless. He was wise in diplomacy in the royal court, cunning and courageous in the battle field. He was modest and virtuous in his personal life."

### 3.4.6 Subadar Shayesta Khan



Shayesta Khan

Shayesta Khan inherited a noble blood. He was the uncle of Emperor Aurangazed of maternal side. He was a brother of empress Mamataj Mahal Begum and the son of Asaf Khan, brother of Nurjahan Begum. He was highly educated and held many significant administrative posts in Bihar, Malab, Gujrat, Agra, and Deccan before being appointed as the Subadar of Bengal.

He was pious, and therefore, fond of Aurangazeb. During the war of accession among the four sons of Emperor Shahjahan, Shayesta Khan initially did not able to take Aurangazeb's side because Dara Shikoh fired him from ruler of Malab and called him in Agra. However, he shrewdly helped Aurangazeb win the war of accession. Being defeated in the battle of Samugarh (1660 AD), when Dara Shikoh fled from Agra, Shayesta Khan joined Aurangazeb's side and helped Aurangazeb outdo Dara Shikoh from Delhi and other territories. Aurangazeb was also very much pleased with his trustworthy and gave him monsob of Sat Hazari (seven thousand monsob). He also gave Shayesta Khan the title of 'Amir Ul Omrah'.

#### ● **Expedition against Shivaji**

Shayesta Khan was a great warrior and administrator. After the coronation of Aurangazeb as the Emperor of Delhi, he appointed Shayesta Khan as the Subadar of Deccan and asked him to crush Shivaji. Shayesta Khan led expeditions against Maratha leader Shivaji and occupied almost all the forts and 'Puna', the capital of Shivaji. When the rainy season came, he stopped expeditions and stayed at the Palace of Shivaji. However, he underestimated Shivaji's strength and was quite careless, therefore, could not resist the sudden attack of Shivaji one night. His son and some other Mughal soldiers were died at the sudden attack. Aurangazeb became annoyed at the carelessness and called him back to the Mughal capital.

#### ● **Subadar in Bengal**

After the death of Subadar Mir Jumla, the situation in Bengal became chaotic. Aurangazeb felt that an efficient person should be appointed immediately to restore stability in Bengal. In those days, Bengal was the richest 'Subah' in the Mughal Empire. Only the revenues of Bengal could meet up the lion's share of Mughal imperial expenditure. Therefor, Aurangazeb appointed Shayesta Khan as the Subadar of Bengal. Shayesta Khan was appointed as the Subadar of Bengal for two times. At the first tenure was the Subadar of Bengal from 1664 to 1676 and then 1679 to 1688. In total he was the Subadar of Bengal for 22 years. He is, in fact, famous for his economic development in Bengal. There is a saying: 'During the rule of Shayesta Khan, eight mounds of rice were found by only one taka in

Bengal.' However, credit also goes to his four sons because they were also very much efficient helping hand of their father.

#### ● **Subduing Koch Bihar**

Mir Jumla had conquered Koch Bihar. However, after his death, the Mughal officers could not control the rebellious situation in Koch Bihar and earlier king Pran Narayan took the advantage and recaptured Koch Bihar from the Mughal Foujdar in 1662. Shayesta Khan reached Rajmahal from Delhi in 1664 and decided to attack Koch Bihar. At this Pran Narayan got frightened and gave five lac taka as compensation and surrendered to Shayesta Khan. After the death of Pran Narayan, a war of accession started among the sons of Pran Narayan. Mudth Narayan, the son of Pran Narayan won the war and agreed to give the Mughal Emperor 10 lac taka annually as a tax. However, after sometime, he started dilly-dally to pay the taxes. Shayesta Khan, therefore, sent his son Iradat Khan and annexed Koch Bihar with the Mughal Empire.

#### ● **Subduing the rebellion of Hijli**

During the rule of Subadar Mir Jumla, the zamindar of Hijli Bahadur Khan became rebellious. Mir Jumla arrested him and confined him in the fort of Ronthombhor. Shayesta Khan set Bahadur Khan free and returned his zamindari with some conditions. Bahadur Khan accepted Mughal domination and agreed to pay one lac taka as a tax annually.

#### ● **Security arrangements in the borders**

During the rule of Subadar Mir Jumla, the King of Jayantia used to make disturbance in the border of Sylhet. When Shayesta Khan became Subadar of Bengal, king of Jayantia sent a letter promising to surrender and pay taxes. As a result, Shayesta Khan gave him autonomy. After some days, the king of Jayantia again started disturbance in the border of Mughal Empire. Shayesta Khan sent his son Iradat Khan against him and annexed Jayantia with the Mughal Empire. The King of Jayantia escaped to save his life.

He also sent an expedition to western border of Koch Bihar to prevent Murang King. The king of Murang surrendered without any challenge and agreed to pay taxes.

### ● Subduing Magh and conquering Chittagong

One of the greatest achievements of Shayesta Khan was the conquest of Chittagong and subduing Magh dacoits. Shayesta Khan himself designed the plan and his son Umed Khan launched the expedition.

Chittagong was then under Arakan kingdom. In 1617 the king of Arakan occupied Sandip Island from the Portuguese. The Magh and Firingee pirates used to loot and wonder around the areas up to Dhaka through the river Meghna. Sometimes, they captured Bengali women and children and sold them to the European traders as slave. The Magh pirates used to torture severely to the captured Bengali people. They used to pinch the fist of the hands of the captured men and women to make a hole and insert reeds through the hole. This way they tied the captured Bengali people one another and left them stay inside the boats unfed. Hearing this, Shayesta Khan became shocked and decided to punish Magh pirates. He built many battleships to conquer Sandip Island.

In 1665 Shayesta Khan launched his expedition from Dhaka with a naval fleet of 300 battleships. In 23 January of 1666 the first naval battle between the Magh army and the Mughal army was held. Shayesta Khan took the benefit of the conflict between the Magh king and the Portuguese. He gave Portuguese leader 2000 take and appointed him in his army for monthly salary of 500 taka. He also appointed other Portuguese leaders in his army. With the help of the Portuguese soldiers Shayesta Khan succeeded to defeat the Magh army. In January 26, 1666 the Mughal army occupied Chittagong fort and annexed Chittagong with the Mughal Empire. 135 battleships of the Magh army were captured and 2000 Maghs were arrested. Some thousands of Bengali peoples were captive at the hand of the Maghs. They were freed. Chittagong was renamed as Islamabad.

### ● Conflict with the English East India Company

At the end of Shayesta Khan's rule, he locked in conflict with the English traders. During the rule of Subadar Shah Suja, the English company first built a commercial fort in Hooghly in 1651. Suja gave them permission for duty free trade only for 3000 taka annual tax. As a result, their business rose up higher and higher. The amount of the

export trade of the English rose many folds but they used to give the same amount of annual tax. As a result, the local traders as well as other European traders faced sever loss and lagged behind the English in competition.

The Mughal government also was deprived of due taxes. Shayesta Khan decided to end the situation. According to his suggestion Emperor Aurangazed cancelled the extra facility of the English traders and imposed 3.25% annual tax for all the businessmen and company because the facility of duty free trade was given by Subadar Shah Suja, not by the Emperor Shahjahan. But the English did not pay heed to the imperial order. Rather the English company urged the British Emperor James II to take actions against Shayesta Khan and emperor Aurangazeb. The British Emperor gave the English company consent to fight against the Mughal army and sent some battleships full of British army. Shayesta Khan successfully fought against the English force and expelled them from Bengal. The English force was compelled to go back to Madras.

#### ● Achievements

Among the Mughal Subadars Shayesta Khan was distinctfor many reasons. He has close ties with the Mughal royal family and he successfully proved his trustworthyness. He not only succeeded to consolidate the rule and order of Bengal but expanded its territory from Chittagong to Assam. He was also famous for his charity. Every year he used to grant the poor 50,000 taka. According to the English historian James Stewart, he was pious, powerful, rich and a skilled judge. Both agriculture and trade were nourished skillfully during his rule. During his twenty two years rule, the economy of Bengalreached its apex level. Agricultural production boosted. Therefore, the price of the commoditiesbecame very cheap.Before he left Bengal, he ordered to close down the western side of Dhaka Gate to mark the glory of his rule. There he coined: "Let no Subadar open the gate in future unless he is able to keep the price of eight mound rice for one taka." Still the gate remains closed. Shayesta Khan left Bengal to Agra in June, 1688 and died there after some years.

### **3.5 Rule of the Nababs**

#### **3.5.1 Murshid Quli Khan (1717-1727)**



Murshid Quli Khan

Murshid Kuli Khan was the first Nabab of Bengal. When he became the Dewan of Bengal, the Mughal Empire was on the wane. After the death of Emperor Aurangazeb in 1707 the Mughal capital became burdened with the conflict and conspiracy among the princes and their relatives. During the

Period between 1707 and 1717, no less than eight emperors ascended the throne and thereafter were killed or outcast by the subsequent rivals. In 1717 Faruk Siyar succeeded to occupy the Mughal throne and appointed Murshid Kuli Khan as the Dewan and Subadar of Bengal. Murshid Kuli Khan was the first Nabab of Bengal. When he became the Dewan of Bengal, the Mughal Empire was on the wane. After the death of Emperor Aurangazeb in 1707 the Mughal capital became burdened with the conflict and conspiracy among the princes and their relatives. During the period between 1707 and 1717, no less than eight emperors ascended the throne and thereafter were killed or outcast by the subsequent rivals. In 1717 Faruk Siyar succeeded to occupy the Mughal throne and appointed Murshid Kuli Khan as the Dewan and Subadar of Bengal. Due to the instability and weakness of the central government, the latter was able to rule Bengal quite independently. After him the post of Subadar became inherited, and therefore, the succeeding Subadars were recognized as Nabab. Five Nababs ruled Bengal among them Murshid Kuli Khan was the first.

### ● Early Life

Murshid Kuli Khan's original name was Muhammad Hadi. He was born in a poor Brahmin family and later was sold to a Muslim named Shafi Ispahani who reared him like his own issue. Shafi Ispahani took him to Persia where Murshid Kuli Khan was influenced by the Persian creed and culture. When Shafi Ispahani was appointed as the Dewan-e-Taan at Delhi, Murshid Kuli was trained on the Dewani affairs. After the death of Shafi Ispahani, he was appointed under Dewan Haji Abdullah Khorasani of Berar province. There he became famous in Dewani affairs. When Emperor Aurangazeb heard about him, he appointed Muhammad Hadi as the Dewan of Hyderabad in 1696. Later he was appointed as the Dewan of Bengal to reform its economy and revenue system. He was also appointed as the 'Foujdar' of Muksudabad and many other extra responsibilities were rested upon his shoulder. Then Emperor Aurangazeb gave him title of 'Murshid Kuli Khan.' Within 1704 he was appointed as the Subadar of Orissa, Dewan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Foujdar of other five districts. All these appointments prove his efficiency.

During the last phase of Aurangazeb era, the Mughal Empire became weak due to his long absence from the capital. During the first decade of eighteen century, the Mughal treasury became empty for the costly wars in the Deccan. This time, only Bengal was the province that could provide sufficient revenue for the running of the central government. Therefore, Emperor Aurangazeb became dependent on the efficiency and trustworthiness of Murshid Kuli Khan. He gave Khan full freedom as a Dewan. Murshid Kuli Khan transferred Dewani from Dhaka to Muksudabad and renamed the city as Murshidabad with the permission of Aurangazeb.

After the death of Aurangazeb, war of accession started. Murshid Kuli Khan was transferred to Deccan. However, when Faruk Siyar, the son of Azim-us-Shan won the war of accession and became the Mughal Emperor in 1717, Murshid Kuli Khan bowed head to him. In return, Faruk Siyar appointed him as both the Dewan and Subadar of Bengal.

Both the posts were separated in the past and the Dewan was directly responsible to the Emperor. By holding the two posts Murshid Kuli

Khan became very powerful. Then he made Murshidabad as the capital of Bengal. He was famous for the revenue reformation in Bengal which is called as ‘Maal Zamini’ system.

#### ● Contributions

Murshid Kuli Khan had remarkable contributions both in politics and economy of Bengal. He ran the administration with ‘iron fist.’ By adopting various economic reforms he made Bengal a viable state but he continued to send tribute to the Mughal Emperor.

#### ● Reformation in revenue collection: Maal Zamini

Before his arrival, there was no sophisticated land revenue system in Bengal. From the beginning of the Mughal rule to Aurangazeb no systematic method was implemented in the field of land revenue. During the reign of Akbar, Raja Todormal tried to reform but did not succeed. Mir Jumla and Shayesta Khan also had little achievements. Most of the lands in Bengal were distributed to the of Mughal employees as ‘Jagir’. There was no land left as ‘khash land’. As a result, there was very little revenue collection from lands. Murshid Kuli Khan wanted to raise the collection of land revenue. For this he took two steps:

Firstly, he turned all ‘jaigir’ lands of the Mughal employees into ‘khash lands’ of the government. Instead, he gave them ‘jaigir’ lands in the impoverished areas of Orissa.

Secondly, he retook the responsibility of revenue collection from the zamindars and appointed ‘contractors’ for this purpose. The contractors took oath to give certain amount of revenue annually and it was collected strictly.

#### ● Characteristics of revenue reformation

Murshid Kuli Khan took distinct policies in the field of revenue collection.

Firstly, he surveyed all the lands both cultivating of ‘fallen’.

Secondly, he fixed the revenue according to the merit of the land.

Thirdly, after the fixation of revenue, he never demanded more than the rate or allowed the Mughal employee to do so.

Fourthly, if any contractor failed to pay due amount of revenue in time, he was to face punishment.

Fifthly, he used to appoint the Hindus as ‘contractors’.

This method of revenue collection is called as ‘Maal Zamini’ system. This way he created a new class of zamindars, which became lineal inheritance during the Permanent Settlement system of Lord Cornwallis.

#### ● **Benefit of the ‘Maal Zamini’ system**

‘Maal Zamini’ system had many positive sides. They are as follows:

1. The revenue collection of the Mughal government increases manifolds.
2. The government income from the revenue became certain, therefore, the treasury crisis of the central government reduced to some extent.
3. As the revenue was fixed, the tenants got relief from the harassment of the revenue collectors of the zamindars.
4. Fixation of business or trade tax helped expanding the trade and commerce.
5. As the interests of the farmers were preserved and the policy of granting agricultural loan was followed, the agriculture developed.

#### ● **Trade and Commerce**

Murshid Kuli Khan knew that the economic development mostly depends on the flow of trade. Therefore, he was sympathetic toward European traders. He never charged more or extra taxes from the businessman. He let the European traders build business centers: at Calcutta to the English, Chandannagar to the French and Chuchura to the Dutch. These places became renowned business centers during his reign. He withdrew the duty free trade facility of the English. However, the latter collected permission letter from Emperor Karuk Siyar but Murshid Kuli Khan was not willing to give the English extra facility.

#### ● **Change in the Bureaucracy**

After the death of Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah, three major families established their independent rule in Hydrabad, Oudhya and

Bengal. As a result, the supply of Muslim bureaucrats from the northern India became stopped. This vacuum was filled by local educated Hindu peoples. This way, the highest positions of the bureaucracy of Bengal were captured by the native Hindus. Some of them were succeeded to establish large zamindari.

### **3.5.2 Nabab Alivardi Khan (1740-1756)**

Alivardi Khan was the fourth Nabab of Bengal. He was once a very distressed position. However, with hard work and efficiency he managed to change the wheel of his fortune. Although he was a betrayer, his good intention and noble deeds helped him to mop the black spot of his forehead. He ruled Bengal for sixteen years.

#### **● Early Life**

Murshid Kuli Khan nominated his grandson Sarfaraj Khan as the next Nabab since he had no son.

However, Suja Unddin Khan, the father of Sarfaraj Khan, grabbed the throne of Bengal with the help of Mohammad Ali and his brother Haji Ahmed. Suja Uddin became pleased with the two brothers and appointed them as the royal officers.



Alivardi Khan

At first, Mohammad Ali was appointed as the Foudar of Rajmahal. Nabab Suja Uddin gave him title as Alivardi Khan. Alivardi Khan's original name was Mirza Bandi or Mirza Mohammad Ali.

His father Mirza Muhammad was a lower class employee of Emperor Shah Azam, the son of Aurangazed. When Shah Azam was killed in the battle of Zuzu in 1707, Mirza Bandi's family fell in a victim. His father Mirza Muhammad was a lower class employee of Emperor Shah Azam, the son of Aurangazed. When Shah Azam was killed in the battle of Zuzu in 1707, Mirza Bandi's family fell in a victim. Then he went to Suja Uddin, the assistant Subadar of Orissa because he had a relation with Suja Uddin from the maternal side. Suja Uddin gave government employment to him and his brother. Gradually, the

two brothers became influential in the court of Suja Uddin. At one time, Alivardi Khan was appointed as the assistant Subadar of Bihar. After Suja Uddin, his son Sarfaraj Khan became the Nabab of Bengal. But he was inexperienced both in politics and administrative affairs. Alivardi Khan took the opportunity. He made a blue print of occupying the throne of Bengal. He gave bribes to the high officials of Delhi court and managed a ‘farman’ from the Mughal Emperor. The Omrahs (ministers) of the court of Sarfaraj Khan i.e. Alam Chand, Jagat Sheth joined his conspiracy. Then he started from Bihar with a large army to Murshidabad. Nabab Sarfaraj Khan challenged the army of Alivardi Khan at Giria, some 22 miles away from Murshidabad. However, he was defeated and killed in the battle. Alivardi Khan became the fourth Nabab of Bengal in 1740 AD.

By killing Nabab Sarfaraj Khan, Alivardi Khan betrayed with his master Nabab Suja Uddin Khan. However, he did not fire his master’s family or other relatives from the administration or show dishonor to them. Rather, he continued to say ‘sorry’ and show repentance for his evil deeds. Alivardi approved Suja Uddin’s relatives to stay their positions.

#### ● **Subduing the rebellion of Orissa**

Alivardi Khan became the Nabab of Bengal and Bihar but Suja Uddin Khan’s daughter-in-law Rustam Jang (known as second Murshid Kuli Khan) did not accept his accession. He was the assistant Subadar of Orissa. He decided to conquer Bengal and marched there from Katak with a large army. Alivardi also started for Orissa from Murshidabad. On the way, the zamindars of Medinipur joined him. At the bank of the river Suvarna, two armies fought together. Rustam Jang was defeated and fled to the Deccan. Alivardi Khan conquered Orissa and appointed his daughter in law Soulat Jang as the assistant Subadar and returned Murshidabad. However, the people of Orissa became fed up at the evil rule of Soulat Jang. At this, Mirza Bakr, the daughter-in-law of Rustam Jang took the opportunity and attacked Orissa and retook it. Alivardi Khan again marched for Orissa in 1741. Hearing this, Mirza Bakr left Orissa unchallenged and took shelter in the Deccan. Alivardi Khan stayed three months there and reorganized the administration of Orissa. Then he appointed Sheikh Masum as the assistant Subadar of Orissa and returned to Murshidabad.

### **● Maratha attack and Alivardi Khan**

The most panic-striking event of the time of Alivardi Khan was perpetual Maratha attacks. From 1742 to 1750, every year the Maratha invaders attacked West Bengal through Orissa. They looted indiscriminately and caused heavy human tolls. In fact, it was a time when the Maratha of Deccan took initiative to build a Maratha Empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. Pesewa Balaji Bishawnath first planned for establishing Maratha Empire and his son Pesewa Bajirao took initiative to materialize the dream. The Maratha invasion in the Bengal was a part of that dream.

### **● Direct causes of Maratha attacks**

It was Alivardi Khan, whose evil deeds paved the way of Maratha attack in Bengal. Alivardi Khan grabbed the throne of Bengal through treachery. It created an unending clash with Rustam Jang, the daughter-in-law of Nabab Suja Uddin Khan. As a result, Mir Habir, the Nayeb of Rustam Jang, helped the Maratha to attack Bengal through Medinipur. However, the historians found three direct reasons behind the Maratha attacks in Bengal:

- a) During the declining age of the Mughal Empire, the Maratha of Deccan was trying to establish a Maratha Empire all over India. However, the Nizam of Hyderabad also established an independent kingdom and wanted to protect Hyderabad kingdom from the Marathas. Thus, he inspired Maratha leader Roghuji Bhoshle to invade Bengal because Bengal was the richest Mughal province at that time.
- b) The exiled family of Rustam Jung inspired Roghuji to attack Bengal to take revenge over Alivardi Khan.
- c) Roghuji Bhoshle failed to establish his domination over 'Satara'. Therefore, he decided to attack Bengal and establish his influence.

### **● Events of Alivardi-Maratha conflict**

When Alivardi Khan was busy in Orissa to subdue Rustam Jang, the Maratha army invaded Bengal and occupied Katoa under the leadership of Bhaskar Pandit. Thereafter, they proceeded toward Murshidabad and looted the treasury of Jagat Sheth. Alivardi Khan returned his capital quickly to prevent the Maratha. However, the

Maratha army bypassed his way and returned Katoa. There they established a strong Maratha camp and occupied the territory along the river Ganges. They also appointed a Maratha Foujdar at Katoa. Alivardi waited for the rainy season and collected army from Purnia and Patna. Then he attacked Katoa all on a sudden. The Maratha army was then at rest. Most of them were enjoying with dancing at the Bijoya Nabami. They could not resist Alivardi and fled without any challenge. However, Maratha leader Bhaskar Pandit did not lose hope. Soon he collected the fleeing Maratha soldiers and re-attacked Medinipur and Katoa and re-captured it. Alivardi again launched his army toward Katoa. This time, the Maratha army fled to the south of Chilka lagoon. Alivardi appointed Afghan general Gholam Rasul as the Nayeb Nazim and returned Murshidabad.

In the meantime, the declining Mughal Emperor made a promise to the Maratha leader Shahu that he would give him the right to collect ‘Chouth’ (revenue) from Bangla, Bihar and Orissa. Shahu transferred the right to Roghuji Bhoshle, the Maratha king of Nagpur. The Mughal Emperor became anxious and sought help from Pesewa Balaji Rao against Roghuji Bhoshle. Roghuji and Balaji were enemy to each-other.

Roghuji started for Bengal with Bhaskar Pandit in 1743 and reached Katoa. Balaji also proceeded to Bengal to prevent Roghuji. Both the army looted, raped, killed indiscriminately and burned down everything on their way to Bengal. The unprotected people started to flee eastward of the river Bhagirothi. Alivardi Khan became anxious to protect his people. He decided to compromise with the Marathas.

Alivardi Khan and Balaji met at a place of the west side of the river Bhagirothi, ten miles away from Baharampur. Both of them made a deal. Alivardi Khan agreed to give ‘Chouth’ to Maratha king Shahu and 22 lac taka to Balaji as a compensation of the battle. In return, Balaji promised to protect Bengal against the attack of Bhoshle. Hearing the news of the deal, Bhoshle got frightened and left Katoa and went to Birbhum. Balaji followed him and ousted him from Bengal. The inhabitants of Calcutta collected 25000 taka from popular subscriptions to cut a ditch to protect the city from the Maratha attacks. However, next one year there was no Maratha attack.

Later in 1743 Maratha king Shahu called in Balaji and Bhoshle to reconcile their relation. The right of collecting ‘Chouth’ was also divided between them. Balaji got the right of the areas of western side of Bihar. Bhoshle got the right of Bangla, Orissa and eastern side of Bihar. They were given permission to loot within their territory.

Hearing this, Alivardi Khan fell in a great difficulty because he already gave 22 lac Taka to Balaji to prevent Bhosle. So his treasury became empty. His army was also tired for continuous battle against rivals and the Marathas. So, he decided to prevent the Marathas through treachery.

He offered Maratha King Bhoshle to make a final peace deal and settle the amount of ‘Chouth’. For this he invited Bhaskar Pandit in his tent to join a feast to make the deal through Afghan general Gholam Mustafa. Assured by Gholam Mustafa, 21 Maratha general including Bhaskar Pandit joined the feast. Alivardi killed them all. Hearing this, all other Maratha soldiers became scattered and fled from Bengal.

Alivardi promised to Gholam Mustafa that he would be appointed as the ruler of Bihar if he could bring Bhaskar Pandit in his tent. However, Alivardi did not keep his promise. Therefore, Gholam Mustafa revolted against him and joined Raghiji Bhoshle.

Now Alivardi has so many enemies. The Marathas, Rustam Jang’s Nayeb Mir Habir and Afghan general Gholam Mustafa. But Alivardi was a great warrior. He successfully faced them and defeated them several times one after another. However, the Maratha invasion could not be stopped until 1751.

For ten years, both the Maratha and Alivardi fought together. Alivardi reached to the age of 75 and became tired. The Marathas also became tired. So, both the party decided to sign a deal for permanent peace on August 24, 1752. The conditions of the deal were as follows:

- a). Mir Habir will be appointed as the administrator of Bihar under Alivardi but the surplus revenue of the province will go to Raghiji Bhoshle.
- b) Alivardi will give 12 lac Taka as annual ‘Chouth’ to Bhoshle.
- c) The Maratha soldiers will never cross the river Suvarna and do not enter Bengal.

After this peace deal the Marathas never attacked Bengal.

#### ● **Alivardi and the European traders**

Nabad Alivardi Khan realized the importance of nourishing trade and commerce for economic development. Therefore, he had a friendly attitude to the European traders. According to an employee of the English East India Company: "He (Alivardi) used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit but that if you disturb their hive they would sting you to death." In fact, Alivardi Khan gave the European right to trade freely. Nevertheless, sometimes he collected money forcefully as punishment of their misconduct. In 1752 Alivardi Khan accused the English East India Company for helping the Marathas and forced them to give huge money as a punishment. He was also aware of the danger of their influence in the politics of Bengal. When the English and the French started to build forts as a result of their conflict in the Deccan, Alivardi issued royal orders to stop such initiatives. He asked them: "You are traders, so why do you need to build forts? You need not to be worried under my rule."

#### ● **Achievements**

Alivardi Khan was one of the remarkable characters in the history of Bengal. From the very impoverished level, he raised himself to a great position through courage, intelligence and hard work. He betrayed with his master but proved that it was only for the welfare of the people, for he fought gallantly against the roaring Marathas, the emerging force during the declining ages of the great Mughals and succeeded to keep the freedom of Bengal. For this, he had to spend the first ten years of his reign. After managing the Marathas, he paid attention to rebuilding the Bengal economy. At first he reconstructed the villages that were ruined by the perpetual Maratha attacks. For this, he spent huge money to give loans to the Farmers. He followed liberal policy in collecting the revenues. He was pious and led a very generous life. He never drank wines and was faithful to his single wife. On 10 April, 1756 he died by heart attack at the age of eighty.

### 3.5.3Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah: Tragedy of Plassey



Siraj Ud Daullah

Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah was the last independent Nabab of Bengal. After the death of Nabab Alibardi Khan, he ascended the throne of Bengal according to the desire of the latter. However, his accession was not greeted by all. Therefore, he had to face the conspiracies of his relatives from the beginning.

#### ● Background

Nabab Alibardi Khan had no son. He had three daughters: Meherunnisa (Ghaseti Begum), Maymuna and Amena. Elder daughter Meherunnisa had no son, Maymuna's son was Shawkat Jang and Amena's son was Siraj Ud Daullah. Alibardi Khan preferred

Siraj Ud Daullah much because his mother Amena was married to Jainuddin, the son of Alibardi's elder brother Haji Ahmed or Ahmed Ali. That means, Siraj Ud Daullah was the son of Alibardi's nephew as well as the son of his own daughter. Moreover, Shawkat Jang was not efficient in warfare and his character was also not sound. That's why Alibardi Khan nominated Siraj instead of Shawkat Jang.

However, Alibardi's elder daughter Meherunnisa (Ghaseti Begum) liked Shawkat Jang very much. She was very much ambitious. She wanted to see Shawkat Jang as the Nabab of Bengal so that she could enjoy the actual power by making Shawkat a puppet. Alibardi Khan appointed his three daughter-in-laws as the head of Bihar, Dhaka and Purnia respectively. However, all his three daughter-in-laws died during his lifetime.

#### ● The primary challenges of Siraj Ud Daullah

On 9 April, 1756, after the death of Alibardi Khan, Siraj-Ud-Daullah ascended the throne at Murshidabad only at the age of twenty two. Meherunnisa and Shawkat Jang were displeased at his accession.

Ghaseti Begum inspired Shawkat Jang through her Dewan Rajballav to revolt against Siraj. Mir Jafar, the chief of Siraj's army, was also not pleased with the accession of Siraj. He was the sister-in-law of Nabab Alibardi Khan. He was also ambitious and wanted to dominate Siraj. As Siraj was arrogant and chose to move as his will, Mir Jafar was also displeased with him. Therefore, Ghaseti Begum-Shawkat Jang-Mir Jafar alliance was created and this alliance decided to oust Siraj from the throne of Bengal.

The English East India Company and the French also took the opportunity of Alibardi's death and started to build forts in reference to the Anglo-French 'Seven Years' War'. The English company joined the conspiracy of Ghaseti Begum-Shawkat Jang-Mir Jafar gang and gave Ghaseti Begum a promise to help against Siraj. Having support from Mir Jafar and Ghaseti Begum, Shawkat Jang decided to challenge Siraj-Ud-Daullah.

#### ● **Siraj-Ud-Daullah's steps against the rivals**

Siraj-Ud-Daullah realized that he will have to subdue the domestic rebels first if he wants to continue his rule. For this, he made some administrative changes. He appointed Mir Madan in the post of Bakhs in place of Mir Jafar, Mohanlal was promoted to the rank of peshkar (secretary) of his Dewan Khana and Zanki Ram (entitled as Ram Narayan), the uncle of Mohonlal was appointed as the Dewan of Murshidabad. Then he started to take steps against his enemies.

#### ● **Steps against Ghaseti Begum**

Siraj-Ud-Daullah heard that Shawkat Jang was trying to get a 'farman' from the Mughal Emperor of Delhi with the help of his aunt Ghaseti Begum. That's why; he tactically seized her wealth from Motijheel Palace and placed her under confinement at Mansoorganj Palace without any blood-shed. At this, the English got frightened and prayed apology to him for their evil deeds.

#### ● **Steps against Shawkat Jang**

After Ghaseti Begam's confinement, Shawkat Jang revolted against. The latter collected a 'farman' as the Subadar of Bengal from the Mughal Emperor by giving a bribe of one crore taka to the chief minister of the Emperor. Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah marched forward to Purnia with his army to subdue Shawkat Jang. The latter was also

ready. On 16 October, 1756 both the army fought a battle at the village of Nababgonj. Shawkat Jang was defeated and killed. Thus, the main obstacle of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah was removed.

#### ● Steps against the English

For some reason, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah decided to punish the English. When Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah ascended the throne, the English denied to show due respect to him. Secondly, the English started to build a fort named ‘Fort William’ and strengthened their military power at Calcutta without prior approval. Thirdly, they gave shelter to some of his disloyal officers, for example Krishnadas, son of Rajballav, who fled Dhaka after misappropriating government funds. Siraj asked the English to stop fortification and send back Krishnadas. But the English did not pay heed to his orders. As a result, Nabab gathered his army and attacked the ‘Fort William’ at Calcutta and captured it in June 1756. When Siraj made a blockade of the fort in June 16, the English Governor Mr. Drake and some other



Fort William, Calcutta

English soldiers fled and took shelter at ‘Falta’. On 20 June, 1756 Halwell, the new English Governor surrendered. Nabab entered the fort.

He renamed Calcutta as ‘Alinagar’, appointed his general Manikchand as the head of Alinagar and left for Murshidabad.

#### ● Black-Hole Tragedy

After Siraj’s departure, Hallwell made a story to make the English crazy against Siraj. He told that Siraj-Ud-Daullah confined 146 English people within a tiny room of 18□X14□ size. As a result, 123 of them died for suffocation. This story is circulated as the ‘Black Hole Tragedy’ by the English writers. In fact, the story was not true. In fact, the captives numbered 64 to 69 people and at most, only 43 people died in the Black Hole. Because, a room of 18□X14□ size might not have enough space for 146 people even if they are placed

the bricks one upon another. Researcher Anny Besanta remarked, “Geometry disproving arithmetic gave lie to the story.” However, for the next two hundred years, the English narrated the false story repeatedly to blame Siraj-Ud-Daullah. Even, they built a monument in commemoration of the dead people at the incident. The Indian Nationalist leader Shuvdas Chandra Basu destroyed the monument and unfolded the false story.

However, hearing the false story of Hallwell the English at Madras became crazy and a naval fleet under Robert Clive and Watson started for Calcutta. On the other hand, Umi Chand, Nabakishen, Jagat Sheth, Roy Durlav, Manikn Chand joined the English conspiracy because Nabab Siraj Ud-Daullah left Calcutta without consolidating his power completely at Alinagar. As a result, the English captured Calcutta easily and declared war against the Nabab on January 3, 1757. Hearing the fall of Calcutta, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah also started from Murshidabad. On January 10 the English force attacked Hooghly; looted and burned the city indiscriminately. Nabab reached Hooghly on 19 January and the English returned Calcutta. Nabab followed them to Calcutta. On February 3, 1757 Nabab set his tent at the mango orchard of Ameer Chand in Calcutta. However, he was quite careless. At night, a band of English soldiers under Watson attacked Nabab's camp and 1300 of Nabab's people were killed. Next morning, Nabab attacked the English with his full strength. Robert Clive fled from Calcutta. However, the generals of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah suggested him to make a peace treaty with the English. Although Nabab heard the conspiracy of his generals, he agreed to compromise with the English because he heard that the Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Abdali was advancing toward Bengal by crushing Delhi-Agra and Mathura. He then made a peace treaty with the English known as ‘Peace Treaty of Ali Nagar’. The conditions were as follows:

- a. Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah will recognize all the facilities to the English that were approved earlier by the Mughal Emperor.
- b. Nabab will give compensation to the English for attacking Calcutta and also give back those possessions that were captured from the English employees during the attack.
- c. Nabab will give the English permission to build fort at Calcutta.
- d. The English will be permitted to introduce coins.

The peace treaty of Alinagar was, in fact, a severe infamous treaty because it destroyed the prestige of Nabab Siraj and upheld the strength of the English as a political power. People afterwards lost their faith on Nabab's ability. After this treaty, the enemies of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah gathered under the umbrella of the English conspiracy. Umi Chand, Jagat Sheth, Roy Durlav, Rajballav, Mir Jafar also were able to restore their mental courage to join the conspiracy against Nabab. This way, a plot of the 'Tragedy of Plassey' found its way.

#### ● Causes of the battle of Plassey

The Peace Treaty of Ali Nagar revealed the weakness of Siraj to the English. However, the quick success of Siraj in subduing his rebels made the English anxious. However, Robert Clive decided that the best way to secure the Company's interests in Bengal was to replace Siraj with a new and more pliant Nabab.

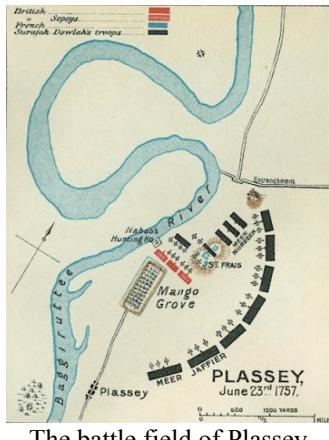
Secondly, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah removed Mir Jafar from the post of Bakhs (chief of army) and Roy Durlov from the post of Dewan (chief of revenue administration) at the beginning of his reign. He also insulted Jagat Sheth in the open court. These three persons were the pivot of the conspiracy against Siraj. They joined the English conspiracy to take a revenge of such insulting. The battle of Plassey was the pre-planned event of that plot. However, the following were the causes behind the battle of Plassey:

1. The dishonor of British company to the New Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah.
2. Violation of Nabab's order and building the fort without prior approval.
3. Disobeying Nabab's orders about trade and commerce.
4. Promise to assist Ghaseti Begum and Shawkat Jang against Siraj.
5. Sheltering Krishnadas at Calcutta.
6. The eighteenth century politics of Bengal.
7. Violation of the conditions of the peace treaty of Alinagar.

### ● The battle of Plassey

After the treaty of Alinagar, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah expected that the English would be obedient. However, they did not show due respect to the treaty. Robert Clive also understood the weakness of Siraj and made a pact with Mir Jafar to oust Nabab from the throne. According to the compromise between Mir Jafar and Robert Clive, Mir Jafar signed for the following conditions:

- i. After becoming the Nabab of Bengal, Mir Jafar will approve all the facilities given earlier to the English by Siraj;
- ii. Mir Jafar will give compensation for the demolition of Fort William by Siraj;
- iii. The new Nabab will also give compensation to the citizens of Calcutta;
- iv. The French will be overthrown from Bengal;
- v. The inhabitants of Calcutta will be governed under the English company and the company will get zamindari from Calcutta to Kulpi in the south;
- vi. The company will be permitted to expand its forts at Dhaka and Qasimbazar;
- vii. The soldiers of the company will protect Nabab Mir Jafar and Nabab will bear the expenditure;
- viii. An English resident will be permitted to stay at Nabab's court and he will be allowed to meet Nabab anytime;
- ix. Nabab Mir Jafar does not build any fort in the south of Hoogli River; etc.



The battle field of Plassey

Robert Clive made a forged document to tame Umi Chand and the select committee of the company of Calcutta and Robert Clive signed this phony document.

Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah also realized that a grand conspiracy was being designed against him. In the meantime, the English occupied the French fort at Chandannagar as a part of the ‘Seven Years of Anglo-French War (1756-1663). The French took shelter at Murshidabad. To subdue the English, Nabab Siraj started correspondence with Bushi, the French general at the Deccan. However, the English heard the news and decided to give Nabab Siraj no more time. Quickly signing a deal of conspiracy with Mir Jafar, Jagat Sheth, Umi Chand, Year Latif, Roy Durlav and Rajballav, Robert Clive declared a war against Siraj accusing him for breaking the treaty of Alinagar.

According to the compromise, Mir Jafar agreed to give the English Company one and a three fourth crore taka for ousting Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah. When the deal was signed, Umi Chand claimed that he will unfold the deal to the Nabab Siraj unless he is given 5% money of the treasury of Murshidabad.



Lord Clive

The cannons, few infantry and some knights were under Mir Madan, Mohonlal, Sinfrey. On the other hand, the English had only 8 cannons, 2200 native soldiers and 800 European artillery. They set their camp at the mango orchard of the village Plassey on June 22, 1757.

In the morning of June 23, 1757 the battle between Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah and the English started. The divisions under Mir Jafar, Roy Durlov and Year Latif remained inoperative. After a couple of years fight, rain poured in torrents and there were also thunders. It lasted for half an hour. The English soldiers covered their cannons with tarpaulin; therefore, their cannons remained active. On the other hand, the cannons of Nabab's side became ineffective due to the rain. However, the divisions of Mohonlal, Mir Madan and Sinfrey fought valiantly. The English army went back foot and took shelter behind the mango orchard. On the eve of the winning, suddenly a shell hit Mir Madan and he died. At this, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah became confused. Mohonlal and Sinfrey continued fighting. Mir Jafar and Ray Durlav were remained indifferent as usual. Nabab called in Mir Jafar for the suggestion. Mir Jafar suggested to retreat for the day. Mohonlal and Sinfrey repeatedly requested the Nabab to continue fighting because the winning was very near. However, the immature Nabab did not pay heed to his loyal generals; he followed the suggestion of a betrayer, Mir Jafar and ordered to stop fighting for

that day. It was a fatal decision. Mohonlal still continued fighting because the situation was in favor of Nabab. But he compelled to retreat for the repeated orders of Nabab.

At night, while the Nabab's soldiers were at rest, Robert Clive attacked the Nabab's camp all on a sudden. Unprepared soldiers of Mohonlal and Sinfrey could not resist the attack. Siraj fled on a fast camel. His demoralized army followed suit. At this skirmish, 500 soldiers of Nabab's side died. On the other hand, 23 soldiers were died and another 49 were injured at the English side.

Nabab returned Murshidabad and distributed huge money to collect soldiers and help. All the relatives and his followers accepted money but nobody came forward to help him. Finding no other way Nabab left Murshidabad and went toward Bhagalpur with his family to collect soldiers to fight back. However, he was caught at Rajmahal in June 30, 1757. He was brought to Murshidabad as an ordinary prisoner in July 2. A short trial was staged at the court of Mir Jafar, the new Nabab of Bengal. Mir Jafar did not issue any punishment. He just ordered to confine Siraj as a royal prisoner. However, on that night (2 July, 1757) Mohammadi Beg killed Siraj with a knife by the order of Miron, the son of Mir Jafar. Thus, the sun of the independent Bengal was set.

### ● Causes of the fall of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah

According to the European historians, Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah himself was responsible for his fall. The Cambridge historian A. C. Lee and others believe that Nabab fought in the battle of Plassey only to loot the treasury of the English East India Company. However, Brijin K. Gupta, Akkhmoy Kumer Moytrey and other Indian writers do not agree with them. They argue that the Cambridge historians want to address Siraj-Ud-Daullah as a villain to uphold the greatness of the English nation. In fact, the battle of Plassey was not a battle at all because the main army of the Nabab did not take part in the fight due to the betrayal of Mir Jafar, Roy Durlav and Year Latif. However, the researchers have found the following reasons behind the fall of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah:

- i. Treachery of Mir Jafar and his collaborators.
- ii. Lack of imprudence of the Nabab.

- iii. Lack of Military skill.
- iv. The moral degradation of the people of Bengal.
- v. Indifference to the British strength.
- vi. Efficiency of Robert Clive

#### ● **Significance of the battle of Plassey**

Though the battle of Plassey was not a decisive battle, it had far reaching impact on the history of Indian sub-continent. However, its significance was not felt in the contemporary Bengal. To the people of then Bengal, it was just a change of a ruler. However, this was the first English win against the princely states on Indian soil. It proved the supremacy of the English company and boosted their prestige. Thereafter, the English company became the king maker in Bengal. Therefore, the English company got a base to fight other powerful rulers of India like Marathas, Mysore etc. and the company got a status of contending power for Indian Empire. After Plassey, the English East India Company virtually monopolized Bengal's trade and commerce. The French was unable to recover their lost position. The Dutch was also defeated. Moreover, the rich revenue that was collected from Bengal helped them throw out the French from India. The battle of Plassey put the British oppression on Bengal, which could not be put off. The battle of Plassey followed the subsequent plunder of Bengal as Bengal was placed at the disposal of the English vast resources. Neither the English nor the subsequent Nababs of Bengal were aware of the consequences of such economic plundering. As a result, only twelve years after the battle of Plassey (in 1770), one third of the population (approximately 10 million) in Bengal were died of famine.

In fact, it paved the way of approximately two hundred years of British rule in India.

### 3.5.4 Mir Jafar



Mir Jafar Ali Khan

After the tragic departure of Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah from the battlefield of Plassey, Robert Clive bowed his head to Mir Jafar addressing him as the new Nabab of Bengal. He, therefore, was the Nabab of Bengal two times: from 1757 to 1760 and again from 1763 to 1765. His full name is Mir Jafar Ali Khan.

Mir Jafar was an Arab by descent and son of Sayed Ahmad Najafi. He came to India as a wanderer like his master Nabab Alibardi Khan and married his sister Shah Khanam. Alibardi raised him to the post of Bakhshi, a position next only to the Nabab himself. However, he was not a grateful person. Soon after the fall of Medinipur in the hand of Maratha invader Raghuji Bhonsle, he entered into a conspiracy with Ataullah (the faujdar of Rajmahal) to overthrow Alivardi. The conspiracy was unearthed and he was dismissed along with his fellow conspirator. After the death of Alibardi Khan, he became ambitious and joined a conspiracy with the English to overthrow Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah. He succeeded to become the Nabab of Bengal by removing Siraj-Ud-Daullah, however, he could not succeed to enjoy the power. The English East India Company seized his power and he became a puppet. People of Bengal uttered his name with the most hatred for his betrayal in the battle of Plassey. Now the name 'Mir Jafar' is synonymous to betrayer.

Mir Jafar thought that the treasury of Murshidabad had huge assets and he could pay the promised money to the English and then he could run his rule with his own desire. However, when he ascended the throne in June 29, 1757, he saw the treasury of Murshidabad was empty. Then he had to sell his personal ornaments and furniture to meet the English demands of 15 million taka. As a result, he became bankrupt and dependent on the company. The company gave him no time for the consolidation of power. In fact, he had to pay a sum of Rs. 17,700,000 as compensation to the company for Sirajuddaula's

attack on Calcutta and the traders of the city. Mir Jafar soon discovered that it was impossible to meet all the demands of the company and its officials. But he was helpless.

Moreover, when the heads of Medinipur, Purnia and Bihar revolted against him, he could not take steps against them due Robert Clive's domination. Then he tried to overcome the English influence by the help of the Dutch. But the Dutch were completely defeated by the English at 'the battle of Bidar' in 1759. When the English company understood that Mir Jafar had nothing left to give them, they removed him from the post of Nabab and set his daughter-in-law, Mir Qasim with a new deal. However, Mir Jafar was again appointed as the Nabab of Bengal after the battle of Baxter in 1763 and lasted for two years.

### **3.5.5Mir Qasim: the battle of Baxter**

Mir Qasim was the daughter-in-law of Mir Jafar. However, he was not as worthless as his father-in-law. He wanted to overcome the British influence and restore the freedom of Bengal. He was a shrewd politician and thus realized that he would have to be solvent economically to overthrow the British domination. That's why he took two steps:

- a. To fulfill the British demands as soon as possible;
- b. To restore the solvency of his treasury.

He also realized that, the British had military supremacy in lower Gangetic areas for their strong naval power. He planned not to allow the British domination at the upper Gongetic areas. Therefore, he transferred his capital from Murshidabad to Mungyer, a hilly area.

He met up all the demands of the English and collected huge amount of money forcefully from the family members of Mir Jafar. He also imposed different taxes on the tenants and punished the arrogant zamindars to collect huge money. However, all his attempts of restoring solvency made the British skeptic. Thus the battle of Baxter became inevitable.

#### **● Causes of the battle of Baxter**

The main cause of the battle of Baxter was the conflict between the desires of Mir Qasim and the English company. Mir Qasim wanted to

re-establish the Nababi of Bengal. On the other hand, the British company wanted to establish their domination in India. Mir Qasim took the following steps to fulfill his desire:

- a. He collected a ‘farman’ from the Mughal Emperor by agreeing to give 26 lacs taka annually as a tribute.
- b. He strongly subdued all the native forces, which were loyal to the British.
- c. He shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Mungyer, and cut moats and built forts around the capital to enhance its safety.
- d. He built a arms factory at Mungyer and trained his army under three European generals.
- e. He withdrew the ‘duty free’ business facility of the English traders and imposed same type of business taxes for all the European companies.

All these attempts revealed that he was preparing to overthrow the British domination from Bengal.

#### ● **The battle of Baxter**

The agent of English fort at Patna, Mr. Ellis marched for Patna city to occupy it as a reply to Nabab’s imposition of business taxes. Mir Qasim reoccupied Patna and overthrew the English from there. As a result, Calcutta Council declared war against him. In 1763 several battles were held between Mir Qasim and the English. Mir Qasim had an army of 20,000 soldiers but they were not skilled enough the European soldiers. On the Other hands, the English had an army of 10,000 Europeans and 400 native soldiers. Mir Qasim was defeated at the battle of Katoa, Gyria and Udaynala. Then the English army marched toward Mungyer, the capital of Mir Qasim under General Adams. Mir Qasim retreated to Oudha with huge assets. He sought help from the Nabab of Oudha and the Mughal Emperor. Both of them sent their army to help Mir Qasim. In the meantime, the English re-appointed Mir Jafar as the Nabab of Bengal in 1763. Mir Jafar withdrew all the steps taken by Mir Qasim against the English and gave them all previous trade facilities.

For two years, Mir Qasim took preparations to launch a final battle against the English. On 22 October 1764 the army of Mir Qasim,

Emperor Shah Alam and the Nabab of Oudha faced the English army at Baxter of Bihar. However, all the three armies were defeated by the British army under Major Hector Munroe. Mir Qasim fled to Delhi and died in 1777 there. The Nabab of Oudha made peace treaty with the English and the Emperor of Delhi took the English side. This way, the last hope of establishing the independence of Bengal was destroyed.

#### ● **The Significance of the battle of Baxter**

Baxter was a decisive battle which proved the British supremacy in India. Historian James Smith said, “Plassey was a cannonade, but Baxter a decisive battle.” In sum, the battle had the following significance:

- a. It ended the reign of Mir Qasim and the independent Nababi era. However, Mir Jafar was re-established as a Nabab for a short time but his powers were curtailed and the English used him to legalize all the facilities they expect.
- b. Oudha became an English dependent state. The English made it a buffer state to protect Bengal from the Maratha attacks.
- c. Kara and Alahabad province of Oudha were snatched from the Nabab of Oudha.
- d. The supremacy of British army was established and thereafter, other areas came under British domination one after another.
- e. Robert Clive got the legal ‘farman’ from the Mughal Emperor as the Dewan of Bangla, Bihar and Orissa with a condition to give the emperor 26 lacs taka annual tribute.
- f. The British monopoly was established over the trade and commerce of Bangla, Bihar and Orissa.

#### **3.6 Arrival of the European Companies in the Indian Sub-continent: British Supremacy**

India had contacts with Europe since time immemorial through land route, which affected both India and Europe culturally and materially. The Europeans came to India for three reasons: Spices, Aromatic materials and Silk. In those days in Europe the aromatic materials were used as an alternative of soap. Spices were needed to make the dry meat and fishes delicious and ‘silk’ was considered as more

aristocratic than woolen or linen cloths. That's why the European traders tried to find out an easy route to India. The trading from Europe by road through the Central Asia was expensive and risky. On the other hand, the Mediterranean Sea was occupied by the Arabian traders. Therefore the European tried to find out an alternative sea route to India. Vasco-da-Gama, a Portuguese was the first European who came to the 'Kalikot port' of India encircling the cape of good hope of Africa. Thereafter, series of European companies came to India. However, only the English East India Company was able to prove their supremacy and established a British colony in India.

### ● The Portuguese



Vasco Da Gama

The Portuguese were known as 'Firingi' in Bengal. After losing the control over Mediterranean trade, they turned to the Indian sub-continent.

Although they had long distance trade

relations with South-East Asia and the west Asian countries, they had no direct contact of maritime trade with India. However, among the Europeans, the Portuguese were the first to establish direct maritime trade link with India. Prince Henry, the Navigator (1398-1460), the ruler of Portugal first took initiative among the European nations. During the regime of King John II, Bartholomew Diaz crossed the Cape of Good Hope. Then Vasco de Gama started his expedition in 1497 during the regime of King Emmanuel and landed on the Indian soil (Calicut) in May 1498. This event opened a new chapter of Indo-European relations.

He was cordially received by Zamorin of Calicut. Vasco de Gama came to India again in 1501 and returned to Portugal in 1503 and by that time they established trading centers at Calicut, Cochin and Cannanore and effectively suppressed the Arab resistance. De Almedia was appointed as the first viceroy in India in 1505 and he initiated the 'Blue Water' policy or the mastery of sea by strong naval

power. In 1509, De Almedia was followed by Albuquerque as the second viceroy and he was in that power till 1515.

Albuquerque laid the foundation of the Portuguese power in India by conquering Goa in 1510, and it became the headquarters of the Portuguese in India. In 1515, he conquered Ormuz; an island in the Persian Gulf. He also built a fort at Cochin with the approval of its ruler. The Portuguese obtained Diu and Bassein in 1534 and in 1538 they conquered Daman. Gradually the Portuguese became an influential power in India. However, their influence declined from the beginning of the 17th century. In the meantime, other European trading companies came to India and the Portuguese lagged behind in competition and left India. Their failure in India was mostly for the influence of European politics.

They failed to survive in India due to various factors like their zeal to convert Indians to Christianity, forcefully married to the Indian women, forcefully arresting Bengali people and selling them to European markets as slaves, pirating and plundering, and the defeat of Portugal by Spain. Subadar Shayesta Khan overthrew them from Chittagong for their untold disturbance.

### ● **The Dutch East India Company**

The Dutch East India Company was established in 1602 by a charter of the Government of Holland. Following the Portuguese, they came to India for spice trade. In 1606, they established their factories at Petapalli and Masulipatnam. As they came to know that India had a large textile market, they established factories at Pulicat in 1610, Cambay in 1620, Surat and Agra in 1621, Hariharapur in 1633, Patna in 1638, Dacca in 1650, Udaiganj in 1651, Chinsura in 1653, Quasim Bazar, Barangore, Balasure and Nagapatnam in 1659-60. They also opened factories in Bengal, at Khankul in 1669 and at Malda in 1676 but both were closed down soon. The Dutch withdrew from Golkonda by 1684.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch also were failed to survive in India due to the influence of mainly European politics. They also were locked in clash with the British Company for gaining supremacy. A

truce was concluded between them in 1619 but it did not last long. By 1795, they were expelled from India totally by the British.

● **The French East India Company**

As a European company, the French entered the eastern trade at last. The French East India Company was established in 1664. In 1668, they established their first factory in Surat and the second at Masulipatnam in 1669. The French obtained Pondicherry in 1673 and they built Chandranagore in 1690-92. In India the rivalry for the major share in the eastern trade started among the French, the British and the Dutch; however, the British smiled in the long run. The European wars between the French and the Dutch; and the British and the French were also extended to India.

The French-Dutch hostility turned to a war in 1690 and again in 1721. Similarly, the French-British hostility also turned to wars in India between 1742 and 1766. The French hopes of establishing their political powers came to an end in 18th century.

The French East India Company was a state controlled organization and from 1723, it was almost wholly controlled by the French government. The superior council consisted of a Governor and five members. The Governor's voice was final. However, the conflicts between the governors and the commanders made the French company weak in implementing decisions in India. Therefore, it could compete with the British in India.

Though they started factories at Masulipatnam, port Novo, and Serampur, their success in trading business was short-lived as their sources were scanty. Finally, they sold their factories to the British and compelled to leave India finally in 1845.

● **The English East India Company**

The English were one of the latest European trading companies in India but they survived to the last. Hearing the successful trade of other European companies in India, 'The English Association of the Merchant Adventurers' was established in 1599. It is widely known as the English East India Company in Bengal. This company obtained a Royal Charter with trade monopoly in the east from Queen Elizabeth on 31 December, 1600. By 1608, the first British factory was established at Surat. By 1619, they established factories at Agra,

Ahmedabad and Broach. They obtained Madras in 1639 and constructed Fort St. George there. They acquired Bombay Island in 1668 and fortified it. Later it was made the Headquarter of the English trade in the west in 1687.

In the east, they established their factories in Orissa at Hariharapur and Balasore in 1633, in 1651 at Hughli. During the declining period of the Mughal Empire, they got permission from the Mughal Emperor to build trade centers in Bengal and also they acquired the Zamindari of Sutanuti, Calcutta and Govindpur in 1698. They took the opportunity of the politics of Bengal and became influential. They successfully managed the Mughal Emperor and got permission to launch duty free trade. As a result, other trading companies could not surpass the volume of their trade. Even the local traders also lagged behind. During European Seven Years' War with the French, they consolidated their power and built Fort William at Calcutta which became the capital of India in the later days. With the conspiracy, they succeeded to defeat Nabab Siraj-Ud-Daullah at the battle of Plassey in 1757. In 1765 the English East India Company successfully defeated Mir Qasim and got the 'farman' of the Mughal Emperor and Lord Clive became the Dewan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. With the plunder and rich revenue of Bengal the English East India Company succeeded to defeat the other contending powers in India and at last they established British colonial rule in India which lasted for 190 years. In 1947 the British left India creating two inborn rival countries—India and Pakistan.

### **3.7 Modern Period: British Rule (1765-1947)**

#### **3.7.1 Rise of British East India Company: Famine of 1770**

After the win in the battle of Baxter in 1765, the English East India Company got the 'Farman' from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II of Delhi which left the responsibility of 'Dwani' (revenue administrator) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on the shoulder of the company. Nabab Mir Qasim was fled to Delhi and died their some years later with extreme poverty. Mir Jafar again became the puppet Nabab and Lord Clive introduced a system of diarchy in Bengal. Robert Clive's diarchy system created serious economic degradation

in Bengal, which resulted in a serious famine in 1770 AD (Bangla 1176). It was mostly a man-made famine, which caused the death of at least 10 million people for starving. In that year, the total population of Bengal was 30 million, which means, one third of the population died by the severe famine.

The regions, in which the famine occurred, included Bihar West Bengal and the present Bangladesh. The famine also extended into Orissa and Jharkhand.

Among the worst affected areas were Birbhum and Murshidabad in Bengal, and Tirhoot, Champaran and Bettiah in Bihar.

The mismanagement of the East India Company was mainly contributed to the famine. As a trading body, the main target of the company was to maximize its



profits. Since it had taxation rights, it tried to obtain the profits from Bengal from land tax as well as trade tax. The Company raised the land tax fivefold what it had been— from 10% to up to 50% of the value of the agricultural products. In the first years, the total land tax income of the company was doubled and most of this revenue drained out of the country. As the famine approached, its height in April 1770, the Company announced that the land tax for the following year was to be increased by a further 10%. This indiscriminate tax collection ruined peoples' purchasing capacity.

The famine occurred for other reasons also. The drought, forced plantation of opium, indigo instead of rice decreased food production and created scarcity of grains. The governmental prohibition of 'hoarding' rice prevented traders and dealers from laying in reserves that in other times would have tied the population over lean periods.

Moreover, in times of famine, the company, as a ruling authority, did not take any step to feed the hungry people. All these together created one of the worst man-made famines of the world in Bengal in 1770 which is known as ‘Chhiattorer Monnontor’.

### **3.7.2 Permanent Settlement, 1789**

The English East India Company wanted to collect as much profit from the revenue as possible. But the steps taken by Lord Warren Hastings before Lord Cornwallis for the purpose was failed and created chaos in the field of revenue. The ‘five yearly’ and ‘one yearly’ revenue system introduced by Warren Hastings was harmful for all—the company, the zamindars and the tenants. Therefore, Lord Cornwallis introduced a permanent revenue system in March 22, 1793 which is known as ‘Permanent Settlement.’

#### **• Aim of the Permanent Settlement**

The aim of introducing Permanent Settlement is multiple. They are as follows:

Firstly, East India Company wants to establish a permanent revenue system so that it might clear data about the yearly income. It will help them make proper plan.

Secondly, if the land-lease contact between the company and zamindars becomes permanent the later will pay attention to land development. If the revenue is fixed, the zamindars will not be able to suppress their tenants for extra or high revenue or other taxes. Therefore, the tenants will pay heed to other works harmoniously under their permanent master.

Thirdly, a permanent revenue system will reduce the bulk of administrative activities of the company. Therefore, the company will get enough time for other administrative works.

Fourthly, the company wanted to create a permanent supporting class which will be a buffer between the British company and the Indian people. This supporting class will help them subdue any popular rebellion.

#### **• Process of Introducing Permanent Settlement**

Lord Cornwallis came from a feudal family. So, he knew about the land and its revenue system. Therefore, at first he collected data of lands and their previous revenue collection for two years. He classified the lands according to their fertility and calculated approximate highest revenue for each category of land. He also consulted with the revenue collectors and took their suggestions about how to retain land valuation and the tenants on their job. This way he analyzed every single matter of land and its revenue. Then he introduced a land lease system for ten years. While introducing, he declared, if the Board of Directors of the company would approve his proposal, he would introduce the system permanently. In September 19, 1792 the Board of Directors of the company approved his proposal. In March 22, 1793 Lord Cornwallis declared the ‘ten years revenue system’ as permanent.

At first, the permanent revenue settlement was introduced in Bangla, Bihar and Orissa. Two years later, it was introduced in Baransi.

### ● Characteristics of Permanent Settlement

The following are some of the characteristics of Permanent Settlement:

1. In this system, the zamindars became the owners of lands and the right to the ownership on land was declared as permanent.
2. Land revenue was fixed. The government will get 89% of the revenue and the zamindar will take the rest 11% of the revenue. If the zamindar could pay the revenue regularly in time, he and his descendants could retain the zamindary hereditarily.
3. The zamindars have to issue ‘Patta’ and ‘Kabuliyat’ in which the size of the land, the amount of revenue for the tenant and for the government were mentioned.
4. This system abolished zamindars administrative power. After that, the maintenance of the law and order situation, security of the area went under control of government agency. However, zamindars might have some limited powers on the local administration, Judiciary and development program.
5. ‘Nazrana’ (tribute), sale fee etc. were abolished.
6. The most significant section of this law is ‘sun-set law’. According to this section, if any zamindar fails to pay the due amount of revenue before the sun-set of the due date, the

contract of the land lease would be cancelled. Then his zamindary was put up for auction.

7. The zamindars could pay his revenue by selling some of his lands also.

### ● The merits and demerits of the Permanent Settlement

The permanent land-lease system had both merits and demerits. They are as follows:

#### Merits

- a. It made the revenue collection clean, timely and disciplined.
- b. It freed the company administration from the gigantic task of fixing revenues every year. As the revenue is fixed and the zamindars could pay their dues even by selling their lands, company got a certain amount of revenue each year. It helped the company composing annual budget and taking development programs.
- c. As the revenue of the particular lands was fixed, the zamindars tended to develop their lands. It raised agricultural production. Therefore, the zamindars could develop local trade and commerce which helped them becoming solvent. As a result, Bengal became a rich and solvent province.
- d. This system had turned the zamindars to a supporting class of the company. Thereafter, the English company was able to crush any rebellion with the help of the zamindars. Sepoy Mutiny was one example.
- e. Zamindars paid attention to land reclamation, therefore, huge amount of ‘fallen lands’ became cultivable lands. As a result, the zamindars’ income raised and land valuation was also increased.
- f. This system increased popularity of the company government among both zamindars and the people.
- g. Permanent Settlement had produced many rich land lords who were renowned for their charitable works.

#### Demerits

- a. In this system, the revenue was fixed by the consultation with the collectors not through survey. As a result, in most cases, the imposed revenue was higher than the reasonable rate. Moreover, the areas of the lands of the zamindars were also not

fixed. It created huge disputes which followed numerous case-filing.

- b. Since the amount of the revenue was very high and was collected strictly following the sun-set law, numerous elite land lords lost their zamindari and became banqurupt. Stock holders and the money lenders of the lower class bought those zamindaries. This way, sun-set law abolished many elite Muslim zaminders and raised Hindu zamindars.
- c. As the land revenue was fixed, the government could not increase the rate although the zamindars could increase their assets by cultivating fallen lands. As a result, the government was deprived of huge land revenues.
- d. Under this land-lease system, the government acknowledged the land ownership for the zamindars, not for the tenants. As a result, the tenants became dependent on the charity of the land lords. The tenants of many oppressive zamindars had to pass their days with the panic of overthrowing.
- e. Cornwallis thought, if the land lords were given the permanent ownership of lands and the revenue was fixed, they'd be eager to develop their lands. However, his dream did not come true. Achieving the permanent ownership of lands, the zamindars let the responsibility of their lands over 'Nayebs' or 'Gomosta' (local names of the employees of zamindars) and they used to lead luxurious lifr at the capital of India. As a result, the tenants had to face untold suppressions by the Nayeps and the Gomostas.

### **3.8 The Anti-British Movements**

The English came to India for trade. However, they took the opportunity of the conflicts of internal politics of Bengal and successfully engaged one group against other and gained legal and illegal privileges from every factions. At one point, they succeeded to defeat the Nabab of Bengal in the battle of Plassey with treachery. Thereafter, they succeeded to defeat the combined armies of the Nabab of Bengal, Nabab of Oudha and the army of the Mughal Emperor. Therefore, Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II gave them 'farman' of the Dewan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. During that

period, there was no sense of patriotism among the people and the aristocrats of the Indian sub-continent. Every contending faction was busy with how to destroy the rival factious groups. As a result, the disciplined English East India Company, with their vast collected wealth, trained soldiers and upgraded weaponry grabbed the territories of India one after another. From 1757 to the next 100 years, they established a company led empire in India. However, they had no experience of ruling since they were merely a trading body. As a result, the people of India fall under a severe anarchy and misrule. Thousands of people died of hunger or other administrative mismanagements. Finding no other way, people of different sections of the society revolted against the English colonial rule in different parts in India. Among them the Santal Rebellion, the Farmers Rebellion, the Fakir-Sannyasi Rebellion, the Sepoy Mutiny, the Farayji Movement, the Wahhabi Movement etc. are the most remarkable. The English company suppressed those rebellions brutally with arms.

#### • **The Santal Rebellion (1855-1856)**

The Santal are large in population among the ethnic minorities in India and Bangladesh. They are hard worker. After the introduction of Permanent Settlement in 1793 the zamindars of Bangla and Bihar hired them from the hill tracts of India and engaged them in cultivation in Birbhum, Vagalpur and Santal Pargana. They gave the santals lease of lands in those areas in condition of developing hilly, bushy fallen lands withlump-sum taxes. The Santals worked hard and made those ‘fallen lands’ fertile. The zamidars were also raised taxes. The more the santals developed lands, the more the taxes got higher. This made serious discontent among the santals.

Rajmahal was a ‘Khash’ land of the government. The British Government encouraged the Santals to come and develop lands in Rajmahal. As a result, thousands of Santals came to reside in ‘Daminko’ (last of mountain ridge) of Rajmahal. They made the barren hilly lands into fertile cultivable land. But the zamindars grabbed those ‘khash’ lands as a lease from the government and turned the lands as ‘Taluk’ of their zamindary. They imposed ‘revenue’ up on the Santal inhabitants. The santals had no idea about the administrative system of the government. They thought the

government would favor them as they gave effort in developing the lands due to the inspiration of the government. But the government did not come forward to protect them from the suppression of the zamindars.

Moreover, the local touts and money lenders entered into Santal society and gave the santals money as ‘loan’ on the condition of high interest so that they might be able to pay the revenue of the zamindars. These tout money lenders used to give the illiterate poor santals ‘lone’ for the repayment of revenue of the zamindars and compel them to work on their lands unpaid.

In santal society, to pay interest in cash was considered as a great sin. However, they become bankrupt by the suppression of both the zamindars and the money lenders.

Sidhu, Kanu, Bhairob and Chand were four santal brothers who wanted to end the suppression. The circulated that they had got a divine order that they might revolt against the oppressive zamindars and the money lenders. They called for unity and mass gathering of the santals. The santals responded to the call of sidhu and 10 thousand of santals gathered at ‘Bhagnadihi’ yard. From there, they gave ultimatum to the British government to end this high tax, suppression of the zamindars and the money lenders. A large number of Hindus of lower caste joined their rebellion. The inspector of ‘dighi’ thana tried to arrest ‘Sidhu’ but was killed. The effort of arresting ‘Sidhu’ made the Santal rebels furious. They started to attack the residences of the zamindars and money lenders; burned and destroyed. They also attacked indigo forts and destroyed them. Gradually the Santal army was build and at one point an army of 60 thousand Santals was organized. The English government sent force under Major Barros from Bhagalpur to subdue the rebellion. But he was defeated at the battle of ‘peer paitee’ on 12 July, 1855. The santal army attacked and looted ‘Pakur Rayal House’ with the help of local cultivators. The santal rebellion spread over entire Murshidabad and Rajmahal.

At last, Lord Dalhousie declared military rule over the area to subdue the rebellion. He gathered huge English force. He collected forces from ‘Danapur’ and other areas. Then he sent the English force against the Santal rebels under the Magistrate of Murshidabad. In

February 1956, two forces fought together at ‘Barhoite’ of Santal Pargana. The Santals were defeated severely. Chand and Bairob died in the battle. Kanu and Sidhu were arrested. Many Santals sacrificed their life heroically. At last, the English succeeded to subdue the santal rebellion. In this battle 2500 santals were died. Many santal villages were destroyed. The Santal dream of establishing ‘Kheoari’ or Independent Santal Kingdom remained unachievable.

#### ● **The Farayji Movement 1818-1906**

Farayji movement is a movement of Islamic reformation. The term ‘Farayji’ comes from the Arabic word ‘Faraj’, which means ‘bound to perform’. Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur introduced this movement and later his son Dudu Mian continued this. While staying at Mecca and Cairo, Shariatullah gathered vast knowledge on Islamic creed and culture. Later in 1820, he returned to his homeland and circulated that in the Muslim society, there are some customs that are against the fundamental faith of Islam. He called for reformation of those practices according to the teaching in holy Quran and Hadith. He wanted to purify the Muslim society according to the fundamental Islam. He said, ‘Since the Indian continent is occupied by the non-Muslim English, it is a country of ‘Daar-ul-Harab’ or enemy country. So, the ‘Jumma Prayer’ at Friday and the prayers of two Eids are not necessary. His followers did not obey the English court as they considered them as non-Islamic Court. He declared, as the owner of the earth is almighty Allah, the zamindars have no right to impose taxes or revenues. He emphasized on the repentance toward Allah and good behavior for the peace and prosperity. He called for rejecting all the activities that are not approved in Islam. He identified the non-approved practices and addressed them as ‘Haram’ (forbidden to perform). These are: Peer Puja (worship to saints), Kabar Puja (worship to grave), and bow head to anybody other than almighty Allah. He also called for rejecting the following non-Islamic prejudices : practicing ‘Chatti’ at birth anniversary, mourning at Muharram, practicing milad, Orash etc, singing songs of Gazi Kalu, Jari Gaan, floating vella (a kind of floating object made of banana or bamboo) or promise something witnessing peer or saints.

Haji Shariatullah's call created inspiration among the farmers of Bengal. Hazi Shariatullah gave 'fatua' (Islamic declaration) that the farmers are the owner of lands as they cultivate, not the zamindars. As a result, the tenants embraced his fellowship in groups. However, the orthodox Muslims and the Hindu-Muslim zamindars opposed him. In 1831 the followers of Shariatullah and his oppositions locked in clash at Ramnagar of Dhaka district. It created serious communal clash. The opportunist Hindu zamindars added fuel to the fire. Haji Shariatullah was expelled from Ramnagar. Then he set up a 'Khankah' at Madaripur and continued his movement.

Haji Shariatullah died in 1880 and then his son Dudu Mian took the lead of the movement. He emphasized on building up strong institution so that he might fight against the oppressive Hindu zamindars and the British Indigo planters. He divided the whole East Bengal into some parts and revived 'Panchayet' system in the villages. He also established distinct judiciary among the 'Farajis'. As a result, the number of cases filed in the govt. court reduced. Dudu Mian also built a strong 'Lathial Bahini' (an army with sticks) to prevent zamindars and indigo planters. He also established a 'brotherhood club' and a fund to help the 'Farajji' people. The tenants stopped paying taxes and revenues to the zamindars obeying the call of Dudu Mian. As a result, the zamindars and indigo planters started to inflict tortures upon the cultivators. They filed a number of cases against Dudu Mian. However they could not able to prove his guilt.

During the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, he was arrested and locked as a royal prisoner. In 1860 he was set free. However, due to heavy physical labor, his health deteriorated and therefore, he died in 1802. After his death, the Farajji movement came to an end for want of efficient leadership.

#### • The Wahhabi Movement

The pioneer of Wahabi movement in the Indian sub-continent was Syed Ahmed of Rayberili. He was born in 1786 and was trained by his master Abdul Aziz on Wahabi line. Syed Ahmed wrote his teachings in his book Siraj-ul-Mustakim.

The term ‘wahhab’ is an Arabic word, which means ‘new birth’ or renaissance. To establish a purified Muslim society according to the teachings of prophet Mohammad (SM) was the aim of Wahabi Movement. The English East India Company snatched away the power of Bengal as well as the Indian sub-continent from the Muslim rulers. That’s why; the Muslims of the Indian Sub-continent did not co-operate or refused to participate in the activities of British government. As a result, they lagged behind for the hundred years. The Wahabi movement wanted to revive the past glory of the Indian Muslims. However, this religious reformation movement turned into a movement against the oppressive rule of the zamindars and the British rule.

Syed Ahmed started the Wahabi Movement from 1820. This year he started to explore different places of India and gave out his teachings. Many practiced Muslims joined his movement. His movement grew stronger. After preaching at Shaharanpur and Rampur, Syed Ahmed went to Jainpur and Gorokkhpur and trained many Muslims. Then he came to Patna and spread his teachings among many elite Muslims. Here Moulavi Wasiyat Ali and Enayet Ali became his disciple. He declared the two Moulana as his ‘Khalifa’ and then came to Calcutta. The Muslims of Calcutta welcomed him cordially.

In 1822, he went to Mecca to observe Haj and returned in 1823. This year Syed Ahmed declared the Indian sub-continent as ‘Daar-ul-Harab’ (enemy country). He called for ‘zihad’ (religious wars) to make the continent a Daar-ul-Islam (a place of Islamist society).

The Calcutta High Court issued a rule that the Wahabi movement is not a religious movement; it is a political movement while giving a judgment of a case of Muslim Wahabi trader Ameer Khan. As a result, the relation between Wahabi activists and the English deteriorated. People of other religions were also took stand against the Wahabis. Syed Ahmed himself took the lead of the movement and declared himself as Imam. He also declared the name of his four ‘Khalifas’ and started to expand his movement all over the continent. He tried to influence over the Yusufiy tribe of Khayerpur and North-West Frontier Province. Gradually, this movement spread to Bangle, Bihar, Mirat etc.



## • Sepoy Mutiny and Indian Act of 1858



Rani Jhansi riding into battle against the British forces

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was the most revolutionary event in the history of British India. The English colonial regime was nearly collapsed by the wave of the mutiny. To the British historians, it was a mutiny. In fact, it was not a mere mutiny to the Indian people; it was a revolutionary event, which could change the English regime unless the zamindars helped the company. However, it ended the company rule and introduced direct British political rule. Although the Sepoy rebellion did not succeed, it paved the way of Hindu-Muslim combined movement against the British oppressive rule.

### • Causes of the rebellion

The Sepoy Mutiny or Sepoy Rebellion was the outburst of many reasons. There were political, economic, social and religious as well as military reasons behind the rebellion.

#### • Political reason

The policy of subsidiary alliance of Lord Wellesley, the doctrine of lapse of Lord Dalhousi, the permanent settlement, imposition of English as an official language instead of Farsi are some of them. All these steps created dissatisfaction among both the Hindu and the Muslim community. The Indian feudal class was very much self-esteem. When Lord Wellesley and Lord Dalhousi implemented their evil ‘subsidiary alliance’ and ‘doctrine of lapse’ policy, many aristocratic family lost their princely states or kingdoms; such as Jhansi, Satara, Sombalpur, Nagpur etc. Therefore, they went against

the English. Due to permanent settlement, many aristocratic Muslim zamindars lost their zamindary and became the enemy of the English. The Muslim community became offended when Farsi was rejected as an official language because this step overthrew the Muslims from the government jobs.

● **Economic reason**

After the battle of Plassey, the English company started to loot as much wealth as they could and smuggled them to Britain. Every employee of the company became rich with the looted money. For an example, Lord Clive was a third class employee in the company. However, after the battle of Plassey, he became one of the richest persons in Britain with the looted money. This 'Plassey Plunder' destroyed the flourishing economy of Bengal. Secondly, after Plassey the English turned India to the market of British commodity. For this, they destroyed the rich textile industries (i.e. silk) and other rich cottage industries of Bengal. As a result, millions of labor became unemployed.

Moreover, the hundred years of company rule produced many usurious money-lenders who made the poor rural people confined to their compound interest. On the other hand, the company imposed heavy taxes over the people. As a result, life became unbearable.

The English indigo planters compelled the farmers to plant indigo instead of rice or other crops. They used to inflict severe torture on the impoverished cultivators. Their suppression became unbearable. Therefore, people wanted to escape from this tyranny.

● **Social and religious reason**

The Company government banned some inhuman social and religious customs for the development of Indian society. Ban of Satidah, early marriage, sacred killing for the worshiping of the God and Goddess, infant killing etc. were some of them. They also introduced some social reforms, such as: introducing widow marriage, western education, women education etc. These were not welcomed by the vast number of impoverished rural people. Moreover, the religious activities of the Christian Missionaries—circulating the teachings of the Bible, setting the criminals free for accepting Christianity, giving money to those who accept Christianity—created social anger. The

charitable works of the missionaries—nursing the sick people, giving medicines to the ill—all these activities were considered as a conspiracy against the native customs and creeds.

#### ● **Military reason**

In the British army, the Indians were the majority. However, none of them could hold any superior rank. Even, the same ranked British soldiers enjoyed much more salary, rations and other facilities than the native soldiers. Moreover, the white soldiers used to show hatred to the native soldiers. The white officers used to misbehave with them. The white soldiers received different increments for different duties for going remote areas. But the Hindu soldiers had no such increments. As a result, there was a general agitation against the white among the native soldiers but they had nothing to do. According to the Hindu faith, they did not want to cross the seas but the British compelled them to cross Kalapani. The British prohibited the Hindus to draw ‘Tilok’ on their forehead. They also prevented the Muslims to wear ‘Pagri’ or to keep beard. All these made them furious.

#### ● **Direct Cause**

The direct cause of the Sepoy Mutiny was the introducing of a special type of cartridge of bullet. In 1856, the British army introduced a new type of Rifle for the soldiers named ‘Enfield’. In this rifle, the bullets were to separate from the cartridge by cutting it with the help of the teeth. A kind of fat was used in the cartridge. Rumors spread among the Hindu and the Muslim soldiers that the fat was mixed with both the fat of pigs and cows. It assumed to the soldiers that the Enfield Rifles were introduced intentionally to pollute their religion. The Hindu and the Muslim soldiers burst into fury.

#### ● **Commencement of the Mutiny**

When the rumor spread among the Hindu-Muslim soldiers of the different barracks of British army, the agitation of the soldiers reached its height. In this situation, on 29 March, 1857 sepoy Mangal Pande revolted openly against the British in Barrackpur camp. Soon the rebellion spread to Mirat, Delhi, Beruli, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Bundelkhand, Rohilkhand, Elahabad, Oudha, Calcutta, Bihar, Dhaka, Jessore, Sylhet, Comilla, Rajshahi, Pabna army barracks. The rebels

declared the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Jafar as their leader. This event created an overwhelming situation in India. In the North India, the rebellion took a devastating turn. In this area Maratha leader Nanabhai, queen of Jhansi Lakhmibai, Moulavi Ahmad Ali, Moulavi Liaqat Ali lead the rebellion. The rebels broke the Jails and set the prisoners free. They looted the government treasury to enhance their strength. In some areas this event created mass upsurge and people gave them support and help. At first, the British authority became appalled. However, with the help of the zamindars and their armies, the British government succeeded to defeat the rebels and restore to situation.

### ● Subduing the Rebellion

Lord Canning was the Governor General of the British government in India. He was very cool. He patiently handled the situation. No sooner had Pangal Pande revolted than he was sentenced to death. Lord Canning ordered his experienced generals Henry Laurence, Hingcok, Collins Campbel to subdue the rebellion brutally. In 23 April, 1857 ninety soldiers of Mirat Barrack refused to accept the cartridge. They were punished for 10 years of confinement. On May 10, the rebel soldiers broke the jail and set them free. The rebels killed the English officers and marched for Delhi. They ascended Bahadur Shah Jafar on the throne of Delhi and declared his as the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. Delhi became the center of the rebellion. Joan Bakhat Khan led the rebels at Delhi. However, the ‘gundas’(gangsters) took the opportunity and started looting. The rebel authority could not control the looting and the law and order situation in Delhi. As a result, the traders and the aristocrats lost faith on the rebels. The rebels became unpopular and they were blamed for the looting. In the meantime, the British army attacked Delhi. Joan Bakht could not resist the attack and left Delhi to Lacknou. In Kanpur, Nanashaheb and Tatia Tupi prevented the English force with much vigor. However, Nanashaheb could not survive to the last and fled to Nepal. In Oudha, the Begum of the Nabab led the rebellion and succeeded to hold Lacknou for a long time. However, the English general Collins Campbell occupied Lacknou at last.

The queen of Jhansi led the rebellion of Jhansi. She took part in several battles. Tatia Tupi also joined her. However, the English

general Huroz defeated Lakmibai at last and grabbed Jhansi. Lakmibai died in the battlefield on June 17, 1857.

This way, the English authority succeeded to defeat the rebels one after another.

#### • **Causes of the failure of the Sepoy Mutiny**

The Sepoy Mutiny was the first powerful united Indian assault against the British power. Within a short time, the rebellion spread all over India. However, for some reasons, it went in vain.

Firstly, the rebellions were confined mainly within the barracks. It was not a political movement; therefore, people of vast areas did not or could not join the effort. As a result, the Company army was able to move freely, take shelter and gather strength outside the barracks. With the help of these free areas, they succeeded to defeat the rebels.

Secondly, the local powers of India did not help the rebels with the unity. Maratha leader Sindha took the English shelter instead of fighting in favor of the rebels. Nizam of Hydrabad showed loyalty to the English. The Mughal Emperor took the lead of the rebellion, however, he was confused. His wives and the sons kept communications with the English secretly. The educated middle class of the Indian society did not extend helping hand to the rebels. The zamindars and the money-lenders were against the rebellion. Therefore, the rebellion did not become fruitful.

Thirdly, the rebellion had no direct aim or destination. It was a sudden outburst against the British oppression. Moreover, no one among the rebel soldiers had the recognition or ability to lead the whole India. Therefore, the scattered rebellions could not be unified. As a result, the English army succeeded to crush the scattered rebel groups.

Fourthly, the rebels were not as efficient as the European soldiers. They lacked discipline and developed war plans. Moreover, they had no sufficient weaponry. As a result, they could not defeat the disciplined English force.

Fifthly, the English army had the telegraph facility. Therefore, they could monitor the movements of the rebels. It helped them make

proper war plans. On the other hand, the rebels could not communicate with the other rebel groups.

### • Results of the Sepoy Mutiny

The results of the Sepoy Mutiny were far reaching.

**Firstly**, after the failure of the revolt, the Indian Muslim community became the first target of the British rage. After that, recruiting the Muslims in the Indian army was prohibited. The Muslims were also neglected in the government jobs and other state affairs. The British believed firmly that the mutiny was the result of a planned conspiracy of the Muslims because the rebels tried to re-establish the Mughal Empire by appointing Bahadur Shah Jafar in the throne of Delhi.

**Secondly**, this mutiny ended the Company rule in India. According to the Government of India Act 1858, direct rule of the British King was imposed over India.

**Thirdly**, the British government dropped the policy of lapse and the policy of subsidiary alliance. They also dropped the policy of expansion.

**Fourthly**, the British Queen Victoria declared a general amnesty to those rebel soldiers who had not killed any British soldiers or British citizens.

**Fifthly**, after the mutiny, the Mughal rule was ended finally and officially. Emperor Bahadur Shah Jafar was deported to Rangoon where he died afterwards. The British authority killed all the successors of the emperor.

**Sixthly**, The European soldiers were increased. Recruiting the Indians in the artillery was banned. The responsibility of border guarding and law enforcing were rested up on the British soldiers.

**Seventhly**, after the mutiny, the British authority realized the danger of the Hindu-Muslim unity. Thereafter, they followed reactionary policy to destroy the communal harmony between the two communities.

### ● The Government of India Act 1858

After the Sepoy Mutiny, the British Prime Minister Lord Palmerstone placed a bill entitled ‘The Government of India Act 1858’ in the British parliament. It was passed in August 2, 1858. This act abolished the East India Company Rule in India. Instead, the direct rule of the British government was imposed here. India became a part of British Empire. Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of the British India. The main provisions of the act are as follows:

- a. From now onwards, the authority of governance of India will be rested upon the British government and it will be conducted in the name of British Queen.
- b. The responsibility and the power of the Court of Directors of the company will be rested upon The Principal Secretary of the State of the Queen. A 15-member Council will assist him. All types of communication between the Government of Britain and the Government of India will be performed through the Principal Secretary of the Queen. The Principal Secretary will have the power to give directions to the Government of India directly without prior consultation with the council.
- c. A Civil Service Commission will be created for India under the Principal Secretary.
- d. The British Government will abide by all the contracts and pacts that were signed between the East India Company and the Princely states.
- e. The British Government will show due honor to the Indian religions and no religious reformation will be imposed.
- f. ‘The doctrine of lapse’ policy of Lord Dalhousi and the policy of territorial expansion was dropped
- g. The Feudal Lords will have the right to take adaptive sons.
- h. The opinions of the Indians will be taken before making and enacting laws.
- i. The Indians will have the freedom of religion. Christianity will not be imposed upon them.
- j. The Princely states will need to take permission before increasing their military strength.

- k. General amnesty was declared for those companies and the kings of the princely states who took part in the rebellions.
- l. It was promised that the Indians will get government employment according to their merit and skill. In this case, the racial discrimination was abolished.

### **3.9 Western Education and Bengal Renaissance**

After the battle of Plassey, the Bengali nation entered into a dark age due to the political anarchy and the division among them. The degradation in the political life transformed into all aspects of life. As a result, economy, religion, literature, culture of the Bengali nation became trackless. Bengali nation gradually became hopeless and led life like a vessel in the ocean having no radar.

The moral structure of the society and the traditional education system collapsed. Innumerable social prejudices entered into the society, which polluted human mind that created an inferior complex among the Bengali people. This tendency continued up to the nineteenth century until some enlightened Bengali scholars lit the light of education again. They were Raja Ram Mohon Roy, Ishwar Chandra Bidyasagar, Raj Narayan Basu, Haji Shariatullah, Nabab Abdul Latif, Sayed Ameer Ali, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. They urged for awakening and accept western education. With their lifelong effort, a sense of Bengali nationalism grew among the educated Bengali middle class, which created a renaissance in Bengal.

The university based education system of the ancient period collapsed in the middle ages. There was no state-declared education policy during this age. Farsi was the state language and it was rich. Both Hindu and Muslim used to learn Farsi to get government jobs.

The Muslims learned their education in Mosque based schools (in the Madrasas or Moqtab). The Hindus generally went to the ‘Toll’s or ‘Chatuspathi’. During the second half of the eighteenth century, this system of education lost its strength and the degradation occurred in the higher education centers due to insufficient government support.

After the battle of Plassey, the Hindu elites and the middle class stepped forward to learn English. The Christian missionaries, the English humanists and reformers helped them. The government

initiative started later because the East India Company did not eager to take risk of replacing Farsi with English at the beginning. It would collapse the administration for the lack of English-known people in the existing bureaucracy. Moreover, all the rules and regulations, the office documents were written in Farsi. Therefore, they took time to create class of an English-known clerks.

The Bengali Hindu first came forward to take western education because the English replaced the Muslim regime; therefore, it opened immense opportunity for the Hindus to fill the vacuum in the administration. The establishment of the Calcutta Court in 1774 created the necessity of English-known people for the regular judicial activities. The need for communication between the English traders and the local people created the need for interpreters, copiers. As a result, the English learning institutions were established by the private initiative. However, the unwillingness of the Muslims to serve under the English and the common hatred toward western education, creed and culture among them gave the Hindus leverage. As a result, the Muslim lagged behind for almost a century. The Muslim scholars of nineteenth century succeeded to break the false sense of Muslim community toward the western education; therefore, they came forward to learn English.

Ram Narayan Misra, who was a clerk of a lawyer of Calcutta Court, first established an English school for educating Bengali youths to help them get the government jobs. However, to introduce western education, thought, philosophy, literature and culture etc. Sherborn established an English school in 'Jorashako' where Prince Darkanath Thakur, Prasannayakumer Thakur, Ram Gopal Ghosh were first introduced to English alphabet. Markin Bowles established another English school at Amratala in Calcutta. However, these schools had no syllabus of English learning except the English school in Dharmatola, established by Mr. Drummond.

William Kerry was the first Christian missionary who established an English school and a press with the help of two other missionaries Mr. Marshman and William Ward at Sreerampur of Calcutta to spread the Christianity. He translated Bible into Bangla language. He also took steps to teach History, Geography, and Science etc. They

followed the ‘Monitorial Method’ of education in which, the learners of the upper class would teach the students of lower class. It was known as ‘Bell Method’. Robert May established 36 schools of this type. The English government gave initially 600 and later 800 per month as a grant to run these schools. David Hare was renowned for spreading western education through English in Bengal. He established Bethun Higher School (Hare School) and Calcutta Book Society in Calcutta.

On 20 January, 1817 Mr. Hide East, the Justice of the Supreme Court and Baydyanath Mukharjee established Calcutta Hindu College, which created an enlightened generation. Soon, Calcutta Presidency College was also established. In 1818 the first Bengali newspaper Samachar Darpan was published. In 1819 the first girls’ school was established in Calcutta. The most renowned Bengali scholars of the nineteenth century were the production of this college. Micael Madhusudan Datta, Bhu Dev Mukherjee, Raj Narayan Basu, Krishna Mohon Banerjee were the students of this college. Though it was named as Hindu College, its teaching method was very progressive and liberal. A report of 1832 mentioned that the teaching of literature, language and science of the Calcutta Hindu College was more developed than other contemporary European colleges. However, the English government still had no plan to educate the Indians with the western education. Raja Ram Mohon Roy continued his movement to make English as the media of education. He demanded to spend government grants for the purpose. The members of the council of the Governor General Lord Meckle and Alexander Duff suggested for the Govt. grants to spread western education through English. In February 2, 1835 he submitted his renowned memorandum in which he criticized the Indian education and literature and urged for western education. Finally, with the utmost effort of William Bentink, Meckle and Raja Ram Mohon Roy, the government took the decision of introducing English as the media of education.

With these efforts western philosophy, thought, literature and science spread among the elite and the middle class of Calcutta. As a result, the newly educated scholars started to question on the age old prejudices of the Indian society and called for reformation. Western education opened the Indian eyes and through this new outlook the

Indian elite and the middle class realized the reasons of their lagging behind. The spread of this outlook is termed as the Bengal Renaissance.

Renaissance means awakening. It means the freedom of thought. It comes through overthrowing the conservative outlook and the stagnant perceptions. The scholars of nineteenth century helped the Bengali people to realize their shortcomings and gave them strength of questioning everything which helped them boldness of accepting the reality against social pressure.

Ram Mohon Roy started to question about the conservative customs of the Hindu society. He blamed them for their faith on many gods and their worships. He called for worshiping single god. For this he established ‘Brahmasamaj’. He also published a newspaper *Tattabodhini*. From 1818, he struggled against the cruel custom *Satiyah*. Lord William Bentinck banned this cruel custom in 1829 with the support of Ram Mohon Roy. He also spoke for the widow marriage.

The Muslim society was the worst affected community in the British regime. He encouraged the Muslims of Bengal to take western education to rebuild their fortune. He established some Madrasas in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong where modern education was also taught along with the religious teachings. In 1863, Abdul Latif established Mohammedan Literary Society in Calcutta. The aim of this society was to exchange views with different religious communities. Sayed Amir Ali established ‘Central National Mohammedan Association’ in 1877 to awaken political consciousness among the Muslims. However, he was a secular scholar. His institution was opened for both the Hindu and the Muslims. These scholars of both Hindu and the Muslim community helped the people to become a modern thinker.

### **3.10 Lord Curzon and the Partition of Bengal (1905)**



Lord Curzon

Among the British rulers in India, Lord Curzon had the most working knowledge about India. Only at the age of 40, he was appointed as the Viceroy of India. Before this appointment, he visited India four times. However, he ruled India for two times.

His first tenure (1899-1904) was considered as the golden age of the British rule. However, he resigned only one year after his second appointment. The most remarkable incident of his time was the Bengal Partition (1905). As a part of his administrative reformation, Lord Curzon declared the partition of Bengal on 19 July, 1905. However, the partition took place on 16 October 1905, two months after Curzon's resignation.

In those days, the areas of the Indian provinces were very big. The Bengal Presidency had an area of 189,000 miles and a population of nearly 80 million. However, the communication system was underdeveloped. Therefore, it was not easy to send proper support from capital to the remote areas. Moreover, it was very hard for a Governor General to monitor the vast areas. For this, he divided Bengal presidency into the following two parts:

- a. West Bengal
- b. East Bengal and Assam

Dhaka was declared as the capital of the new province 'East Bengal and Assam'. 'Curzon Hall' was built in Dhaka to monitor the provincial activities. However, this administrative division was not only for the administrative reasons, a far-reaching political agenda was behind this partition. According to the scholars, for the three reasons, the British divided Bengal:

- a. Administrative
- b. Economic
- c. Political.

The British government thought the partition would be fruitful in the following ways:

- 1) Reducing the burden of government of Bengal and form a separate government for the efficient administration of East Bengal and Assam.
- 2) Promoting the development of Assam by including it under the direct jurisdiction of government which was earlier administered by a Chief Commissioner.
- 3) Integrating the scattered sections of Orissa under a single administrative umbrella.

The main reason behind the partition of Bengal, as per the argument of the British government, was administrative. The Lt. Governor of Bengal appointed by the Govt. in Calcutta (Kolkata) had to administer an area of 189,000 sq miles, and by 1903, the population of the province rose to 78.50 million. The eastern part of Bengal, because of poor communications was left isolated and neglected in favour of west Bengal and Bihar. Its countryside was cut off by numerous rivers and creeks. Robbery and piracy in waterways were rampant and the peasants lived in extreme misery. Till the last decade of 19th century the region was thought to be under-developed and under-governed.

Bengal was the most educated areas among the Indian provinces. The Bengalis were more advanced in education. They were also conscious politically. This Calcutta-centric western-educated class was nationalist in nature and they were always vocal against the British oppression. The British government thought that a united Hindu-Muslim community might be a threat to the British Empire. That's why; the government tactically divided them by dividing the Bengal province. The British prophesied that the impoverished Muslim community would be benefitted in the new province with its capital in Dhaka. However, it is an irony that the Muslims in Bengal were lagged behind in competition to the Hindus. East Bengal was mainly an agrarian country. Revenue was collected mainly from agriculture.

However, most of the zamindaries of Bengal were under Hindu lords and the Muslims were the landless tenants. The lords of these zamindaries used to live in aluxurious life in Calcutta and their ‘Nayeb’ and ‘Gomostas’ used to inflict inhuman suppression and torture over the poor Muslim tenants for the excessive revenues and taxes. The Muslim thought, if they got a new province with the Muslim majority, this oppression would be ended. Then, they could be able to reshape their life. Their issues would be able to join the bureaucracy; the Muslim businessmen would get rid of the Hindu ‘Maroary’ businessmen. In fact, the partition of Bengal ushered a new opportunity before them. That’s why; most of the Muslims supported the partition, although some Muslim secular leaders opposed the idea of the partition.

On the other hand, the Hindu elites saw, if the partitions prevailed, they might lose their zamindary. The Calcutta-centric industries would be destroyed unless they could collect the raw materials from East Bengal. Therefore, they stood firm against the partition. They called the partition as the division of ‘mother’.

The Indian National Congress, the only political organization of India at that time which was mainly composed of the Hindu elites considered the decision of the partition as the British policy of ‘divide and rule’. They declared that the partition of Bengal was a conspiracy against the Hindu-Muslim age-old communal harmony. They called for a strong movement demanding for the withdrawal of the decision. Rabindranath Tagore (Thakur) wrote verses to raise patriotism among the Bengalis. He wrote some famous verses:

‘Banglar Maati, Banglar jol...  
Punno Houk, punno houk...’ or;  
‘Amar Sonar Bangla  
Ami Tumay Valobasi...’, etc. (in 1915 AD)

He started a function named ‘Rakhi Bandhan’ as a symbol of the eternal friendship of the Hindu-Muslim community. At one moment, he rejected his NobePrize (1913) for the cause of the Bengal partition. At first, many progressive Muslims joined the ‘withdrawal movement of the partition of Bengal’. However, as days passed by, many Hindu customs were inserted into the movement and the Muslims realized

that it might have been for the interest of the Hindu community. Therefore, they withdraw their support from the movement.

The movement against the partition of Bengal took a devastating turn, when lord Carzon commented on the nationalist leaders of Bengal by saying, ‘They might not burn the Ganges’. However, at one point he became disappointed at the agitation of the people. He resigned from his post in August 1905.

The Congress gave a call for agitation. ‘Vande Mataram’ or ‘I bow to thee, Mother-land’ became the slogan of the time. Soon, the agitation against partition assumed the shape of a national movement which became famous in history as the Swadeshi Movement.

However, according to the suggestion of the Governor-General-in-Council, King George V at his Coronation Darbar in Delhi on 11 December 1911 announced the revocation of the Partition of Bengal.

### **3.11 Swadeshi and Boycott Movement**

Swadeshi movement was the most powerful anti-british movement, which shook the foundation of the British government in India. When the Government announced partition of Bengal in July 19, 1905 ignoring a loud public opinion against the partition proposal, protest meetings were held in small towns all over Bengal within days.

Then series of meetings were held in different parts of India condemning the decision. At point, the leaders pledged to boycott foreign goods. This included boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of foreign-made salt or sugar, refusal by priests to ritualize marriages involving exchange of foreign goods, refusal by washermen to wash foreign clothes.

On August 7, 1905, with the passage of Boycott Resolution in a massive meeting held in the Calcutta Town hall, the formal proclamation of Swadeshi Movement was made. After this, the leaders dispersed to other parts of Bengal to propagate the message of boycott of Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt.

October 16, 1905, the day the partition formally came into force, was observed as a day of mourning throughout Bengal. People fasted, bathed in the Ganga and walked barefoot in processions singing Bande Mataram.

Later in the day, Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose addressed huge gatherings (perhaps the largest till then under the nationalist banner). Within a few hours of the meeting, Rs 50,000 were raised for the movement.

Soon, the movement spread to other parts of the country—in Poona and Bombay under Tilak, in Punjab under Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, in Delhi under Syed Haider Raza, and the Madras under Chidambaram Pillai.

The Indian National Congress, meeting in 1905 under the presidentship of Gokhale, resolved to:

- (i) condemn the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and
- ii) support the anti- partition and Swadeshi Movement of Bengal.

After 1905, the extremists acquired a dominant influence over the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. There were three reasons for this:

- a. The Moderate-led movement had failed to yield results.
- b. The divisive tactics of the Governments of both the Bengals had embittered the nationalists; and
- c. The Government had resorted to suppressive measures.

Soon many ‘somities’ (organizations) were formed to continue the movements. *Swadeshi Bandhab Samiti* of Ashwini Kumar Dutta (in Barisal) was one of them. It became a very popular organization and succeeded to create huge mass mobilization.

The Swadeshi activists rejected western education and took steps to uphold native education.

They also chalked out programs of swadeshi or national education. Bengal National College, inspired by Tagore’s Shantiniketan, was set up with Aurobindo Ghosh as its principal. Soon national school and colleges sprang up in various parts of the country. On August 15, 1906, the National Council of Education was set up to organize a system of education—literary, scientific and technical—on national lines and under national control.

Along with the educational institutions, they established swadeshi textile mills, soap and match factories, tanneries, banks, insurance companies, shops etc.

At one point the Swadeshi movement turned into a mass movement. Students came out in large numbers to propagate and practise swadeshi, and to take a lead in organizing picketing of shops selling foreign goods.

Women, who were traditionally home-centred, especially those of the urban middle classes, took active part in processions and picketing.

Some of the Muslims participated—Barrister Abdul Rasul, Liaqat Hussain, Guzanvi, Maulana Azad—but most of the upper and middle class Muslims stayed away or, led by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, supported the partition on the plea that it would give them a Muslim-majority East Bengal. The movement was also not able to garner support of the Muslims, especially the Muslim peasantry.

### 3.12 The Indian National Congress: (INC), 1885



First meeting of Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress was a major outcome of some previous initiative for awakening national consciousness and

demand for political rights. It's the first all-India political organization of British India. On 28 December 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay, with 72 delegates in attendance. Allan Octavian Hume, an ex-British bureaucrat, assumed office as the General Secretary, and Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee of Calcutta was elected President.

#### ● Background

In 1883, the member of legal affairs of the council of Viceroy C.P. Elbert placed a bill which proposed for the right of the Indian Justices in all the presidency cities to try the Europeans. It was welcomed by the Indians, but the Europeans opposed the bill and organized strong agitation against the bill. As a result the government of India amended the bill which shocked the Indians. The aristocrat and educated Indians felt that they were insulted by the amendment. They

realized that they need an all India organization to protect their rights. In 1883, under the leadership of Surendranath Banerji and Anand Mohan Basu, the educated Hindus from all the parts of India gathered at the Ilbert Hall in Calcutta and expressed their dissatisfaction. The British government of India also realized that there might be a system to release the agitation of the Indian mind. The Indian National Congress was the outcome of the realization of two sides

Before establishing Indian National Congress, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose established the Indian Association. It actively attempted to form a strong public opinion against the unjust policies of the British Government. It opposed the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton. It also opposed the reduction of the qualifying age for appearing in the Indian Civil Service Examination from twenty-one to nineteen.

With a view of bringing representatives from all over India to a common platform, the Indian Association organised All-India National Conferences twice in 1883 and 1885, which led to the formation of Indian National Congress as a national forum. Allan Octavian Hume, a retired I.C.S. officer was instrumental in the formation of Indian National Congress. His aim was to form such an organization which might work as the model of the opposition party of Britain. He met Lord Dufferin, the then Governor-General of India and succeeded to convince him that, for the lasting of the British government, the increasing distrust among the native people should be removed. Therefore, he decided to form an organization which might function as a 'safety valve' to release agitation of Indian mind.

Hume invited eminent Indians from different parts of the country to meet at Poona from 25th to 28th December 1885. But the venue of the meeting was shifted to Bombay as Poona became infected with Cholera.

The first session of the All India Congress began on 28th December 1885 at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College. Eminent barrister of Calcutta, Mr. Woomesh Chandra Banerjee presided over it. Seventy two invited delegates from different parts of India assembled in this first session. Mr. Hume was elected as the first general secretary of the Indian National Congress. Nine resolutions were passed in this first session.

### • Objectives of INC

In the first congress four objectives were declared. They were:

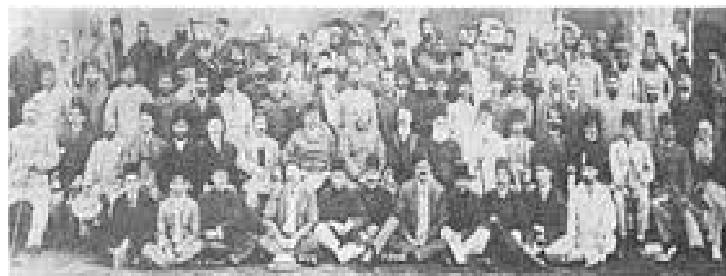
- a. To create communication and friendship among all the volunteers of the country.
- b. To remove the national-territorial-racial and religious meanness and create a congenial atmosphere of national unity.
- c. To find out solutions of different challenges with the peaceful discussions among the educated societies.
- d. To fix the manifestos of the political development for the next year.

Initially it was humble in manner, however, with its birth, the struggle for India's liberation was started in an organised manner. Mahatma Gandhi subsequently 'made it a mass organisation from a class organisation of few urban educated middle class people. In the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, Congress became a pivotal participant in the Indian independence movement, with over 15 million members and over 70 million participants in its opposition to British colonial rule in India.

Initially, few Muslim progressive Muslim leaders joined the Congress. However, when it assumed that the party activities were against the Muslim interests, they left the party and prohibited the Muslims to join it. Sir Sayed Ahmed was one of them.

At first, the Congress leaders were mainly moderate. Gradually, it took the way of struggle against the government to achieve the demands. At one point, it became the most powerful opposition party in India.

### **3.13 Muslim League (1906)**



The First Meeting of Muslim League

The Muslim League was the sole political organization of Muslims in the British India. Initially, the Muslim leaders joined the Indian Nation Congress since it called for all India unity against the British. However, the activities of the Congress, especially, in the context of the partition of Bengal and Swadesi Movement, the Indian Muslims felt disappointed. Then the Muslim leaders felt that they also need a separate political organization for the safeguard of the Muslim interests. As a result, a Muslim political organization named 'All India Muslim League' was formed in 1906 in Dhaka.

#### **• Formation**

The formation of All India Muslim League was the result of Sir Syed Ahmed and some other Muslim scholars' separatist thinking. In 1867, a strong debate on Hindi-versus Urdu occurred. The Hindus organized some festivals and functions such as the Hindu Mela of Naba Gopal Mitra, The Shivaji Mela, establishment of 'Go Jabai Niberan Somiti' and the prohibition of the butchering of cows all over the North India etc. created anxiousness among the Muslim community in India. The Muslim leaders became worried about the backwardness of the Muslims in the area of trade and commerce, bureaucracy and other govt. services. The government of United Province declared to use 'Devnagori letter' instead of 'Urdu' letters in some government documents in 1900. As a result, the Muslims of the United Province burst into agitation. In response to this govt. decision, the Muslim leaders organized a conference in Lucknow in August 18, 1900. There a committee named 'Urdu Preservin Committee' was formed under Mohsin Ul Mulk, the Secretary

General of Aligarh College. Again in October, 1901 the Muslim representatives gathered another congress in Lucknow and took a decision to form a political organization for the safeguarding of the Muslim interests.

In 1903 a Hindu-Muslim communal agitation occurred in the United Province and the leaders who gathered in a meeting in Shaharanpur demanded for the establishment of a Muslim political organization. In 1905, Sir Salimullah, Nabab Syed Ali Chowdhury felt the absence of such organization. In July, 1906 a Muslim delegate under the leadership of Mohsin ul Mulk met Lord Minto and expressed their desire against the Congress. In October 1, 1906 a 35-membered Muslim delegate met the Viceroy under the leadership of Prince Aga Khan at Simla which is renowned as 'Simla Deputation'. In this conference, all the delegates discussed for a separate Muslim Political organizations. Sir Salimullah, proposed to form a political organization named 'All India Muslim Confederacy.'

Finally, on December 30, 1906, Mohammedan Educational Conference' was held where 'All India Muslim League' was formed. The first meeting of this proposed entity, named the All India Muslim League happened in Karachi on December 20th, 1907.

### **Objectives**

Initially, three objectives were fixed as the goal of the organization. They were:

- a. To protect Muslim interests,
- b. To counter Congress influences,
- c. To support the British administration.

The greatest achievement of Muslim League was the achievement of 'Pakistan'. Again, it is the great shame for the political party that it imposed colonial suppression to its larger followers in East Pakisan, which lead to a independence movement that caused more than 3 million people death and the dismemberment of Pakistan.

### **• Lahore Proposal, 1940**

Lahore Resolution had been the pioneering step of the Muslim League towards the creation of Pakistan. Also known as Pakistan Resolution, the Muslim League adopted a formal resolution in the

three day session held from 22-24th March 1940 regarding their claim for a separate state with Muslim majority.

### ● **Background**

With the onset of the Second World War and forcible entry of India in the war, the sense of insecurity on the part of the Muslims was increased. The League heavily criticised the British government as well as the Indian National Congress.

Jinnah was more concerned by the results of general elections of 1937 elections where the league failed immensely in all the Muslim majority areas. With this background Jinnah's main concern was to secure the interest of the Muslim community for the future.

Within this session Muhammad Ali Jinnah propounded his famous Two Nation Theory in which he claimed the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate entities and that it was a mistake to assume that Muslims were a minority; rather they were a nation by any definition. He further claimed that the Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither intermarry nor interdine. As such it was viable that these two communities get separated and form two nations. It was rather not sensible to put these communities under one political roof. This formed the base of the new nation called Pakistan which continued till the end.

The Lahore Resolution was then placed in the general session of Muslim league by Ser-E-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Hoque clearly stating the causes for the demand for a separate state. Immediately it was supported by the heads of Panjab, North Western Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan. The formal resolution for Pakistan was first passed by the Sindh Assembly. The Lahore formally came into existence on 23rd March 1940 and it was formed the constitution of Muslim league from 1941 which finally took its formal shape in the form of Pakistan on 14th August 1947.

## **The text of Lahore Proposal**

### **The Lahore Resolution March 23, 1940 - Lahore**

“While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 17<sup>th</sup>& 18<sup>th</sup> of September and 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1939, and the 3rd of February, 1940 on the constitutional issue, this session of the All India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of federation embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 is totally unsuited to, and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

It further records its emphatic view that while the declaration dated the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 1939 made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is reassuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Government of India Act, 1935, is based will be reconsidered in consultation with various parties, interests and communities in India, Muslims in India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered de novo and that no revised plan would be acceptable to Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of (British) India should be grouped to constitute ‘independent states’ in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.

That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Muslims are in a minority adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall

be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

The Session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defense, external affairs, communications, customs, and such other matters as may be necessary.”

The Lahor Proposal afterwards turned into Pakistan Proposal. It created a bloody communal clash between the Hindu and the Muslim community in India. At Last, the British government decided to leave India dividing it into two dominions: Dominion of India and Pakistan. Pakistan got its independence on 14 August, 1947 and India on the following day.

# **Chapter- Four**

## **Emergence of Bangladesh**

### **Objectives**

This chapter aims at giving the learners a clear picture of our national struggle. The main purpose is to focus on the Pakistani suction and disparities toward the Bengali people and how the Bengali people tore the chains of Pakistani oppressors and achieved Bangladesh.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Language Movement, Political, Economic and Administrative Conditions of East Bengal, Rise of Bengali Nationalism, Election of 1954 and Victory of the United Front, Rise of Military Dictator Ayub Khan: EBDO, PODO, Basic Democracy and its Effects, Education Movement of 1962, Revival of Political Parties and Democratic Movement, Indo-Pak War in 1965 and the Condition of East Pakistan, Bangabandhu and Six Point Movement, Agartala Case and Trial of Sheikh Mujib and Others, Eleven Point Movement and Mass Upsurge in 1969, Fall of Ayub Khan, Rise of Yahya Khan: LFO, Election of 1970 and its Significance, Economic Background Towards Independence, Disparity in Foreign Aid Distribution, Disparity in Export- Import Sector, Disparity in Five-Year Development Program, Disparity in Civil Services, Disparity in Military Service, Disparity in Military Expenditure, Disparity in Internal Trade and Commerce, Disparity in Education Sector, Denial of Power Transfer by Yahya Khan, 7-March Speech and Non-cooperation Movement, Operation Searchlight and Declaration of Independence, The Spontaneous Early Resistance, Formation of Mujibnagar Government and the Liberation War, Role of India towards the Liberation War, Role of China towards the Liberation War, Role of the USSR towards the Liberation War, Role of the USA towards the Liberation War, Role of the UNO.

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will be enriched with the in-depth knowledge of the liberation movement and the liberation war of Bangladesh. They will also know the friends and foes of Bangladesh.

## **Chapter-Four**

### **Emergence of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh came into being through a nine month bloody battles. However, prior to that, it had to pass a long slippery path of struggle. Before the takeover of the English East India Company, Bengal was the richest province in the Mughal Empire. During the two century long suppression, oppression and suction of the British, all its glorious past had been destroyed; Bengal became the most under developed region. However, the Bengali people contributed mostly to overthrow the British tyranny but they found nothing but a heart-rending division of their motherland. In 1947 they were included to Pakistan, a region approximately 1200 miles away. There were no cultural, economic and social relations with the region except the religion. Moreover, the West Pakistanis did not recognize Bengali Muslims as the pure Muslims. Therefore, the Bengalis were to face suppression, oppression and suction. However, this time they were conscious enough and protested every single disparity. The West Pakistani rulers inflicted inhuman torture over the Bengali people, but could not subdue the desire of the freedom loving people. In this chapter, we'll try to show how the people of Bangladesh achieve their independence.

#### **Cultural, Political and Economic Background- Towards Independence(1947-1971)**

Bengal became the most under developed area in the British India. When the capital of India was shifted from Calcutta to the New Delhi as a result of the annulment of the decision of the partition of Bengal in 1911, the Bengali leaders were cornered in all India politics. Thereafter, the Urdu-spoken Muslim league leaders grabbed the political power in Bengal when the Basu-Suhrawardy proposal was rejected. As a result, the leaders of the progressive faction were forcedly ignored in the domestic politics in Bengal after the emergence of Pakistan. Those, who were in touch with the power, gave up the national interests shamelessly to materialize their personal agenda. That's why; the people of Bengal had to achieve their rights by pouring bloods. In fact, when Pakistan was achieved, the Bengali people were lagged behind politically, economically and socially.

## **Language Movement**

### **4.1 Background: Political, Economic and Administrative Conditions of East Bengal**

Language Movement occurred to resist the blueprint of the West Pakistanis to make Bengalis a cripple nation. That's why; they wanted to impose Urdu over Bangla. The Bengali scholars realized the conspiracy and call the mass people to take part in the movement. People also realized the conspiracy and took part in thousands. However, the language movement was not only for the cause of language, the disparities in all aspects of life created a combined hatred to the West Pakistani rulers. Let us see the disparities in some fields:

#### **4.1.1 Disparities in Politics**

From the ancient times, the political culture of Bengal was very much different from the other regions of India. Before the Christian era, Alexander came to India, conquered all its territory, however, he dare not to invade Bengal. Later, this region was renowned as the 'Balgukpur' (the city of revolt). At the beginning of the Mughal period, some independent feudal lords named 'Boro Bhuiyan' ruled the area quite independently. However, during the Mughal rule it became a subah (province) of the empire. At the later part of the Mughal rule, it was ruled by the independent Nababs. After the battle of Plassey, the English grabbed the power of Bengal and started to plunder the economy of Bengal. In fact, the drainage of wealth in the British period made Bengal a skeleton. During the 190 years of the British rule, Bengal became the most underdeveloped area.

At the end of the British rule, the Bengali leaders urged the British to leave a united Bengal as they got it during their inauguration in the eighteenth century. The Basu-Suhrawardy proposal was sketched an undivided independent Bengal. However, the artificial communal riot that was created by the politicians extinguished the dream of united Bengal. The Muslim people of Bengal joined the Pakistan Movement in the hope that they will be able to enjoy a suction-free life; a life that they cherished for long. However, their dreams did not come true. After the emergence of Pakistan, Bengal became its eastern province.

Name	Title
Frederik Burn	Governor
Khawaja Nazim Uddin	Prime Minister, Ministry of Home, Planning, Justice and Registration
Nurul Amin	Ministry of Civil Supply, Commerce, Labor and Industry
Abdul Hamid	Ministry of Education
Syed Mohammad Afzal	Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperative and Relief
Hasan Ali	Ministry of Communication, Infrastructure and Water
Hamidul Hoq Chowdhury	Ministry of Revenue and Finance
M. Habibullah Bahar Chowdhury	Ministry of Health, Local Govt.
Mafijuddin Ahmed	-
Abdul Karim	Speaker
Nazmul Huda	Deputy Speaker

On 5 August, 1947 Khawaja Nazim Uddin was elected as the leader of the Muslim League parliamentary board by defeating Suhrawardy in a meeting by 75-39 votes. An 11-member provincial cabinet headed by Khawaja Nazim Uddin was formed in East Bengal on 14 August, 1947. The cabinet was as follows:

### **First Cabinet of East Bengal, 1947**

The cabinet of the central government of Pakistan was as follows:

Name	Title
Mohammad Ali Jinnah	Governor General
Liyakat Ali Khan	Prime Minister
I. I. Chundrigarh	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Golam Mohammad	Ministry of Finance
Sardar Abdur Rab Nister	Ministry of Communication
Raja Gaznafar Ali Khan	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
Jogendra Mandal	Ministry of Law and Infrastructure
Fazlur Rahman	Ministry of Home and Education
Sir Mohammad Jafrullah	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Moulavi Tamij Uddin Khan	Speaker

It is worth mentioning here that all of them were from Nazimuddin group, the followers of Suhrawardy and A. K. Fazlul Hoq were

rejected. The East Pakistan held the majority of population (more than 56% of the total population of Pakistan but they had no parity with the West. The politics of Pakistan was dominated by the civil and military bureaucracy from the very beginning. As there were few Bengali representatives in the then bureaucracy, they lagged behind. Moreover, the popular leaders of East Pakistan were branded as the Indian collaborators as they were non-communal in practice and vocal for independent undivided Bengal.

During 1947-1955, one out of four Governor General was from Bengalis, however, he also was Urdu speaking person. If the distribution of power was done as per the ratio of population, the Bengalis would get benefitted because they were the majority. That's why; the West Pakistani authority invented an unusual formula of 'one unit theory'. However, the Bengalis never enjoyed power whether they hold the position of the president or the prime minister. When Khwaja Nazim Uddin, Suhrawardy or A. K. Fazlul Hoq became the prime minister of Pakistan, they were suspended through indoor conspiracy. Moreover, when the Bengalis were elected as the prime ministers, the state power was seized by the governor General of Pakistan. Again, when any Bengali became the governor general, the state power went in the hand of West Pakistani prime minister. Khawaja Nazim Uddin became the Governor General of Pakistan after the death of Jinnah. Then the power was exercised by the Prime Minister Liyakat Ali Khan. Again, when Khawaja Nazim Uddin became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the power was transferred to Panjabi Governor General Golam Mohammad. So, Khawaja Nazim Uddin never enjoyed the actual power as a prime minister or as a Governor General although he was Urdu speaking person and always loyal to the West Pakistani interest groups. His label of Bengali gave him nothing. This was because of

#### **4.1.2 Disparities in economy**

At the beginning of Pakistan, the economic condition of the general people of East Pakistan was severe. They were very poor. Most of them were peasants. They became impoverished during the Calcutta-centric Hindu zamindary rule. As the literacy rate was very low, there was no strong middle class. They joined the anti-British movement, because they were convinced that their condition would be developed

within the Muslim Pakistan. On the other hand, the people of West Pakistan were comparatively solvent. As a result, it is seen that from the beginning, there was a disparity between the two wings of Pakistan.

However, during 1947-55 years, the central government of Pakistan spent 90% of national asset in West Pakistan. If we analyze the data of national spending, it reveals that it was a pre-planned West Pakistani policy that they wanted to make East Pakistan as their colony to suck and build West Pakistan. The capital of Pakistan, all the head Quarters of civil and military administration were set up in West Pakistan. The central bank was set up in West Pakistan. Even, if anybody wanted to get a simple trade license, he might have to go to Korachi, Rawalpindi or Islamabad. East Pakistan produced huge amount of jute and paper. However, it was to send to West Pakistan first for the pricing and the release order. As result, the West Pakistanis could buy the product comparatively with low cost. Service was also scarce for the Bengalis as the bureaucracy was being dominated mainly by Urdu speaking officers. Bengalis had little opportunity to expand trade and commerce as there was little national spending here for infrastructure development or industrial development. The West Pakistanis wanted to make East Pakistan as their market and the supplier of raw materials. During the first Fifth Year Plan (1950-55), 1,129 crore Rupee was allocated for West Pakistan and only 524 crore Rupee was allocated for the East. However, only a few portion of allocated money was disbursed for the East Pakistan. However, during this time, East Pakistan earned a lion's share of export but got only a loaf of the share. Most of the money was spent to the development of West Pakistan. Even, the allocated money for the investment in the capital was also spent in West Pakistan, especially in military purposes. There were so many data available now, which reveal that severe economic disparity was imposed upon the East Pakistan. Some of the data is mentioned in the following discussions.

#### **4.1.3 Disparities in the administration**

Pakistan inherited a bureaucracy along with its emergence. From the beginning, this bureaucracy used to dominate and monitor all the activities of the state: from law enforcing activities to the

development program. It is a matter of grief that the participation of the Bengali officers were very few in the bureaucracy as they were very impoverished having low literacy rate. In 1947, 15 ICS officers joined the Pakistan bureaucracy among them only four were Bengalis. Moreover, as the capital was build in Karachi, all the government posts were grabbed by the West Pakistani people, Bengalis lagged behind. Bengalis did not get chance because they had to cross 1200 miles to take part in the competitive exams. Until the recognition of Bengal as the state language in 1956, no Bengalis could find ease in the govt. services. In 1956, the number of the employees of the central government was 42,000 among which Bengalis were only 2900. However, the latter held mostly the lower posts. During 1955-65, the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the secretaries of the Ministry of Establishment, Airlines, and all other secretaries were West Pakistanis. During 1958-68 years, 790 junior grade govt. officers were recruited; among them only 120 were Bengalis. During 1960-69, 14 military officers were appointed in the civil administrations and they were all from West Pakistan. After the emergence of Pakistan, 810 officers were recruited in the military department from East Pakistan where as thousands of West Pakistanis were recruited there. Moreover, if any officers were appointed in the military, they were given a posting in the remote areas of West Pakistan where they had to stay years after years. That's why; the meritorious Bengalis were reluctant to join the army. This further decrease the number of Bengali soldiers in the army.

#### **4.2 Major events of Language Movement**

Language Movement of Bangladesh is the mother of all the movements during the Pakistan era in Bengal. It's the source of inspiration because through this movement the Bengali nation realized its identity.

The creator of Pakistan wanted to make a nation. But they did not realize that nation cannot be created, it evolves. Moreover, they considered religion as the only strong bond and considered it as sufficient enough to transform the people into a nation. They did not take into account the linguistic and cultural diversity between these two far-flung wings .The language of the people of eastern wing of Pakistan, who were the majority, was Bangla. It had a rich tradition of

literature of over a thousand years. The Bengalis also had a highly developed culture that had little in common with the culture of the people of western wing of Pakistan. When in 1952 the central leaders and the Urdu-speaking intellectuals of Pakistan declared that ‘Urdu and Urdu alone shall be the state language of Pakistan’, the people of East Pakistan underwent an uprising known later as the Language Movement of 1952.



The demand of ‘Bangla’ as one of the state languages of Pakistan was sensible because it was spoken by the majority of the population. During the language movement the percentage of the ‘different language speaking people’ in Pakistan was as follows:

Language	Percentage
Bangla	56.40%
Punjabi	28.55%
Pashtu	5.47%
Urdu	3.27%
Beluch	1.29%
English	0.02%
Others	1.52

Language movement has two phases:

First phase: movements in 1947-48

Second phase: movements in 1952

#### 4.2.1 First phase of Language Movement: 1947-48

In this phase the question of language turned to agitation from debate. In fact, the debate on the state language was an old issue which was enrooted in the last part of the British rule. When it became clear that the British might quit India, a question on the future language of Pakistan arose during the 1940s. In July 1947, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University

put forward a proposal pleading to make Urdu the only state language of Pakistan as Hindi was going to be the only state language of India. This was promptly protested by Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, who analyzed the issue elaborately in an essay entitled ‘Pakistaner Bhasha Samasya’, published in *the Daily Azad* on 29 July, 1947. The controversy regarding state language thus went on and the new state of Pakistan came into existence on 14 August 1947 before any concrete decision was made on state language issue.

However, the new bureaucracy of Pakistan started to issue post cards, postal envelopes, money order forms in only English and Urdu languages which created suspicion among the Bengali scholars about, the motives of the Pakistani authority. Here and there in East Bengal sporadic discussions were going on. In November 27, 1947, a resolution was passed in the ‘All Pakistan Education Conference’ in Karach, which advocated ‘Urdu’ as the sole language of Pakistan. The concerned people at Dhaka burst into a protest. The Father of the Pakistan nation, Governor General and the President of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah was present there. When the news of the resolution reached in Dhaka, the students and the scholars burst in discontent and organized furious processions in the city.

In protest of this tendency some social, literary and political organizations were formed. Among them, Tamuddun Mazlis, Gono Azadi League, Jubo League, East Bengal Muslim Chhatra League were prominent. During this time, ‘Rastra Bhasa Sangram Parisod’ was formed under the leadership of Nurul Hoq Bhuiyan, Professor of the Department of Chemistry, Dhaka University.

A booklet entitled ‘Pakistaner Rastrabhasha-Bangla Na Urdu?’ (State Language of Pakistan-Bengali or Urdu?) was published on 15 September, 1947 by Tamaddun Majlis, in which three articles of Prof Qazi Motahar Hossain, Abul Mansur Ahmad, and Prof Abul Quasem. However, the government of East Bengal started to give the resolution in effect and the public service commission removed Bangla from the approved subjects, currency notes and from the stamps. In December 8, 1947 a great meeting was held in Dhaka demanding ‘Bangla’ as the state language. Students of Dhaka University, Dhaka College, Eden College and from other educational

institutions brought out big processions demanding ‘Bangla’ as a state language. The prominent Bengali scholars wrote articles in the newspapers analyzing the perceived blueprints behind rejecting ‘Bangla’ from the list of the state language of Pakistan.

On 23 February, 1948, the member of National Assembly of Pakistan Dhirendranath Datta placed an amendment bill in the parliament, which demanded the right to approve Bangla along with the Urdu and English in the government offices and a right to speak in Bangla in the parliament. Premhori Barman, Bhupendra Kumar Datt and Srish Chandra Chatterjee welcomed the proposal as it was the reflection of the popular opinion of East Bengal. However, all the Muslim members rejected the proposal under the leadership of Tami Uddin Khan. Khawaja Nazim Uddin said, “... most of the people of East Bengal want Urdu as the state language of Pakistan.” Later the proposal was rejected by vote. Many Muslim members of East Bengal did not support the proposal due to the parliamentary custom, because they could not vote against the party decision against the Muslim League. Prime Minister Liyakat Ali Khan submitted ‘reprehension proposal’ against the demand for Bangla. In protest people all over East Bengal observed Hartal. The government continued arresting the activists.

In February 26, 1948 the students observed a strike all over the country. A grand procession marched through the street of Dhaka under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Later a meeting was held and Principal Abul Kashem presided over the meeting. From the meeting the next was announced: 11 March— agitation and strike in Dhaka, 13 March— strike in all the educational institutions. Spontaneous participation succeeded the strike and the agitations. The government of East Pakistan became weak. They took hard line and arrested some popular student leaders— Shawkat Ali, Kazi Golam Mahbub, Shamsul Hoq, Oli Ahad and Sheikh Mujib. But the movement grew wild. The government decided to retreat because the scheduled date of Jinnah’s visit was ahead. Prime Minister Khawaja Nazim Uddin decided to cheat the activist for the sound visit of Jinnah. In March 15, he signed an 8-point agreement with the ‘Rastra Bhasa Sangram Parisod’, which includes:

1. The confinements were to set free who were arrested after February 29, 1948 for the cause of language movement.
2. The Prime Minister will form an enquiry committee under his supervision on ‘the suppression by the police’ and he will make a statement on this enquiry within a month.
3. A special proposal will be placed by Khwaja Nazim Uddin in the Legislative Assembly on the first week of the following April, where it will be placed that Bangla will be given the status of the state language and the media of examination along with Urdu.
4. It will be decided in the Legislative Assembly in the following April that, from the following April, Bangla will be replaced to English and the medium of education also will be Bangla.
5. No action will be taken against those who took part in the language movement.
6. The sanctions over the Newspapers will be withdrawn.
7. Section 144 which has been imposed from 29 February, will be withdrawn, and
8. After the discussion with the ‘Rastra Bhasa Sangram Parisod’, I am convinced that this movement was not launched by the enemies of the state.

Prime Minister Khwaja Nazim Uddin signed the agreement to tame the agitated activists so that he could create a congenial atmosphere for the visit of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. However, he did not keep his promise and tried to make Urdu as the only state language of Bangladesh.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan, visited East Pakistan from 19 - 28 March 1948. The visit felt as a disaster because he hurt the people of Bengal who fought for him during the Pakistan Movement. During his visit Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared in a public meeting at the Race Course Maidan, Dhaka, on 21 March 1948. He said,

Let me make it very clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. Therefore, so far as the state language is concerned, Pakistan’s shall be Urdu.

Again in Carson Hall, as a convocation speaker, Jinnah uttered the same words, ‘Urdu and Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan.’ In both places, the present listeners protested the declaration by uttering: ‘No’, ‘no’.

#### **4.2.2 Second phase of Language Movement: 1952**

The next few years, people of East Bengal kept patience in the hope that Khwaja Nazim Uddin might keep his promise as he became the Governor General of Pakistan. During this period, the parliament members were busy in debating on the constitution of Pakistan. In March, 1949 a 25-member guideline Committee headed by Liyakat Ali Khan was formed. In 7 September, 1950, this committee placed its report in the National Assembly where ‘Urdu’ was proposed as the only state language of Pakistan. In protest people posed severe demonstrations in Dhaka.

In December 4 and 5, a Grand National Convention headed by Ataur Rahman Khan was held in Dhaka where ‘Bangla’ proposed as one of ‘the state languages of Pakistan’. This time the central government took a project named Kendrio Bangla Unnayon Committee’ headed by Maulana Akram Khan, under which Bangla was proposed to write with the Urdu letters. However, Dr. Shahidullah protested the initiative by giving a statement.

Khwaja Nazim Uddin took the post of Prime Minister after the death of Liyakat Ali Khan. People of East Bengal became optimistic. However, during his visit in the East Bengal in January 26, 1952 he declared ‘Urdu’ at a meeting in Paltan breaking the promise he gave the Rastrabhasa Sangram Parisad. In protest, ‘Sarbadaliyo Rastrabhasa Sangram Parisad’ was formed. Kazi Golam Mahbub was its convener on January 31, 1952. Under this committee the language movement started with a new vigor.

Students observed hartal on 4 and 5 February. This day, a meeting held in the campus of Dhaka University declared that 11 and 13 February would be observed as ‘Flag Day’ and on 21 February the students and the mass people will march toward the Provincial Assembly Bhawan (Bardhawan Bhawan, now Bangla Academy) and would place their demand. In 16 February, 1952 Sheikh Mujib and Mohiuddin Ahmad started ‘lifelong starvation’ in the jail demanding

'Bangla' as the state language and for the release of all confined activists. On February 18, Sheikh Mujib and Mohiuddin Ahmad were transferred to Faridpur jail. The mass movement spread all over East Bengal like wildfires.

Chief Minister Nurul Amin imposed section 144 in at the night before February 21 and banned all kinds of demonstrations and gathering in the streets. Police raided everywhere in search of the activists of the language movement. Huge number of people all over the country was arrested. However, the young leaders of the Rastrabhasa Sangram Parisad' decided to breach section 144. They proceeded toward the 'Bardhawan Bhawan' in groups. Police opened fire at the procession. Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and worker Awal became spot-dead.

This killing led to a furious situation all over East Bengal. As a result, the Pakistani government compelled to accept the demand. In the first constitution of Pakistan, Bangla was recognized as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1956.

### **The First Shaheed Minar**

On the night February 23, 1952 the students of Dhaka Medical College built a brick-made Shaheed Minar beside the college. It was completed at the dawn of 24 February. A handwritten paper was hung on the Minar with the words 'Shaheed Smritistombho'. It was inaugurated by the father of slain activist Shaheed Safiur Rahman. All the days of 24 and 25<sup>th</sup> February the pedestrians saw the Minar, read the paper and silently passed the way because the situation was horrific. However, it was destroyed by the police on February 26.



The First Shaheed Minar were built

#### **4.2.3 Significance of Language Movement: Rise of Bengali Nationalism**

Language Movement was the first nationwide Bengali movement against the Pakistani oppressors. It was also a successful movement. It awakened a sense of Bengali Nationalism among the people of East Bengal, which led them participate in the follow movements. During this movement, the Bengali scholars, especially, Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, Kazi Motahar Hossain wrote on the merits of ‘Bangla’ in nation building. With the informative writings of the scholars in the Newspapers, the ‘Bangla’ speaking people were able to find out their actual identity.

Only few years ago, the people of East Bengal fought for ‘Pakistan’ for the cause of ‘Muslim Nationalism’. However, despite being Muslim, the people of East Bengal could not prevent disparities. They saw that they were ignored by the Pakistani authority only because they could not inherit the history and culture of the West Pakistan. They are different from them in every aspects of life: Food, clothing, way of living, functions and festivals as well as social manner. The staple food of the Bengali people is rice and fish. On the other hand, the main food of the people of West Pakistan is meat and bread. The Bengali women generally wear ‘Sari’, on the other hand, women in the West Pakistan generally wear Salwar and Kamij. All these have made them different. The only similarity is ‘religion’. However, the West Pakistanis did not recognize Bengali Muslims as real Muslim. They considered the latter as a nation derived and polluted by Hindu culture.

The disparities in the politics, economy, and military and in the administration opened the eyes of the Bengali people. The language movement drew the attention of the Bengali people on these distinctions and helped them realize the conspiracies behind making Urdu, the only state language of Pakistan. In fact, the West Pakistanis wanted to make the Bengali people cripple so that they could continue their colonial rule unchallenged. The Bengali scholars played the role of those scholars who built the base of the French Revolution.

Through the language movement, the Bengali people realized that they were not a Muslim, nor a Hindu, Buddhists or a Christian—they are actually Bengali nation with a distinct language, food, clothing, fest and functions and a different way of life. This sense of Bengali Nationalism inspired them to join the movements of the later part. At last they fought valiantly against the Pakistani Military and achieved independence through huge bloodshed.

#### **4.2.4 Role of Women in Language Movement**

The role of the women in the Language Movement is also unique. In the fifties, the society of East Bengal was very much conservative. Even, women do not have much access to education. They were mainly confined to household chores. Going outside home without being escorted by the male members of the family was quite unusual. However, some female students came out of their cocoon for the cause of the mother tongue, which in the long run brought pitiful future in their personal life. These women were bold and they joined the procession in the streets violating section 144, held banners and gave slogans. They also collected money wandering door to door to help the male activists. Sometimes, they risked their life to save the male activists by hiding them in their homes. Sometimes, they carried foods for the confines. Even, they bore ‘bricks’ all the night to build a Shaheed Minar. Those women, who contributed much in the language movement, were namely, Begum Sufia Kamal, Nadera Begum, Dr. Halima Khatun, Roushan Ara Bacchu, Mamataj Begum (Narayangonj) and her students: Ila Bakshi, Benu Dhar, Hamida Khatun (Khulna), Zobeda Khatun Choudhury (Sylhet). Shahera Banu, Syed Najibunnesa, Rabea Khatun (Head Mistress), Saleha Khatun, Raushan Ara Begum (Jamalpur) etc.

Begum Sufia Kamal collected the female students of Bangla Bazar School and Anandamoyee School and led them in violating section 144 in 21 February. According to the decision, they came out in a small group of four students. However, police charged with sticks and they were injured.

Nadera Begum was the sister of Munir Chowdhury. She became a legend for her courageous activities. Begum Sufia Kamal hide her in her home at Hatkhola to save her from arresting. Her name was also changed to ‘Jahanara’.

Dr. Halima Khatun was a medical student then. While demonstrating in violation of section 144, she became injured in the morning of 21 February by the police charge. However, she took first aid from the Dhaka Medical College and again took part in the agitation. Her group was the first female group that violated section 144.

Mamataj Begum took out a procession with 300 female students of Narayangonj Morgan High School. She was the Head Mistress of the school. Later police arrested her. When she escaped from the jail, her husband did not accept her and gave divorce. In Jamalpur, Roushan Ara Begum led the female students of Jamalpur Girls' High School in protest of the brutal killing in Dhaka in 21 February.

#### **4.2.5 International Mother Language Day**

The Language Movement of Bangladesh was recognized all over the world. The supreme sacrifice of the people of Bangladesh for the cause of their mother tongue awakened the universal human mind. They realized the importance of mother tongue in human development. Mother languages, along with linguistic diversity, matter for the identity of individuals. As sources of creativity and vehicles for cultural expression, they are also important for the health of societies. At the same time, we can do more to support the balanced development of translation, as a channel to open to all the great diversity of knowledge and experience throughout the world.” That's why; in November 17, 1999, in the General Meeting of the UNESCO, 21 February was declared as the International Mother Language day. This day has been observed across the world since 2000. People all over the world mourn for the martyrs of our Language Movement and take a vow to protect all the mother tongue. They sing, “Aamar Vier Rokte Rangano, Ekuse February; Aami Ki Vulite Paari”. The right to speak and educate through mother tongue has been accepted as the ‘birth right’ all over the world.

## **4.3 Political Background towards Independence**

### **4.3.1 Election of 1954**

The East Pakistan Provincial Legislative Assembly Election in 1954 is considered the next important political event toward independence after the Language Movement. It was the first election held in Pakistan after the emergence.

In the undivided India, Bengal provincial legislative Assembly Election was held in 1946 and the members were elected for the next five years. According the Indian Independence Act 1947, it was declared that the provincial Legislative Assemblies will be formed with the elected members of 1946 elections until the new election is held. Therefore, 1951 was the year for the election. However, ruling Muslim League postponed the election several times with various pretext. At last, the election was held from 8 to 12 March, 1954.

In the election, the opposition parties joined together an alliance named the United Front headed by A.K.Fazlul Hoq against the ruling Muslim League. The Front was formed on 4 December 1953 by the initiative of AK Fazlul Huq of Krishak Sramik Party, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy of Awami Muslim League. The United Front was formed with five opposition parties: the Awami Muslim League led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the Krishak Sramik Party led by AK Fazlul Huq, Nezam-e-Islam led by Maulana Atahar Ali, Ganatantri Dal led by Haji Mohammad Danesh and Khilafat-e-Rabbani Party.

The ruling Muslim League knew that they have little public support because they went against the popular demand ‘Bangla’ as a national language. So, to win the heart the Bengali people, in a meeting of Muslim League Parliamentary members Prime Minister of Bogra Mohammad Ali resolved to give ‘Bangla’ as the status of official language. However, this decision created much agitation. Some other ethnic groups started to protest the decision and demanded the official status of their language. Moulavi Abdul Hoq took out a procession of 10000 people in protest of this decision. Therefore, the Muslim League government could not implement the decision. So, the Muslim League could neither restore its already destroyed prestige

nor satisfy the people of other languages. The result is shameful defeat. On the other hand, the United Front placed the demand of provincial autonomy as their main slogan. They declared 21 point manifesto which included:

#### **4.3.2 Election Manifesto of the United Front: 21 Points**

1. To recognize Bangla as one of the State Languages of Pakistan;
2. To abolish without compensation zamindari and all rent receiving interest in land, and to distribute the surplus lands amongst the cultivators; to reduce rent to a fair level and abolish the certificate system of realising rent;
3. To nationalise the jute trade and bring it under the direct control of the government of East Bengal, secure fair price of jute to the growers and to investigate into the jute-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish those found responsible for it;
4. To introduce co-operative farming in agriculture and to develop cottage industries with full government subsidies;
5. To start salt industry (both small and large scale) in order to make East Bengal self-sufficient in the supply of salt, and to investigate into the salt-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish the offenders;
6. To rehabilitate immediately all the poor refugees belonging to the artisan and technician class;
7. To protect the country from flood and famine by means of digging canals and improving irrigation system;
8. To make the country self-sufficient by modernizing the method of cultivation and industrialisation, and to ensure the rights of the labourer as per ILO Convention;
9. To introduce free and compulsory primary education throughout the country and to arrange for just pay and allowances to the teachers;
10. To restructure the entire education system, introduce mother tongue as the medium of instruction, remove discrimination between government and private schools and to turn all the schools into government aided institutions;
11. To repeal all reactionary laws including those of the Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities and to make them autonomous

- institutions; to make education cheaper and easily available to the people;
12. To curtail the cost of administration and to rationalise the pay scale of high and low paid government servants. The ministers shall not receive more than 1000 taka as monthly salary;
  13. To take steps to eradicate corruption, nepotism and bribery, and with this end in view, to take stocks of the properties of all government officers and businessmen from 1940 onward and forfeit all properties the acquisition of which is not satisfactorily accounted for;
  14. To repeal all Safety and Preventive Detention Acts and release all prisoners detained without trial, and try in open court persons involved in anti-state activities; to safeguard the rights of the press and of holding meetings;
  15. To separate the judiciary from the executive;
  16. To locate the residence of the chief minister of the United Front at a less costly house, and to convert Burdwan House into a students' hostel now, and later, into an institute for research on Bangla language and literature;
  17. To erect a monument in memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement on the spot where they were shot dead, and to pay compensation to the families of the martyrs;
  18. To declare 21 February as 'Shaheed Day' and a public day;
  19. The Lahore Resolution proposed full autonomy of East Bengal leaving defence, foreign affairs and currency under the central government. In the matter of defence, arrangements shall be made to set the headquarters of the army in West Pakistan and the naval headquarters in East Bengal and to establish ordnance factories in East Bengal, and to transform Ansar force into a full-fledged militia equipped with arms;
  20. The United Front Ministry shall on no account extend the tenure of the Legislature and shall resign six months before the general elections to facilitate free and fair elections under an Election Commission;
  21. All casual vacancies in the Legislature shall be filled up through by-elections within three months of the vacancies, and if the nominees of the Front are defeated in three successive by-elections, ministry shall resign from office.

In the elections held, 1285 candidates contested for 304 seats, 5 seats having been won uncontested. Of them, 986 were Muslim candidates for 228 seats, 101 Hindu candidates for 30 seats, and 151 scheduled caste candidates for 36 seats. The seats for the non-Muslims were contested by candidates mainly from the Pakistan National Congress, United Progressive Party and the Scheduled Caste Federation. The total electors numbered 1,97,48,568 of whom 73,44,216 (37.19%) cast their votes. The lower turnout was ascribed to poor communications in rural areas and the reluctance of conservative Muslim women to come out of their houses.

The elections resulted in a landslide victory for the United Front which won 228 seats in a House of 309 (including nine reserved seats for women). On the other hand, the Muslim League, the party in power directly or indirectly ever since 1937, managed to get only 7 seats. Of the total of 228 elected Front members, 143 belonged to Awami Muslim League, 48 to Krishak Sramaik Party, 22 to Nezam-e-Islam, 13 to Ganatantri Dal and 2 to Khilafat-e-Rabbani Party. Of the non-Muslim seats, Congress got 25, Scheduled Caste Federation 27, and the United Front of the Minorities 13.

#### **4.4 Rise of Military Dictator Ayub Khan: EBDO, PODO**

General Ayub Khan was the first military dictator in Pakistan who grabbed the power without a drop of blood but a pre-planned conspiracy. During the political turmoil after the general election of 1954 and the enactment of a new constitution in Pakistan in 1956, he added fuel to fire in the evil politics of Pakistan and inspired Iskandar Mirza to suspend the constitution and the democratic rule in October 7, 1958. Iskandar promoted Ayub Khan as the Chief Marshal Law Administrator (CMLA) who only 20 days later overthrew Mirza (October 27) and take full control of the government. Mirza later confessed, it was his great blunder to promote Ayub Khan as CMLA. Persuaded by Ayub Khan, Iskandar Mirza wanted to take the opportunity of violent politics in Pakistan. In the provincial Assembly of East Pakistan, a violent scuffle was held between the members of the opposition and the police force, in which the deputy speaker Shahed Ali was fatally injured and two ministers badly wounded in 1958. Due to this uncomfortable parliamentary democracy and the

threat of Baluch separatism in West Pakistan paved the way to Iskandar Mirza to issue a proclamation that abolished political parties, abrogated the two years-old constitution, and placed the country under martial law. Mirza announced that martial law would be a temporary measure lasting only until a new constitution was drafted. On October 27, he swore in a twelve-member cabinet that included Ayub as prime minister and three other generals in ministerial positions. Included among the eight civilians was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a former university lecturer and future leader of Pakistan. However, Ayub Khan did not agree to this settlement and on the same day, he sent his loyal generals to the palace of Mirza and exiled him to London.

#### **4.4.1 Actions of Ayub Khan**

Ayub Khan's main aim was to destroy the existing political order. Once he said, the parliamentary democracy is not workable with the nature of the people of Pakistan. So, he wanted to introduce a new method. This could not be achieved by letting the political leaders work freely. That's why; all the popular leaders were arrested and detained. Politics was suspended for two years. Constitution was also suspended. He combined the offices of the president and the prime minister and he himself became the head of the both. He then promoted himself to Five Star (Field Marshal). However, Ayub Khan obtained judicial validation of his move because the Supreme Court ruled that his take-over is legal under the 'Doctrine of Necessity' law. Then he launched a program of cleansing. He arrested all the corrupted bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians and put them in jail. People at first welcomed this move. They thought it was better than the continuous political turmoil.

#### **• PODO**

In March 1959, the Martial Law administration published the Public Offices (Disqualification) Order (PODO), which was often misused—PRODA law that provided for public office holders found guilty by a two-person tribunal to be disqualified from holding public office for up to fifteen years. Three tribunals were created to inquire into allegations of misconduct as referred to them by the government. While definite figures do not exist, in 1960, in East Pakistan alone, as many as 3000 people seemed to have faced this regulation— majority

of whom either opted to retire or were disqualified. Evidence suggests that majority of the people simply chose to retire rather than face the difficult questions of an EBDO tribunal. Thus, in a fairly systematic and complete fashion, the Martial Law administration cleared the political field for any likely opposition to the President's future ambitions.

#### • **EBDO**

EBDO was another ordinance issued by President Ayub Khan. While it was seemed that the implementation of PODO ordinance would be lengthy, Ayub Khan passed the Elected Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) in August 1959. Three tribunals were created to inquire into allegations of misconduct as referred to them by the government. Under ordinance, 75 leaders were disqualified for participating in political activities for 8 years (until December 1966). Under the EBDO, Ayub Khan primarily targeted East Pakistani politicians from the Awami League while leaving the Muslim League largely untouched.

It was estimated that about 6,000 persons, half of them from East Pakistan, were disqualified under Article 5 of EBDO until 31 December 1966. A further 78 politicians were disqualified under article 7 and 8 of EBDO.

Prominent politicians disqualified under these three articles of EBDO were the top leaders of the East Pakistan Awami League including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. Maulana Bhashani was also arrested.

On 30 January 1962, Suhrawardy was arrested in Karachi under the Security of Pakistan Act, which authorized his detention without trial for a year. It was an irony that a politician who was the Prime Minister of the country was accused of activities “fraught with such danger to the security and safety of Pakistan that one could fairly describe them as treasonable” which was the biggest shock of his life.”

When a habeas corpus petition was filed in Lahore High Court challenging his illegal detention, Ayub Khan conveniently promulgated an Ordinance suspending the habeas corpus rights of those detained under the Security of Pakistan Act. All these he did to clear the path of introducing his new political system.

#### **4.4.2 Basic Democracy**

Basic Democracy was a peculiar and controversial system that Ayub Khan invented. The critics of Ayub Khan observed the system as was a form of “representational dictatorship.” It offered for an indirect election system.

Ayub Khan did not believe that a sophisticated parliamentary democracy was suitable for Pakistan since there were vast number of illiterate people.

President Ayub Khan has issued an ordinance in October 1959 for setting up ‘basic democracies’ or small units of local self-government in the country. There will be around 1,20,000 such units, each representing from 1000 to 15000 citizens. Ayub Khan said,

Democracy has brought to the very doorstep of the people making it possible for them to know its real meaning in terms of managing and developing their village or mohalla as they would manage and develop their own home or family. Indeed for the first time in the history of Pakistan, our people will be able to elect as their representatives men and women whom they know from personal knowledge to be good, honest and competent.

The Basic Democracies system set up five tiers of institutions. The lowest but most important tier was composed of union councils, one each for groups of villages having an approximate total population of 10,000. Each union council comprised ten directly elected members and five appointed members, all called Basic Democrats (BD member). Union councils were responsible for local agricultural and community development and for rural law and order maintenance; they were empowered to impose local taxes for local projects.

The next tier consisted of the *tehsil* (sub-district) councils, which performed coordination functions. Above them, the district (*zilla*) councils, chaired by the deputy commissioners, were composed of nominated official and nonofficial members, including the chairmen of union councils. The district councils were assigned both compulsory and optional functions pertaining to education, sanitation, local culture, and social welfare. Above them, the divisional advisory councils coordinated the activities with representatives of government departments. The highest tier consisted of one development advisory

council for each province, chaired by the governor and appointed by the president. The urban areas had a similar arrangement, under which the smaller union councils were grouped together into municipal committees to perform similar duties.

In 1960 an election was held under the ordinance of this system. 80,000 (from East Pakistan 40,000 and another 40,000 from West Pakistan) Basic democrats were elected. The elected members of the union councils voted to confirm Ayub Khan's presidency, and under the 1962 constitution they formed an electoral college to elect the president, the National Assembly, and the provincial assemblies.

#### **4.4.3 Education Movement of 1962**

One of the notorious steps, which was a part of Ayub's grand conspiracy of subduing the Bengalis is the formation of an Education Commission. In an ordinance, he constituted an Education Commission chaired by S.M. Sharif (Education Secretary of West Pakistan) on December 30, 1958. In August 26, 1959 the commission submitted its report. The recommendations of the report were so harmful for the students of East Pakistan that they burst into agitation ignoring the life risks under the Marshall Law when the results of public exams were published under the partial implementation of this law. However, the report recommended the following steps:

- a) Encouragement should be given to the development of residential secondary schools;
- b) Secondary school curriculum should include a core of compulsory subjects along with a few optional ones with a technical and vocational bias;
- c) The conducting of Intermediate courses should be vested upon the Boards of Secondary Education instead of the universities;
- d) The degree courses both pass and honors, should be of three years duration;
- e) Comprehensive' scholarship programs for the gifted students should stretch from beyond the primary stage to the top and;
- f) Provision should be made for adequate facilities for female education.

The Commission also suggested for a few basic changes in the administrative set-up, such as decentralizing the management of

primary education, revamping the examination system, and envisaging a new management structure for technical education. The report claims that the steps recommended by the commission have the following objectives:

To develop—

- i. a good worker,
- ii. a good citizen,
- iii. a good individual and
- iv. a good patriot.

However, the report was rejected by the students and the scholars of East Pakistan. As a result, they launched a movement against the report and demanded for the withdrawal.

The students' movement took a new turn on August 10 when college students assembled in a meeting at Dhaka College. It includes month long programs. On September 10 a meeting was held at the Dhaka University cafeteria where almost all the colleges of the city were represented. The meeting withdrew the previously announced sit-down strike but announced a fresh action program of hartal or total strike on September 17. It was the first general strike during Ayub Khan's tyrannical rule. Army was deployed in the Dhaka city; Section 144 was promulgated. A few college students including Quazi Faruque Ahmed initiated the movement at college level. Gradually student leaders at university level joined them, and made the movement wide. The student movement spread to entire Bangladesh, then East Pakistan. In Dhaka, shops, bazaars, educational institutions, semi-government offices remained closed. Attendance in government offices was thin. On September 17, the participants in the Dhaka procession were not only students, but also industrial workers, rickshaw pullers and boatmen. In the morning of September 17, when a procession was crossing Abdul Gani road in Dhaka, police opened fire. Babul, a student of Nabokumar High School was killed, and bus conductor Golam Mostofa, domestic worker Waziullah and many others seriously injured. Waziullah later died in the hospital.

During the clash between police and public in Jessore, 41 police constables and the police super was injured. In Chittagong, army was called in following clashes between police and public. More than 100 persons including 50 policemen were injured.

When the situation turned to hostility, opposition leader H. S. Suhrawardy came to Dhaka from Karachi and met East Pakistan Governor Golam Faruk. He succeeded to convince the governor to suspend the implementation of the recommendations of the Sharif Commission Report. Thus, the students' movement in 1962 succeeded completely. It is said that the '52-language movement cultivated the spirit of Bengali nationalism and the '62-education movement indoctrinated and inculcated the ingredient of progressive content in it.

#### **4.4.4 Six Point Movement**

The placement of the Six Points demand by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 5 February, 1966<sup>34</sup> in the conference of the all Pakistan opposition parties at Lahore was a milestone in the history of the liberation movement in Bangladesh. It took the movement to the final stage. When his demand of six points was not permitted to place within the agenda of that meeting, he boycotted the conference and withdrew its representation from the meeting. Thereafter, in an off the cuff press conference in Lahore airport on February 10, he said, "The question of autonomy appears to be more important after the war ( Indo-Pakistan war in September, 1965). The time has come for making East Pakistan self-sufficient in all respects." He then enunciated a 'six-point charter of survival' (Aamader Bachar Dabi: Chhoi Dofa) program for East Pakistan.

On his return to Dhaka on February 11, 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman provided further clarification on his six-point formula in a press conference. He explained why he had disassociated himself from the All-Party conference in Lahore. He emphasized that the immediate adoption and implementation of his six-point formula "will be conducive to foster durable relationship between the two provinces of Pakistan". In a press conference on February 14, 1966, he also repeated what he had uttered in his Lahore press conference: that "the question of autonomy appears to be more important for East Pakistan after the 17-day war between Pakistan and India."

Even, the senior leaders of Awami league initially did not aware of the demand. Later, some of them left Awami League on the question of 'Six Points'. However, the charter grew overwhelming inspiration

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<sup>34</sup>*The Daily Ittefaq*, February 12, 1966.

among the people of East Pakistan. People considered the charter as the 'Magna Carta' of Bengali nation.



**The six points are as follows:**

1. The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
2. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defense and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states.
3. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established, and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.
4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the federal centre will have no such power on the issue. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.
5. There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the Constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.
6. East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.

#### **4.4.5 Reactions to Six Point Movement**

No sooner had the 6-point program been published than Ayub Khan declared it ‘secessionist’ and styled its author Bangabandhu as the enemy number one of Pakistan. Ayub also threatened to use brute force to suppress this charter of demands. But Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remained undaunted by such threats. Bangabandhu started a 3-month long mass-contact program which took him to every nook and corner of Bangladesh. Mujib was arrested eight times in the first three months of the 6-point movement. By then, Bangabandhu had become the President of Awami League. He was finally thrown into jail on May 8, 1966, a general strike was observed all over East Pakistan in support of the 6-point program and for the release of Mujib. Police fired in Tejgaon, Tongi and Narayanganj killing 13 people. This was followed by large-scale arrests of the leaders and followers of Awami League throughout the country. All these measures taken by the Ayub regime proved counter-productive. 6-point program became the heartfelt demand of the common masses. Students put forward their 11-point program, which complemented the 6-point charter of demands. Thus the political situation in East Pakistan became extremely volatile: the stage was set for a great explosion of popular anger through an all-out mass-movement against the Ayub rule.

#### **4.4.6 Why Six Point is called as Magna Carta?**

The six point of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was widely compared with the ‘Magna Carta.’ The Magna Carta is a document that dates back to the year 1215. The name is Latin for ‘Great Charte’. In that year English King John declared a charter in which defined the rights of King John, who ruled England at the time, a group of wealthy men called barons and the Catholic Church in England. Throughout history the document’s meaning has expanded to include other people as well. In the six points declared by Bangabandhu included such steps, which was essential for the freedom of the people of East Pakistan. That’s why; it is widely called as the ‘Magna Carta’ of Bengali nation.

#### **4.4.7 Significance of Six Point Movement**

The historic Six Point is very significant in the history of the liberation movement of Bangladesh. After the declaration of the

charter, it became clear who were actually Bengali nationalists and who were not. The steps demanded in the points were so sound that the people easily understand their status and their vision. It officially expressed the full autonomy, however, the West Pakistani leaders and the Muslim league branded it as the separatist movement. People were also fed up with the Pakistani rule. So, the blame against Sheikh Mujib was also created by the people because they already took the role of Sheikh Mujib as a great nationalist leader.

President of Pakistan Ayub Khan challenged to face the movement with arms. People did not accept this threat cordially rather they took the threat against Sheikh Mujib as the threat against them. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib gave speech in 32 public meetings with 50 days and explained Six Points. It's a record in the history of the political campaign in Bengal. Sheikh Mujib's campaign for Six Points made an example of systematic movement through which he was succeeded to create a mass mobilization for the Six Points. Therefore, when Bangabandhu and his followers were put behind bars on May 8, 1966, along with his other followers it was vehemently resented by the people, and the whole of Bangladesh protested like one entity by holding meetings, rallies and processions which rocked the distant capital at Rawalpindi.

On May 20, the Awami League Working Committee decided to organize a protest meeting on June 7, 1966 by condemning repression and demanding release of Bangabandhu and other leaders, and thus came the observance of strike on 7th June. The day dawned with factories remaining closed, transport off the roads and business houses shut down. This was the way people tried to express their indignation against the oppressors and resolute support to the leadership of Bangabandhu. People came out on the streets closing their establishments, offices and shops. They suspended all their normal activities. Dhaka became the city of processions and slogans. The workers and students brought out peaceful processions. But the regime of exploiters could not tolerate slogan-chanting people who had made a sacred vow to realize their right to self-determination and so the ruling clique responded with the language of weapons killing scores of people including Monu Mia in Dhaka and Narayanganj. Thus the people of Bangladesh raised their slogans for independence

by shedding their blood. The subsequent movements, therefore, led the people of Bangladesh achieve an Independent country and Bangabandhu became the father of the Bengali nation.

#### **4.5 Agartala Case: Trial of Sheikh Mujib and Others**

The historic Agartala Case filed against Sheikh and other 34 persons in 1968 was another milestone in the History of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. Governor of East Pakistan Monayem Khan wanted to prove Sheikh Mujib a traitor and hang him by this trial, but it resulted otherwise. This trial made him undefeated ‘hero’ of Bengal.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib put forward a couple of young nationalist leaders after declaring the Six Points by pushing back the old and conservative Awami League leaders. These young leaders were Taj Uddin Ahmed., Syed Nazrul Islam, Captain Monsur Ali, A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman. When the mass mobilization started to gather furiously for the demand of Six Points, the Pakistani government arrested all the leaders of Awami League. Nearly one thousand five hundred Bangalis throughout Pakistan were arrested by the intelligence force. However, mass agitation could not be stopped. They thought, the Six Point demands could not be denied unless they could crush the political career of Sheikh by accusing him as a traitor to the nation. Agartala Case was organized to fulfill the evil desire.



##### **4.5.1 Filing the Agartala Case**

On 6 January 1968 the Home Department of Pakistan declared that a conspiracy against the sovereignty of Pakistan was detected by the government through a press-note. The press note disclosed that the conspiracy was held at Agartala of India in December, 1967 through,

which a plan was organized to dismember Pakistan. The press note also disclosed that 28 persons including 2 CSP officers and two Awami League leaders were confined because they were involved in the conspiracy. Sheikh Mujib was set free in January 17 and was arrested in 18 January under martial law regulations accusing him for ‘the Agartala Conspiracy.’ In a separate press note issued in January 18, the government of Pakistan disclosed that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was involved in the conspiracy. That day, the government filed a case against him and 34 other accused. The accused were taken to Dhaka Cantonment under military custody. However, Sheikh Mujib was already in jail since 9 May 1966. People could not understand how Sheikh Mujib could be accused by this allegation since he was in jail. Therefore, the case lost its merit from the very beginning.

The accused included in the charge-sheet of the Agartala case were: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Commander Moazzem Hossain, Steward Mujibur Rahman, former LS Sultanuddin Ahmad, LSCDI Nur Mohammad, Ahmed Fazlur Rahman CSP, Flight Sergeant Mahfiz Ullah, Corporal Abdus Samad, former Havildar Dalil Uddin, Ruhul Quddus CSP, Flight Sergeant Md. Fazlul Haq, Bibhuti Bhushan Chowdhury alias Manik Chowdhury, Bidhan Krishna Sen, Subedar Abdur Razzaque, former clerk Mujibur Rahman, former Flight Sergeant Md. Abdur Razzaque, Sergeant Zahirul Haq, AB Khurshid, Khan Mohammad Shamsur Rahman CSP, AKM Shamsul Haque, Havildar Azizul Haq, Mahfuzul Bari, Sergeant Shamsul Haq, Shamsul Alam, Captain Md. Abdul Motaleb, Captain A Shawkat Ali Mian, Captain Khondkar Nazmul Huda, Captain M Nuruzzaman, Sergeant Abdul Jalil, Mahbub Uddin Chowdhury, Lt. M Rahman, former Subedar Tajul Islam, Ali Reza, Captain Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, and Lt. Abdur Rauf.

A special tribunal was formed after an amendment was made in the penal code to that end for the disposal of the case. The hearing of the case started on 19 June 1968 under Sections 121-A and 131. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was enrolled as accused No.1. The case was entitled “State vs Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others”. The tribunal started proceedings of the case in a highly protected chamber inside Dhaka Cantonment. A charge-sheet consisting of 100 paragraphs against the

35 accused was placed before the tribunal. There were 227 witnesses including 11 approvers. However, 4 approvers were declared hostile by the government.

#### **4.5.2 Trial of Agartala case and Mass Upsurge**

The case continued and the news of the hearing was published in the newspapers. The government hoped that by reading the descriptions of hearing in the newspapers, people might be convinced against Sheikh Mujib. So, government did not censor the news. However, people gradually became more sympathetic to Sheikh Mujib and other. They rose in uprising against Ayub Khan in reaction to the Agartala Case.

In November 1968, the movement against the Agartala Case turned to a new course. In November 17 and 18, two big public meetings were held in Paltan Maydan and before Baitul Mokarram under NAP (Wali). On 26 November leader of NAP, Maulana Bhasani and Awami League leader Mizanur Rahman chowdhury joined a meeting to fix the policy of the movement. On December 7 people observed a spontaneous hartal, in which the labors of Dhaka city joined. Two labors Mohammad Ishahak and Abdul Mazid were shot dead by the police. Situation grew worse. All the leaders of the opposition protested the police action and called on hartal again 8 December. People all over the Dhaka city locked in clash in groups with police up to the evening. The government declared curfew in the evening.

The scattered student organizations felt that they should do something from a single platform to overthrow the Ayub dictatorship. The student leaders started to discuss among them. On January 4, 1969 they made a Chhatra Sangram Parisad and declared 11-point demand. They adopted Six Points in their third number demand.

Formation of Chhatra Sangram Parisad and the declaration of 11-point led the movement against Ayub Khan to the final stage. People showed fierce agitations against the Ayub Khan regime. They demanded for the unconditional withdrawal of the Agartala case and release of Sheikh Mujib and others. On January 20, 1969 students brought out a procession from the ‘Bat Tala’ (from under the Banyan tree). The procession was so long that, when the front of the procession reached Bahadur Shah Park, the tail remained at the

University campus. At one point police inspector fired from his pistol and Asaduzzaman, the student of the department of Dhaka University, was killed. This killing created a severe situation like 1952. Three days program- 21, 22 and 23 days- was declared. Army was deployed in the city. Next few days, army created severe situation in the city. Arresting, torturing and Killing went on. Even, a baby was killed in the lap of his mother while he was suckling by the indiscriminate gun-shot of the army. But people did not give up movement because they were no more afraid of the army. They moved to single demand program and that is the resignation of Ayub Khan.

On February 1 Ayub Khan softened his voice and offered for discussion. But the Chhatra Sangram Parisad and all other political leaders declared that no offer would be considered before the unconditional release of Sheikh Mujib and other prisoners.

On 15the February Sergeant Zuhurul Hoq, one of the accused of Agartala Case was killed in the jail. This incident created overwhelming shock around the country. In January 16, Moulana Bhasani declared his unification with the movement. In a public meeting in Paltan, he declared, "We must broke the jail and bring Sheikh Mujib out of the bars, if needed, we'll create a situation like the French Revolution." The government started to loss control of the situation. In February 18, Dr. Shamsuzzoha, teacher of Rajshahi University was shot and killed by the Pakistani army. The situation fully grew out of the govt.'s control. On February 22 the government withdrew the Agartala Case and set Mujib and others free. THus the Six Point movement of Sheikh Mujib and 11 point movement of the students became successful.

On the next day, 23 February, a public celebration to Sheikh Mujib was organized at the Race Course Maidan of Ramna. Millions of people joined the celebration. Sheikh Mujib was given the title of 'Bangabandhu' in the meeting. Millions of people supported the title by clapping and slogans.

#### **4.6 Election of 1970 and its Significance**

The election in 1970 was the first and last general election of universal adult franchise in Pakistan. After the mass upheaval of 1969, Ayub Khan withdrew the Agartala case, released the prisoners

and offered Round Table Conference with the popular leaders of East Pakistan. However, when the conference failed to give any fruitful result, President Ayub Khan resigned and transfer power to his Chief of Army Staff Yahya Khan. In a radio speech on 26 March 1969, Yahya Khan declared that he would transfer the power to the elected representatives within a short time. Accordingly he declared LFO (Legal Framework Order) for the next general election on a radio speech on March 28, 1969. Election date was declared as 5<sup>th</sup> October for National Assembly and 22 October for Provincial Assembly. However, due to severe flood in East Pakistan, the election date was rescheduled in 7<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December respectively. For the severe cyclone in the coastal areas of East Pakistan, the elections in some areas again were rescheduled in 17<sup>th</sup> January 1971. The

#### **4.6.1 Election Campaign**

An election commission headed by Justice Abdus Sattar of Supreme Court was formed in July 2, 1969. All the political parties except NAP (Bhasani) took part in the election. Sheikh Mujib of Awami League declared that the election would be a referendum on Six Points and 11 Points. On the other hand, the rightist parties alleged that Awami League and Mujib is a collaborator of India. If he won, the country would be divided and went under the influence of India and Islam would no longer exist. However, people vote for the ‘Boat’, the electoral symbol of Awami League and it achieved a landslide victory.

#### **4.6.2 The Results of the Election**

In the election in 1970, it is seen that Awami Leagued won 167 seats out of 169 in the National Assembly and 288 out of 300 in the Provincial Assemble. However, Awami League got no seat in West Pakistan and the majority part PP also got no seats in East Pakistan. So, it was clear that the people of Pakistan accepted separation of the two wings of Pakistan in this election by giving such mandates.

**Table**

<b>Party Name</b>	<b>Seats won by the parties</b>		
	<b>National Assembly</b>	<b>East Pakistan Provincial Assembly</b>	<b>West Pakistan Provincial Assembly</b>
Awami League	167	288	-
PPP	88	-	144
Jamat-e- Islami	4	1	3
Muslim League (Council)	7	-	8
Muslim League (Quaiyum)	9	-	24
Jamiat Ulamaye Islam	7	1	8
Markaji Jamiat Ulamaye Islam	7	-	11
Muslim League (Convention)	2	-	21
NAP (Wali)	7	1	21
PDP	1	2	4
Others Party	-	-	4
Individual	14	7	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

#### **4.6.3 Significance of the Election of 1970**

The result of the election in 1970 was overwhelming. It was, in fact, a clear mandate for the Six Points. It denied the claims of the Muslim League that people would not vote for Awami League since it was, according to them, a collaborator of India. It also gave a clear message that the public opinion of both the wings of Pakistan were clearly different. So, the demand of the full provincial autonomy of Awami League was proved. The election of 1970 had some other significance also. They are as follows:

- a. It was the first and the last general election universal adult franchise of the united Pakistan.
- b. People gave mandate for Bengali Nationalism.
- c. Awami League became a powerful organization and its leaders became the symbol of people's dream.
- d. It created regionalism in the politics of Pakistan.
- e. It gave death certificate of Pakistan.
- f. It gave mandate for Six Points
- g. It rejected the 'Two Nations Theory'.

- h. It gave mandate for introducing a new constitution.
- i. It broke the day-dream of Yahya.
- j. It's a ballot revolution.
- k. It was an electoral protest against disparity.

#### **4.7 Economic Background toward Independence**

Disparities between the two wings of Pakistan had been prevailed from the inception of the country. However, as time marched on the gap between the two countries became wider. The West Pakistan considered East Bengal (East Pakistan) as its colony. Therefore, it had made the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as the supplier of its economy and development. The following tables show the disparities between the East and the West Pakistan in different sectors:

**Table-01: Disparity in National Expenditure (Rs. In Crores)**

Year	Region	Revenue	Development	Total	%
1950-51 to 1954-54	East	171	100	271	20
	West	720	400	1120	80
1954-55 to 1959-60	East	254	270	524	26
	West	898	757	1655	74
1960-61 to 1964-65	East	434	270	1404	32
	West	1284	2071	3355	68
1965-66 to 1969-70	East	648	1655	2304	36
	West	2223	2970	5193	64

Source: Pakistan Economic and Social Review University of the Punjab, Lahore,  
Special issue on Income Inequalities in Pakistan, 1976, Table 2, p.270.

**Table-02: Disparity in Foreign Aid Distribution  
(Million Dollar)**

Project	In Capital	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Total
Project Loan	108	417	608	1133
Non-project Loan	53	408	673	1134
PL 480 Food aid	5	445	791	1241
Guaranteed Loan	11	352	623	986
Project grants and Technological grants	200	56	140	396
Commodity Loan	15	263	575	793
Sindhu Basin Fund	00	00	756	756
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>4166</b>	<b>6439</b>

Source: A M A Muhi, *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*  
(Dhaka: BBIL, 1978), p.104

**Table-3: Disparity in Export Sector  
(Million Dollar)**

Year	Total in Pakistan	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Share (%) of East Pakistan
1951-52	2009	1087	922	54.11 %
1955-56	1783	1041	742	58.38 %
1959-60	1843	1080	763	58.60 %
1963-64	2309	1228	1075	53.32 %
1967-68	3348	1484	1864	44.32 %
1947-70	46,696	25,559	21,137	54.73 %

Source: *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*, p. 106-107

**Table-4: Disparity in Import Sector (Million Dollar)**

Year	Total in Pakistan	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Share (%) of East Pakistan
1951-52	2233	763	1474	34.11 %
1955-56	1325	361	964	27.25 %
1959-60	2515	655	1860	26.04 %
1963-64	4430	1449	2981	32.71 %
1967-68	4654	1327	3327	28.51 %
1947-70	64,392	20,067	45,325	31.16 %

Source: *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*, p. 106-107

**Table-5: Disparity in Five-Year Development Program  
(Crore in Rupee)**

Year	Expenditure in East Pakistan	Expenditure in West Pakistan	Share (%) of East Pakistan
1950-55	524	1,129	46.40 %
1955-60	524	1,655	31.70 %
1960-65	1,404	3,355	41.80 %
1965-70	2,141	5,195	41.20 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,593</b>	<b>11,334</b>	<b>40.50 %</b>

Source: *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*, p. 106-107

**Table-6: Disparity in Civil Services  
(Administration-officers)**

Department	East Pakistan	West Pakistan
Central Secretariat	42	692
Industrial Development Corporation	03	132
Radio Pakistan	14	98
Supply and Develop Department	15	164
Railway	14	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	1,254

Source: A K Chowdhury, The Independence of East Bengal:  
A Historical Process (Dhaka: Jatyo Grontho Kendra, 1984), p.133

**Table-7: Disparity in Military Service (officer)**

Post	East Pakistan	West Pakistan
General	00	01
L. General	00	03
Major General	01	20
Brigadier	00	35
Colonel	00	50
L. Colonel	02	198
Major	10	590
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>897</b>

**Table-8: Disparity in Internal Trade and Commerce  
(in Million Rupee)**

Year	Export to West Pakistan from East Pakistan	Import to East Pakistan from West Pakistan
1955-56	244	532
1956-57	269	701
1957-58	289	686
1958-59	362	569
1959-60	363	826
1960-61	402	855
1961-62	471	957
1962-63	511	895
1963-64	544	875

1964-65	655	1209
1965-66	739	1325
1966-67	785	1233
1967-68	871	1385
1968-69	966	1800
<b>Total: 1955-69</b>	<b>7471</b>	<b>13848</b>

Source: *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*, p. 109

**Table-9: Disparity in Education Sector  
(in million Rupee)**

Year	East Pakistan		West Pakistan	
	Expenditure (Education)	Share in provincial Budget %)	Expenditure (Education)	Share in provincial Budget %)
1955-56	26.5	9.19	84.6	16.57
1956-57	7.41	-	616.41	22.5
1957-58	39.9	12.70	102.8	16.83
1958-59	34.4	6.58	136.6	15.50
1959-60	25.2	6.25	115.7	14.37
1960-61	61.9	12.65	121.6	14.35
1961-62	67.2	10.76	155.7	14.37
1962-63	76.5	10.27	203.4	15.07
1963-64	88.3	8.87	229.1	14.58
1964-65	95.4	8.32	264.5	15.39
1965-66	121.8	10.69	282.0	16.87
1966-67	138.0	10.85	288.0	16.15
<b>Total: 1955-67</b>	<b>797.6</b>	<b>9.65</b>	<b>2084.6</b>	<b>15.50</b>

#### 4.8 Liberation War, 1971

The result of the 1970 election astonished the West Pakistani authority. Yahya Khan was convinced by the rightist political parties that Mujib might not get the majority. Moreover, Moulana Bhasani, a popular leader of East Pakistan boycotted the election due to the devastating flood around the country and cyclone in the coastal areas of East Pakistan. He claimed ‘relief’ instead of ‘election’. He gave slogan: “Give relief before the ballot”. He also criticized Mujib’s decision to take part in the election whereas millions of people were

in distress due to the severe flood. So, Yahya Khan thought, he could dash Mujib to the ground and would continue his dictatorial rule. That's why he was agreed to give the election. However, Mujib said, election and relief work would go in parallel. People accepted Mukib's decision and, therefore, the result of 1970 election dashed Yahya in the ground.

#### **4.8.1 Denial of Power Transfer by Yahya Khan**

After the landslide victory in the election, Mujib and his party, Awami League, started to prepare a constitution on the basis of six points and 11-points. On the other hand, Yahya Khan and his associates started conspiring to undo the verdict of the people. As a part of the blueprint, Yahya Khan came to Dhaka and had two rounds talk with Mujib and Awami League leaders on 12 and 13 January, 1971 to fix a possible date of National Assembly session. Bhutto, the leader of the second largest party in Pakistan, also came to Dhaka and met Mujib. Returning to Karachi from Dhaka, Yahya told the journalists in Karachi airport, "Mujib is the future Prime Minister" of Pakistan. During the talk with the West Pakistani leaders, Sheikh Mujibor Rahman clearly told them that the constitution would be based on 6-points and 11-points. Mujib demanded for the National Assembly session on 15 February. However, Yahya Khan declared the on 13 February that the National Assembly would be held on 3 March. Bhutto already conferred with Sheikh Mujib on 6-points. It was assumed that Yahya Khan was planning something to jeopardize the National Assembly session. Bhutto declared on 15 February that he would not join the National Assembly session. He also suggested other West Pakistani leaders not to join the Dhaka session. He declared that he would close from Peshawar to Karachi if the West Pakistani leaders join the Dhaka session. As a part of the conspiracy, an Indian aircraft 'Ganga' was hijacked and destroyed at the Lahore airport. The people of East Pakistan understood Yahya's ill motive and demanded the transfer of power to the elected representatives. They came out of their homes and took part in the processions and slogans in the streets against all conspiracies. At this situation, Yahya Khan consulted with Bhutto and suddenly postponed the National Assembly session on 1 March for an indefinite period. This declaration made it clear to the Bengali people that Yahya Khan did not want to transfer power to the Bengalis.

#### **4.8.2 Seven March Speech and Non-cooperation Movement**

No sooner had Yahiya Khan declared the postponement of the National Assembly session, Sheikh Mujib called a press conference and declared an action program. Hartal was observed on 2 March in Dhaka and on 3 March throughout the country. On 2 March, the students of Dhaka University hoisted a flag of independent Bangla at a meeting before the Arts building. Police opened fire in Dhaka and the situation grew worse. Curfew was imposed in Dhaka. However, people violated the curfew and erected barricades on the routes of army movement.



On March 3, 1971 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib addressed a huge rally at Paltan and declared hartal program up to 6 March from 5 am

to 2 pm. He asked for closing down all the government offices during this hartal period. He also announced that no tax would be paid unless the armed forces were withdrawn and peoples' demands were met. People abide by his announcement word to word.

On March 7, Sheikh Mujib gave a historic address at 'Race Course' Maydan (now Suhrawardy Uddan) before more than 10 lac people. A helicopter was spinning above the vast gathering to scare the people. But the people were not scared. They had come to bear the orders of their great leader. They had come to take a final oath. In his address, Mujib called for taking preparations to face any situation. He urged the people to fortify their homes and be prepared to fight the enemy to the last with what they had. He said, "...We have given blood, we will give more; and InshaAllah, we will liberate our country." He also said, "...since we've learnt to sacrifice, none can subdue us." He said, "...even if I may not be alive to give orders, lock everything." By stipulating four conditions for the Pakistan military establishment, Bangabandhu concluded his thunderous speech by saying: "This time, the struggle is for our liberation, this time the

struggle is for our independence". His fierce voice enchanted the people and made them fighter for the independence. In fact, he declared the independence of Bangladesh indirectly through his 7<sup>th</sup> March speech. After the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech, the whole nation started to prepare for a great battle.

#### **4.8.3 Subject and Significance of the 7 March speech**

The historic 7 March speech of Bangabandhu was considered as one of the greatest speeches in the world. Only two other speeches of the modern history are comparable to his speech. One is the Gettysburg speech by American President Abraham Lincoln and the other is the speech of Martin Luther King Jr. for the black's rights. However, Bangabandhu's speech was unique in the sense that it was not a prepared speech; he gave a spontaneous speech under the threat of Pakistani military helicopter spinning above his head. He was strongly forbidden by the American delegates, not to declare independence. On the other hand, the agitated Bengali youth activists were surrounded him and were posing heavy pressure on him to declare the independence. The people all over the country were also waiting for their leader's final order. The international community was also observing the political development in Pakistan. It was such a moment that even a single mistake could destroy the historical opportunity of fulfilling the long cherished desire. It was such a moment that he was to uphold the spirit of his nation; he was to satisfy his agitated disciples. Again, it was such a moment that he was to hold the support of the international community. He was to ensure that his enemies might not get chance to take actions against the Bengalis in reference to his speech. However, Bangabandhu gave such a tactical speech, which did not violate the UN charter, but clearly gave message of independence movement to the people. He gave only 18 minutes speech, which covers the history of the struggle of the Bengali people, the inhuman oppression of the Pakistani authority, the evil desire of the West Pakistan, the legitimacy of his movement and his final desire. His speech was so decisive that the Bengali officers and the soldiers in the Pakistani army took his speech as the green signal for starting rebellion. Major Ziaur Rahman (Later the President of Bangladesh) wrote in his article, 'Ekti Jatir Jonma'

(the Birth of a Nation) in 1972 published in the *Weekly Bichitra*:  
“...we take it as a green signal...we finalize our plan”

Along with the call for the liberation struggle, Sheikh Mujib declared an action program of non-violent and non-cooperation movement. He announced 35 rules for running the civil administration. People followed him spontaneously and he became a *de facto* in East Pakistan. From 7 March to 25 March, the civil administration and the private institutions of East Pakistan followed Mujib's 35 instructions. When Yahiya Khan saw the *de facto* power of Sheikh Mujib and the collapse of the civil administration in East Pakistan, he announced a new date for the National Assembly session on the following 25 March. For this, he called a meeting of political leaders at Dhaka on March 10, 1971. Sheikh Mujib refused to take part in that meeting. On March 15, Yahiya Khan came to Dhaka and invited Sheikh Mujib for a dialogue. On 16 March the dialogue started between Sheikh Mujib and Yahiya Khan. Later Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was called to join the dialogue. Bhutto came to Dhaka on 22 March. However, he demanded the revision of 6-points and a share of power. But Mujib expressed his firm stand on 6 points. The situation began to be critical. News spread that thousands of Pakistani soldiers were landing at Dhaka Airport with civil dresses. Bengali soldiers were disarmed. On March 19 the civil people locked in a clash with the Pakistani convoy when they heard that the convoy was going to disarm the Bengali soldiers at Gazipur Cantonment. Awami League intensified the movement for the independence throughout the whole country. When the news spread that huge soldiers and weapons were waiting at the Chittagong port, the dock workers refused to unload those arms shipment by the call of political leaders. On March 23, the Republic Day of Pakistan, the national flag of Bangladesh was hoisted in every house of the country. In fact, people all over the country were prepared for the independence movement after the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of Sheikh Mujibor Rahman.

On March 24 Yahiya Khan again sat for the discussion with Sheikh Mujib and his party leaders. However, two hours discussion produced no result.

On 25 March, before leaving Dhaka, Yahya Khan ordered his armed forces to launch military operations upon the innocent Bengalis to destroy them as a nation.

#### **4.9.1 Operation Searchlight and Declaration of Independence**

The Pakistani authority decided not to transfer power to the Bengalis. They wanted to make Bengalis as their subject. However, when they saw that it is not possible to continue the suction and suppression any more, they decided to kill as many as possible to stop the voice of the freedom loving people. Therefore, Mujib-Yahya dialogue was a camouflage. A cruel plan was already designed and that was the mass killing. Yahya wanted some more time to let his army get prepared. That's why; he came to Dhaka on 15 March and continued a dialogue up to 24 March. According to Siddiq Salik, a senior officer of Pakistan Army at Dhaka, on 17 March the military governor of East Pakistan General Tikka Khan, Lt. General Khadim Hossain and Rao Farman Ali finalized the plan of genocide named 'Operation Search Light'. It was a systematic massacre. It was nothing but a systematic killing, raping and burning down. Yahya told his soldiers, "Kill three millions of them and the rest will eat out of our hands." The Operation Search Light was launched at the midnight of 26 March and continued up to 10 April when all the district head quarters of East Pakistan were captured by the Pakistani army.

On March 20, all the soldiers of East Pakistan were ordered to hand over their arms to disarm the Bengali soldiers. On the same day, Yahya Khan sat on a meeting with his senior army officers. During this discussion Yahya Khan approved the 'Operation Search Light'. It was decided that the attack would be launched in the divisional cities at a time. Rao Farman Ali was given responsibility to launch Operation Search Light' at Dhaka city. It was planned that the operation would start at 12 am. However, the operation started some time before because of the people's resistance. As a part of the operation, a group of Pakistani army raided the residence of Bangabandhu at mid-night and arrested him. Before being arrested, **Bangabandhu declared the independence of Bangladesh and his declaration was circulated through T&T messaging system and it was decoded and circulated throughout the country.**

In the first hour of 26 March, (at 00:05 hours) the message of the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu was handed over to the elected parliament member of Chittagong Advocate Yunus Ali. The message was received through EPR wireless set at Chittagong.

According to the recent research, it is known that Bangabandhu sent his declaration paper through a messenger to maghbazar wireless station, which was still unaffected. Abdul Kader and Meshbah Uddin received Bangabandhu's message and sent it to the then 19 districts through the VHF telecommunication system.<sup>35</sup> The officers of this center also cyclostyled the message and circulated among the Awami League and Student League leaders. In some places in the country, the declaration was publicized through microphones.

The message was as follows:

#### **The declaration of Independence of Bangladesh**

This may be my last message. From Today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved.

Joy Bangla.

Sk. Mujibur Rahman

26th March, 1971

Bangabandhu's declaration of independence was approved by the Mujib Nagar Government on April 10, 1971 through the 'Proclamation of Independence'. It is a part and parcel of our constitution and the base of the legitimacy of the Mujibnagar Government and the liberation war of Bangladesh. Unless Bangabandhu gave the declaration of the independence of Bangladesh, all the activities of the Mujibnagar government and the activities in favor of Bangladesh during the liberation war in 1971 might lose its legal merit to the international community and we might not prove our right to be independent. That's why; 26 March is considered as the independence day of Bangladesh.

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<sup>35</sup> See: *The Daily Janakantha*, April 8, 2013

Bangabandhu prepared for the situation and took necessary steps secretly to declare the independence of Bangladesh. For this purpose, he had set some sources for the circulation of his declaration. His plan was succeeded. His declaration soon spread all over the country.

#### **4.9.2 The aim of the Operation Search Light**

- Operation to be launched simultaneously all across East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).
- Maximum number of political and student leaders and those among cultural organizations and teaching staff to be arrested or fired.
- Operation must achieve 100% success in Dhaka. (Dhaka University would be occupied and searched).
- Free and greater use of fire authorized for securing cantonments.
- All internal and international communications to be cut off, including telephone, television, radio and telegraph.
- All Bengali (East Pakistani) troops to be neutralized by seizing weapons and ammunition.
- To deceive the Awami League, President Yahya Khan to pretend to continue dialogue, even if Mr. Bhutto disagrees, and to agree to Awami League demands.

#### **4.9.3 Causalities**

In an attempt to crush forces seeking independence for East Pakistan, the West Pakistani military regime unleashed a systematic campaign of mass murder which aimed at killing millions of Bengalis, and likely succeeded in doing so.

On the mid night of March 25, 1971 West Pakistani troops began massacres of unarmed citizens in the capital city of Dhaka. The main targets during the first massacres were students and professors at Dhaka University, the Bengali police force, Bengali Para militias, and the Hindu minority. The Pakistani elite believed that the roots of the liberation movement were Bengali intellectuals and Hindu minorities. The first massacre in Dhaka left 7,000 people dead in a single night. It caused to a large number of casualties along with the displacement of many Bengali nationals into neighboring countries. The first six weeks of the genocide was characterized by weak, uncoordinated counter-attacks by Bengali militias and mass slaughter of Bengali civilians by the West Pakistani army.

#### **4.9.4 The Spontaneous Early Resistance**

The massacre failed to quell nationalist sentiments. Instead on March 26th Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan. Nationalist pride grew as the news of the March 25th massacres spread to surrounding areas and an amateur Bengali army was assembled. However, the small ill-equipped army failed to keep Pakistani troops out of Bangladesh. To combat the larger Pakistani army, Bangladesh increased the number of its guerrilla troops and sought external support, especially from India. As the violence intensified, mass rape was used as a weapon of war by the Pakistani army. Women were raped in their homes in front of their families to cause lasting mental and physical trauma. They were also taken to rape camps. It is estimated that 200,000 women and girls, from 8 to 75 years of age, were raped during the genocide.

However, the resistance after the Operation Search Light was spontaneous. After the formation of the Mujib Nagar government, the liberation war went on a systematic way, which led to a final victory in December 16, 1971.

#### **4.10 Formation of Mujibnagar Government**

When the Pakistani Army launched a brutal massacre, the elected political leaders crossed the Indian border and met together at Agartala and then Calcutta. They took decision of forming a parliament with the members elected in 1970. The proclamation of independence was declared on 10 April, which declared Bangladesh as a Peoples Republic with equality, human dignity and social justice as its fundamental principles. A government was formed under the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on that day although he was then confined by the Pakistani army. Sayed Nazrul Islam took the responsibility of acting president. The cabinet was formed as per the seniority followed in the party during the presence of Bangabandhu. On 17<sup>th</sup> April, the elected members gathered in the town on Baidyanathatala in Meherpur, Kushtia district. On that day, the cabinet took oath at a mango orchard near the site of the Battle of Plassey, in which the British defeated the last independent Nawab Siraj Ud Daulla in 1757.

The first cabinet of Bangladesh was as follows:

Office holder	Names	Notes
President	Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	Nominal president. Detained in West Pakistan throughout the war.
Vice President	Syed Nazrul Islam	Acting President.
Prime Minister	Tajuddin Ahmad	Principal wartime political leader.
Defense Minister	Colonel M A G Osmani	C-in-C of the Mukti Bahini.
Finance Minister	Mansur Ali	-
Home Minister	Abul Hasnat Muhammad Qamaruzzaman	-
Foreign Minister	Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad Abdus Samad Azad	Mostaq Ahmad was removed after attempting secret talks with Islamabad.

#### 4.10.1 Operating the Liberation War by the Mujibnagar Government

The Mujibnagar Government formed its armed forces with the Bengali army, police, EPR, naval forces and air forces. There were thousands of civilian people who crossed the Indian border to take part in the liberation war. The government gathered them with the help of Indian armed forces and provided training for them. They were Mukti Bahini. They were the main force of our small regular force. To launch the liberation war through a systematic way, the government divided the country into eleven sectors. They were as follows:



At Mujibnagar, 17 April, 1971

A Brief History of Bangladesh 244

No	Area	Sector Commander
1	Chittagong District, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and the entire eastern area of the Noakhali District on the banks of the river Muhuri. The headquarters of the sector was at Harina.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Ziaur Rahman (April 10, 1971 – May 15, 1971)</li> <li>• Captain Rafiqul Islam (June 10, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
2	Districts of Dhaka, Comilla, and Faridpur, and part of Noakhali District. The headquarters of the sector was at Melaghar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Khaled Mosharraf (April 10, 1971 – September 22, 1971)</li> <li>• Major ATM Haider (Sector Commander September 22, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
3	Area between Churaman Kathi (near Sreemangal) and Sylhet in the north and Singerbil of Brahmanbaria in the south.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major K. M. Shafiullah (April 10, 1971 – July 21, 1971)</li> <li>• Captain A. N. M. Nuruzzaman (July 23, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
4	Area from Habiganj District on the north to Kanaighat Police Station on the south along the 100 mile long border with India. The headquarters of the sector was initially at Karimganj and later at Masimpur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Chitta Ranjan Dutta (April 10, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> <li>• Captain A Rab</li> </ul>
5	Area from Durgapur to Dawki (Tamabil) of Sylhet District and the entire area up to the eastern borders of the district. The headquarters of the sector was at Banshtola.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Mir Shawkat Ali (April 10, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
6	Rangpur District and part of Dinajpur District. The headquarters of the sector was at Burimari near Patgram.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wing Commander M Khademul Bashar (April 10, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
7	Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Nazmul Huq (April 10 –</li> </ul>

	part of Dinajpur District. The headquarters of the sector was at Tarangpur near Kaliaganj.	September 27, 1971) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Quazi nooruzzaman (September 30 – February 14, 1972)</li> <li>• Subedar Major A Rab</li> </ul>
8	In April 1971, the operational area of the sector comprised the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Faridpur and Patuakhali. At the end of May the sector was reconstituted and comprised the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Satkhira and the northern part of Faridpur district. The headquarters of the sector was at Benapole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Abu Osman Chowdhury (April 10 – July 17, 1971)</li> <li>• Major Abul Manzoor (August 14, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>
9	Barisal, Patuakhali, and parts of the districts of Khulna and Faridpur. The headquarters of the sector was at Hasnabad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major M. A. Jalil (July 17 – December 24, 1971)</li> <li>• Major MA Manzur</li> <li>• Major Joynal Abedin</li> </ul>
10	This sector was constituted with the naval commandos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commander HQ BD Forces (December 3–16, 1971)</li> </ul>
11	Mymensingh and Tangail along with parts of Rangpur - Gaibandha, Ulipur, Kamalpur and Chilmari. The headquarters of the sector was at Teldhala until October 10, then transferred to Mahendraganj.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Ziaur Rahman (June 26, 1971 – October 10, 1971;</li> <li>• Major Abu Taher (October 10, 1971 – November 2, 1971 (injured from mine blast);</li> <li>• Squadron Leader M. Hamidullah Khan) (November 2, 1971 – February 14, 1972)</li> </ul>

#### **4.10.2 Different Bengali forces during the Liberation War in 1971**

##### **• Regular Army**

The regular forces were created by approximately three thousand and a half soldiers of five battalions of East Bengal Regiment (the number increase to 8), 12,000 EPR, and some thousands of Police and Ansars. Sector trups were also raised up to 10 thousand.

Three brigades were formed in July, September and October and were named after respective commanders.

**K-force:** Head Quarters: Agartala, Commander: Lt. Col. Khaled Mosharraf

**S-force:** Head Quarters: Hajamara, Commander: Lt. Col. K M Shafiullah

**Z-force:** Head Quarters: Teldhala, Commander: Lt. Col. Ziaur Rahman

##### **• Other Liberation War Forces**

Bangladesh Liberation Force was formed after special training of selected members of Students league and young members of Awami league. This force was popularly known as ‘Mujib Bahini’.

Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni: Coordinator, Eastern Region

Sirajul Alam Khan: Coordinator, Northern Region

Abdur Razzak: Coordinator, Western Region

Student’s Union, NAP and Communist Party

Tofayel Ahmed: Coordinator, Southern Region Student's Union, NAP and Communist Party, Some members of Students Union, NAP and Communist Party were separately trained and organized. They directed armed action in coordination with central command. Chief of Command: Mohammed Forhad

#### **Civilian Forces in Occupied Territories**

##### **•Quader Bahini**

During the liberation war ‘Quader Bahini’ led by Abdul Quader Siddiqui played significant role in Tangail area. In the final days of liberation war, this armed force entered Dhaka with the allied forces. Chief of Command: Abdul Quader Siddiqui. It has 17 thousand forces and other 70 thousand volunteers.

### **● Hemayet Bahini**

These locally organized freedom fighters made harassing attacks on Pakistani outposts in Faridpur and part of Khulna. Chief of Command: Hemayetuddin. It has 4500 freedom fighters.

### **● Afsar Battalion**

Major Afsaruddin Ahmed organized freedom fighters in Mymensingh to form Afsar Battalion. This battalion collected arms from Pakistan occupation army and developed liberated area in the region. Chief of Command: Major Afsaruddin Ahmed. It has 5054 freedom fighters.

### **● Air Force**

Bangladesh Air Force started its venture on 28 September at Dimper with an Oter Aircraft, Aluvet Helicopter, and a Dacota Biman—all these were given by India. Air Commodore A K Khondakar was the founder of Bangladesh Air Force. 67 Airman, 300 junior technicians and Captain Khaleque, Captain Sattar, Captain Shahabuddin, Captain Mukit, Captain AAkram, captain Sharfuddin and some other officers established the Air Force.

### **● Navy**

On 31 March, 1971 eight Bengali sub-mariner trainees left the Pakistan Navy and took political shelter at Indian Embassy at Madrid, Spain. They reached the Indian border with the help of India. Later with the direction of Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahymad and Osmany, they collected 357 strong Bengali youth. Then they started training in the Baghrothi river of West Bengal. At last the members of Naval Force were raised to 515. Later 45 Bengali Naval soldier joined the Navi fleeing from Pakistani Naval force.

### **4.10.3 Surrender of Pakistani army and the Victory of Bangladesh**

On 16 December 1971, Lt. General A.A.K. Niazi, Commanding Officer of Pakistan Army forces located in East Pakistan signed the Instrument of Surrender. At the time of surrender only a few countries had provided diplomatic recognition to the new nation. Over 93,000 Pakistani troops surrendered to the Indian forces & Bangladesh Liberation forces, making it the largest surrender since the World War II.



Bangladesh sought admission in the UN with most voting in its favor, but China vetoed this as Pakistan was its key ally. The United States, also a key ally of Pakistan, was one of the last nations to accord Bangladesh recognition. To ensure a smooth transition, in 1972 a treaty was signed between India and Pakistan. The treaty ensured that Pakistan recognized the independence of Bangladesh in exchange for the return of the Pakistani POWs.

India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh on 4 December 1971. Bhutan recognized Bangladesh on 6 December, 1971.

#### **4.11 Role External Actors**

The birth of a state depends not only on the internal efforts; it is heavily dependent on the support and recognition of the international community. During the liberation of Bangladesh, the world was passing a tough period of ‘cold war’. Most of the countries of the world were divided into two ideologies—socialism and capitalism. In this context, most of the countries observed the liberation war of Bangladesh through cold war world view. Let us see how the major powers reacted to the liberation war of Bangladesh.

##### **4.11.1 Role of India towards the Liberation War**

India is the neighbor country of Bangladesh. It encircled Bangladesh in all the four sides—by land and by sea. The two countries were connected historically from the ancient times. Most of the people of the both countries share the same values, culture and creed. So, the attitude of India to the liberation war of Bangladesh was very much important. The two countries were divided in 1947 politically, but their soul-relationship remained strong. It was proved during the liberation war of Bangladesh.

After the declaration of independence, Bangladesh appealed to all the countries of the world to extend help and support to outdo the Pakistani oppressors. India responded immediately. When the Pakistani army launched Operation Search Light and started to kill indiscriminately, the millions of homeless Bengali people rushed to the Indian border to save their life. India immediately opened its border and accepted the refugees. The CPI of West Bengal established "Bangladesher Muktisangram Sahayok Somiti" on 30 March. On the other hand, CPM of West Bengal established "Bangladesh Sanghati and Sahajjo Committee" on 31 March. The intellectuals of Calcutta gave statements in support of Bangladesh. Indian media broadcast the news of Bangladesh with much importance. On March 26, 1971 Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gave statement on Bangladesh issue in Lokosova. She greeted the Bangladesh revolution and condemned Pakistani brutality. She said, "...When millions of people are pushed into another territory, jeopardizing its normal life, its plans for the future, and it's very security, it is obvious that peace is in peril." He said, "At the very moment of genocide upon the innocent Bengalis, the international conscience might not be silent." She promised to provide utmost support and help to the freedom loving Bengali people. When Tajuddin Ahmad met Indira Gandhi on April 3, 1971, the Indian government gave the following promise:

- a. The freedom fighters can use Indian soil to launch attack on the Pakistani oppressors;
- b. Border will be opened for the refugees;
- c. Bangladesh will be permitted to set up a radio station in Indian Territory to create public opinion of the international community in support of the liberation war.

India gave shelter to more than one crore Bengali refugees, launched relief activities, trained the youths and gave them weapons to launch operations against Pakistani army. The government and the peoples of India urged the international community to support Bangladesh achieving independence. From 24 October, 1971, the then Indian Prime Minister started visiting the western countries for 19 days to collect support for Bangladesh.

With the help of India, the freedom fighters of Bangladesh gradually strengthen their position and the Pakistani army in East Pakistan started to weak facing continuous guerrilla attacks. On November 21 Bangladesh and India established a joint army command. On December 3, Pakistan attacked India. In reply, India also declared war against Pakistan on December 4, 1971. In the same day, India recognized Bangladesh as an independent country. On December 14, the India-Bangladesh joint army reached the border of Dhaka and gave the Pakistani army ultimatum to surrender. On December 16 Pakistan surrendered to India-Bangladesh joint command at Race Course Maydan, Dhaka. Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign, independent country.

#### **4.11.2 Role of China toward the Liberation War**

The role of China in the Liberation war of Bangladesh was disappointing. China supported Pakistan strongly. It considered the Liberation war of Bangladesh as a ‘civil war’ in Pakistan and urged the international community to consider it as Pakistan’s domestic matter. When Pakistani army launched the brutal genocide, the whole world condemned it. However, China remained silent. 15 days after the massacre, on April 11, Chinese Prime Minister Chou En Lai wrote a letter to Yahya Khan, which said, “Against the expansionist India and to protect the sovereignty of Pakistan, China will be always in favor of Pakistan.” It was reported that from the mid-1971, China sent 100 Lorries of arms to Pakistan everyday through the western border of Pakistan. Not only that, to prevent guerrilla attacks of the freedom fighters, China sent 200 guerrilla specialists to train Pakistan Army. After December 3, when Indo-Pakistan war began, China took active role in the United Nations. On December 5 and 6, the USSR placed two proposals in the United Nations Organizations in favor of the liberation war of Bangladesh. China gave ‘veto’ to defeat the initiative. However, when Bangladesh emerged as the sovereign, independent state in December 16, 1971, China remarked, “Bangladesh is the creation of Indo-Russian conspiracy.”

#### **4.11.3 Role of the USSR toward the Liberation War**

During the cold war period, Soviet Union always tried to follow a non-partial liberal policy. Moreover, as a socialist country, it was embarrassing for the USSR to go against China. At the beginning, Soviet Union wanted a peaceful solution of Bangladesh liberation war within the existent structure of Pakistan. However, the USSR strongly protested the inhuman genocide of Pakistan. On March 30, 1971 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union condemned Pakistani brutality in their 24<sup>th</sup> Congress. On April 2, 1971, Soviet President Mr. Podgorny wrote a letter to Yahya Khan, which said, "...As a true friend, in this tough challenging time of the people of Pakistan, we cannot but to say that the complex situation arose in Pakistan might be solved politically without using power and it should be done." In July 9-10, when US Foreign Minister Henry Kissinger visited China and Pakistan, [India] succeeded to convince the USSR about the significance of the situation. Then the Soviet Union left the moderate policy and tilted toward the liberation war of Bangladesh. On August 9 Indo-Soviet friendship treaty was signed.

From December 1-10, Bangladesh liberation war issue became the most important issue in the United Nations meetings. The friends of Pakistan started to realize that the dismemberment of Pakistan could not be stopped. So, they tried to pass a cease-fire resolution in favor of Pakistan. USA and China tried to pass the resolution. However, the USSR gave three times 'veto' against the proposal. Moreover, the USSR took the challenge of an atomic war against the USA when the USS Enterprise moved toward the Bay of Bengal. When it became clear that Pakistan was going to be defeated by the India-Bangladesh joint force, the United States sent its aircraft carrier the USSR Enterprise. This carrier started on 9 December and reached the Indian Ocean on December 11. On the other hand, the USSR realized that the USA might move toward the Bay of Bengal, therefore, on 6 December it sent anatomic submarine along with some fleets equipped with atomic missiles from Vladivostok. When the USS Enterprise reached the Indian Ocean, it saw the place was already occupied by the Soviet Navy. Therefore the US fleet dared not advance and moved toward, this way, the USSR helped to ensure the win of Bangladesh. Soviet Union was the first among the world powers which recognized Bangladesh on February 24, 1972.

#### **4.11.4 Role of the USA towards the Liberation War**

The role of the USA during the liberation war of Bangladesh was completely negative. During the liberation war, the US President was Nixon and his foreign minister was Henry Kissinger. Both of them had an anti-Indian perception. Nixon believed that Indian lobby worked for his challenger Kennedy in the US election. Therefore, he was not happy with the Indira Gandhi's stand. Secondly, the United States lost China's friendship after the Second World War. As it was a tough period of the Cold War, the United States was desperately trying to reopen China. General Ayub Khan, the ex-President of Pakistan, helped the USA to reopen China. It was decided that in 1972 the US President would visit China to reconcile Sino-US relation. US president Nixon was eagerly waiting for that opportunity. That's why; the United States did not want to go against Pakistan lest China should be hurt. The China-Pakistan strong bond led the USA remain mute about the brutal genocide imposed upon the innocent Bengalis by the Pakistani army. That's why; the United States addressed the liberation war of Bangladesh as the internal affairs of Pakistan. The USA emphasized on the territorial integrity of Pakistan. However, the opposition members of the US Senate and the Congress and the US citizens accused the Nixon government for overlooking the Pakistani brutality. They demanded for stopping genocide in Bangladesh. Some of them raised funds for the relief activities in the Refugee camps. George Harrison organized 'Concert for Bangladeh' in New York for the purpose. Thus the United States had two roles: the US government was against the liberation of Bangladesh and the citizens as well as other opposition leaders did not agree with the government policy.

The United States took hard line against the liberation war of Bangladesh after the Indo-USSR friendship treaty of August 1971. The United States considered this treaty as a 'blank cheque' for India. In September 26, 1971 when the general assembly of the UNO held, the representative of the USA denied to give permission to Bengali representative to deliver a speech on the situation in East Pakistan. Even the United States organized its western and Arabian alliance to pass a resolution condemning Indian supportive activities toward the liberation war of Bangladesh. It also sent a threat to the USSR that

the Détente might be postponed unless the USSR restrained India to interfere the internal affairs of Pakistan. When it became clear that Pakistan was going to loss the war, the United States tried to pass a UN resolution for ceasefire. When it was failed by the ‘Veto’ of the USSR, the United States sent its renowned aircraft carrier widely known as 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet toward the Bay of Bengal to scare India. However, the United States sent relief funds to the Bengali refugees in India.

#### **4.11.5 Role of the UNO**

During our liberation war, the role of the United Nations Organizations was disappointing. It was then used as the rubber stamp of the western world. On 9 December 1948, the UNO had passed a resolution of ‘Conventionon the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime ofGenocide, 1948’, which said“Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world...” However, during the liberation war, the United Nations Organizations remained mute about the “Operation Searchlight” of the Pakistani army at the mid-nigh of March 25, 1971 and the successive genocide.Even in the Geneva Convention of 1949, it was declared that a state must show humanity in dealing its internal conflicts. Pakistan ignored both the charter of Genocide convention and Geneva Convention. But the UN failed to take steps against Pakistan. It shamelessly failed to save the innocent infants, womes and elderly people of Bangladesh. Even in September 26, 1971, when the UN General Assembly was held, it failed to discuss and take any resolution regarding Pakistan Crisis. This failure has proved that the UN is rubber stamp organization of the big powers. This time the Secretary General of the UN was Dr. U. Thant, a citizen of Myanmar. He did not provide support for the distressed Bengali people. It a reflection derived from China-Myanmar closeness over him. However, the UN launched relief activities both within East Pakistan and the refugee camps in the border areas in India. But there is allegation that the relief materials sent to East Pakistan through Pakistani authority did not fruitful for the distressed general people. Most of these materials were assimilated by the members of peace committee, Rajakars and the Pakistani soldiers. The relief sent to the refugee camps was also insufficient.

#### **4.11.6 Nation Building**

Nation building is the conscious and focused application of the people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that they identify as theirs. It involves the development of behaviors, values, language, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate their history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the nation. Nation building is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of national culture, and the collective identity. According to According to the research of Simon and Schuster a successful Nation-building depends on the following five principles:

- **Partners:** Nation-building always requires partners; there must be communication between people on the ground and people in distant government offices.
- **Process:** Human societies do not follow formulas. Nation-building is a process which does not produce clear, quick results.
- **Problem-solving:** Leadership must start small, addressing basic problems. Public trust during a period of occupation emerges from the fulfillment of basic needs.
- **Purpose:** Small beginnings must serve larger purposes. Citizens must see the value in what they're doing.
- **People:** Nation-building is about people. Large forces do not move history. People move history.

According to Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh was the first country to emerge out of a successful national liberation movement waged against 'internal colonialism' in the new states. However,

Bangladesh was a poor, overcrowded land, which was completely destroyed by the Pakistani army during the nine-month bloody war. All the infrastructures were destroyed, the cultivable lands were ruined, roads and railways, bridges and culverts were destroyed. There was no food in the store houses, no currency left in the treasury. Everything was burned down and destroyed by the Pakistani army so that the new born Bangladesh might not sustain as a state and prove itself dysfunctional. The western countries and media looked upon Bangladesh as 'an international basket case.' It is assumed that

Bangladesh appeared destined to be a client state of India. However, the first government after the liberation, headed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, took such steps with empty hands toward nation building, which was proved fruitful for the empty-pocket new born state. The economy of Bangladesh slowly recovered from the disruption of the previous year. 97 countries recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign, independent state. The Awami League government started to build a new political structure. Constitution was composed within shortest time and under this constitution, an election was held through which a democratic people's government was established. When the civil and military bureaucracy were to structure, the question of 'collaborators' and 'patriot' arose which gave much trouble in the process of nation building. It is irony that the most senior and experienced civil and military bureaucrats were working in the central government in 1970. They could not defect from West Pakistan to Bangladesh. After the liberation, when they were freed and returned to Bangladesh, it became difficult for the new government to adopt them in the administration. It irony that their experience was valuable for the formation of the new bureaucracy, however, as they were in West Pakistan, it was difficult for the new government to adopt them in the administration, to fix their seniority which caused much internal conflicts. However, the overwhelming personality of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, successfully tackle the situation at the beginning. However, an internal conflict developed as an undercurrent which later encouraged the coups and anticoups. However, the Bangabandhu government successfully started its enterprise of nation building and the people also have much faith on him. But the local and international conspiracy against Bangladesh took the opportunity of the transitional situations and Bangabandhu was assassinated. Thus the ideals of the nation buildings were changed and moved to the new course.

# **Chapter- Five**

## **Constitution of Bangladesh and Major Amendments**

### **Objectives**

This chapter wants to develop the learners' perception about the definition, formation and the salient features of Bangladesh constitution so that they could become a good citizen.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Constitution of Bangladesh and Major Amendments: Background, Definition, Types and Salient Features, Uniqueness of the Constitution of Bangladesh, Major Amendments: First Amendment, Fourth Amendment, Fifth Amendment, Seventh Amendment, Eighth Amendment, Twelfth Amendment, Thirteenth Amendment, Fifteenth Amendment, Sixteenth Amendment.

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will become well educated citizen. Their knowledge of the constitution will guide them to act as a responsible person. It will also help them aware of their rights and responsibilities.

## **Chapter- Five**

### **Constitution of Bangladesh and Major Amendments**

#### **a. Definition of Constitution**

The term *constitution* comes through French from the Latin word *constitutio* which means regulations and orders. A constitution is the fundamental law according to which the government of a state is organized, and agreeably to which the relations of individuals or moral persons to the community are determined. It is a system of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, corporation, or the like, is governed. According to Aristotle, a constitution is ‘the way of life the state has chosen for itself’. He also said that it is the arrangement of magistracies in a state, especially the highest of all. According to Lord Bruce, “Constitution is the aggregate of laws and customs under which the life of the state goes on”. According to C.F Strong, “A Constitution may be said to be a collection of principles according to which the powers of the government, the rights of the government and relation between the two are adjusted”. However, some writers, namely K.C. Wheare, Hood Phillips and Gilchrist have defined Constitution in wider sense. According to them the term ‘constitution’ is used to denote all written and unwritten principles regulating the administration of the State. It’s an essential part of a modern state.

Constitutions are of two kinds: written constitution and unwritten constitution. Some constitutions are developed on the basis of age-old customs. They are unwritten constitutions. For an example, the constitution of the United Kingdom (UK) is unwritten. On the other hand, the constitution of Bangladesh is written.

#### **5.2 Methods of establishing constitution**

Constitutions may form in many ways. These are:

- a. Evolution
- b. Declaration of the king or grants
- c. Revolution
- d. From religious faith
- e. Peoples’ mandate
- f. war

The British constitution has been evolved through ages on the basis of customs. The American and Bangladesh constitution came through a war of independence. The French constitution was derived from the French Revolution in 1789 AD and Russian constitution after Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 etc. The constitution of Saudi Arabia is formed on the basis of the holy Quran and Hadith. Sometimes constitution is established by the grant or charter of a king. The constitution of Japan is established through this way. French monarch Luis XVII granted a constitution by declaring a charter. The king of Hawaii Kamehameha III declared a constitution in 1840 to the kingdom. Again, Bangladesh constitution came through the peoples' mandate in the election of 1970 on six-points.

### **5.3 Types of Constitution**

Constitutions are of mainly two types:

- a. Written and unwritten
- b. Rigid and Flexible

Written constitution: The constitutions of Bangladesh, the United States of America, India and Pakistan provide the example of written constitution.

Unwritten constitution: British constitution is the example of unwritten constitution. It has developed through ages on the basis of customs.

Flexible constitution: The constitutions which can be amended by ordinary law making procedures are within this type. The constitutions of Britain, New Zealand are flexible constitution.

Rigid constitution: Constitutions which cannot be amended through ordinary process and need special procedures are rigid constitutions. This type of constitution needs two thirds of majority. For an example, the constitution of Bangladesh is rigid.

### **5.4 Background of Bangladesh Constitution**

The constitution of Bangladesh is the outcome of nine month long bloody war of independence. Before the independence, Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan inhabiting majority of population. In 1970 a general election of universal franchise was held in Pakistan. The

election was the outcome of six-point movement which demanded full autonomy of East Pakistan. The largest political party of East Pakistan chaired by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibor Rahman declared the election as ‘referendum’ on the six points. He also declared, if his party, Awami League, gets the mandate of the majority he will compose a constitution based on six points. On the other hand, the Pakistani government and all other rightist parties took stands against six points demand and urged people not to vote for Awami League. However, Mujib got absolute majority. Out of 169 seats for National Assembly from East Pakistan, Awami League secured 167 seats. The second highest seats went to Pakistan People’s Party led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. PPP got 88 seats in the National Assembly. In the Provincial Assembly election, Awami League secured 288 seats out of 300, highest in East Pakistan and PPP got 144 out of 300, highest in West Pakistan. Awami League did not get any seats either in National Assembly or in Provincial Assembly in West Pakistan. Similarly, the second highest party PPP also did not get any seat either in National Assembly or in Provincial Assembly in East Pakistan. The nature of voting of the people of the two wings of Pakistan proves the reality of provincial autonomy. Awami League declared that they will compose a sound constitution of Pakistan based of the six points because it has become a possession of the people.

The President of Pakistan General Yahya Khan summoned the session of National Assembly at Dhaka on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1971. However, the Pakistani ruling class did not want a constitution based on 6-points. Therefore, they created an artificial chaos to adjourn the session. The Peoples’ Party leader Bhutto did not accept the idea of transferring power to the Bengalis. He boycott the assembly and declared, ‘PPP does not want to be the opposition in the Assembly and it does not accept the constitution unless its demands are fulfilled.’ As a result, on March 1, 1971 President Yahya Khan cancelled the forthcoming session of National Assembly for the indefinite period. As a result, fierce protests arose in East Pakistan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibor Rahman gave a historic speech on March 7 at the ground of Race Course, Ramna. He then started a non-cooperation movement by declaring 35 instructions to the peoples of East Pakistan. People accepted and implemented those instructions

unanimously. Bangabandhu became the de facto rulers in East Pakistan. Yahya Khan again summoned the session of National Assembly on March 25, 1971. A closed-door meeting held between the convoy of Yahya Khan and the representatives of Sheikh Mujib on the issue of future constitution and power sharing. On March 21, Bhutto joined the meeting at Dhaka. However, all on a sudden, President Yahya Khan left East Pakistan in the evening of March 25 giving consent to impose genocide named ‘Operation Search Light’ over the people of Bangladesh. Pakistani Military started the operation some hours before the mid-night. Mujib’s residence at Dhanmondi was attacked by the Pakistani Army and he was arrested. On the eve of the arrest, a couple minutes after the mid-night of 25, the first hour of March 26, 1971 Mujib declared the independence of Bangladesh through a secretly pre-prepared wireless.

Later, the elected representatives of Awami League gathered at Mujibnagar of Meherpur on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1971; formed a constituent assembly and approved the ‘Declaration of Independence’ of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by signing a ‘Declaration of Independence’ note. This is the legal basis of Bangladesh constitution because the formation of Mujibnagar Government and launching the war of independence under the government was legitimated by this declaration and it was also recognized by the all other governments of the then world. This constituent assembly declared ‘Bangladesh’ as ‘Peoples’ Sovereign Republic’.

This ‘Declaration of Independence’ stated that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will remain President of the Sovereign Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh until the constitution of Bangladesh is composed and at the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam will be chaired as acting President.

After the independence of Bangladesh in 16 December 1971, the world community forced Pakistan to set Bangabandhu free. He was released on January 10, 1972. On January 11, 1972 he issued Interim Constitution Ordinance which approved the activities of Mujibnagar Government.

On March 23, 1972 President Mujib issued an ordinance to form a Constituent Assembly and it was given effect from March 26, 1971. This ordinance let the representatives elected in the election held from 7<sup>th</sup> December 1970 to 1 March 1971 form a Constituent Assembly. The first session of this assembly started from 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1972. In the first session Speaker and Deputy Speaker were elected. This session formed a '34-member constitution committee'. The Chairman of the committee was Dr. Kamal Hossain. Other prominent members were Syed Nazrul Islam, Taj Uddin Ahmed, Khandakar Mustaq Ahmed, A H M Kamaruzzaman. The first sitting of this committee was held on April 17, 1972. This committee met 74 times, spent approximately 300 hours to draw a 73 pages draft of constitution.

On October 12, 1972 this draft constitution was placed in the Assembly session at 11: 45am. The first Constitution Assembly of Bangladesh included 430 members. In November 4, 1972 the proposed constitution was passed in the assembly and came to effect on December 16, 1972.

### **5.5 Definition, Types and Salient Features**

The constitution of Bangladesh is the supreme law of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. It establishes a unitary state and parliamentary form of democracy. It was adopted on 4 November 1972 and then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman signed the Constitution of Bangladesh into law on 16 December 1972.

It has a preamble, 11 parts with 153 articles including four schedules. Part-1 is about the republic. Part-2 is about fundamental principles of state policy. Part-3 describes fundamental rights. Part-4, 5 and 6 are about the three organs of the state: Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Part-7 is about the election system of Bangladesh. Part-8 describes the formation, functions and the rights and responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh. Part-9 is about the services of Bangladesh. Part-10 describes the procedures of the amendments of the constitution and Part-11 includes miscellaneous.

Schedule-1 is about laws effective notwithstanding. Schedule-2 was about the election of President. However, it is now omitted. Schedule-

3 includes oaths and affirmations and schedule- is about transitional temporary provisions.

### • Salient Features of the Constitution of Bangladesh

#### 1. Written Constitution

The Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh is a written document. It was formally adopted by a Constituent Assembly on a specific day (4th November, 1972). It contains 153 articles, 1 preamble and 4 Schedules.

#### 2. Rigid Constitution

The Constitution of Bangladesh is a rigid one since on provision of it can be amended by ordinary lawmaking procedure; an amendment can be passed only by votes of not less than two thirds of the total number of members of parliament.

#### 3. Preamble

The Constitution of Bangladesh starts with a preamble which is described as the guiding star of the Constitution. This very preamble contains the legal as well as the moral basis of the Constitution; it also identifies the objectives and aims of the state. The full text of the preamble is as follows:

"We, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our independence on the 26th day of March, 1971 and through a historic struggle for national liberation, established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh;

Pledging that the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism, which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the national liberation struggle, shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitution;

Further pledging that it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realise through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizens;

Affirming that it is our sacred duty to safeguard, protect and defend this Constitution and to maintain its supremacy as the embodiment of the will of the people of Bangladesh so that we may prosper in

freedom and may make our full contribution towards international peace and co operation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind;

In our Constituent Assembly, this eighteenth day of Kartick, 1379 B.S., corresponding to the fourth day of November, 1972 A.D., do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution."

#### **4. Supremacy of the Constitution**

Constitutional supremacy has been ensured in the Constitution of Bangladesh. Because article 7 (2) provides that "This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

#### **5. Unitary Governmental System**

Article 1 of the Constitution provides that Bangladesh is a unitary peoples' republic as opposed to federal republic. Governmental system is a unitary one since all power under the constitution has centralized to a unitary government; no division of power has been provided for in the Constitution unlike in federal constitutions.

#### **6. Unicameral Legislature**

Article 65 of the Constitution provides for a unicameral legislature for Bangladesh It is only one House to be known as the House of the Nation. Like Indian legislature it is not composed of upper House and lower House. Laws made by the parliament are equally applicable to the whole territory of Bangladesh.

#### **7. Fundamental Principles of State Policy**

Article 8 of the Constitution provides for four major fundamental principles of state policy. They are (i) Nationalism, (ii) Democracy, (iii) Socialism; and (iv) Secularism. All other principles derived from these four shall also constitute the fundamental principles of state policy.

#### **8. Fundamental Rights**

Part-III of the Constitution provides for 18 fundamental rights. The enjoyment and enforcement of these rights have been guaranteed in the Constitution. The Supreme Court has been invested with the task to protect these rights. No authority can make any law which is

inconsistent with the provisions of fundamental rights and any law so made shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.

#### **9. Parliamentary form of Government**

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides for a Westminster type of parliamentary system. This form of government, in other words, cabinet form of government is run by a cabinet of Ministers headed by the prime Minister and the cabinet as a whole has to be responsible to the parliament and can remain in power so long it enjoys the confidence of the majority members of the parliament. President becomes a titular head: the real executive power is exercised by the cabinet. The 1972's Constitution of Bangladesh provided, more or less, all the trappings of parliamentary form of government.

#### **10. Independence of Judiciary**

The Constitution of 1972 ensured the independence of judiciary. Firstly, provision was made that the Chief Justice would be appointed by the president and other justices of the Supreme Court would be appointed after consultation with the Chief Justice (Art. 95). Appointment of subordinate judges and magistrates was also to be exercised with consultation of the Supreme Court.

Secondly, a judge could not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed pursuant of a resolution of parliament supported by a majority of not less than two thirds of the total number of members of parliament. Again, the security of tenure of the subordinate judges was vested in the Supreme Court.

Thirdly, it was provided that the remuneration, privileges and other terms and conditions of service of judges could not be varied to their disadvantages and the salaries of the judges were charged upon the Consolidated Fund of the Republic. Again, the control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and Magistrates exercising judicial functions was vested in the Supreme Court.

Thus the entire judiciary except some aspects of magistrate's courts was made independent.

## **11. Ombudsman**

Provisions for the establishment of an ombudsman were inserted in Article 77. To provide machinery to overview the activities of civil bureaucracy, to eradicate corruption in the administration and to ensure the responsibility of the government in a more specific way the role of an ombudsman like a citizen's defender or watch dog has been successful in some countries. Though the office has not yet been implemented in Bangladesh, the incorporation in the Constitution of such an office reflected the desire of the Awami League to strengthen the functioning of democracy in the country.

## **12. Responsible Government was not ensured**

Though the 1972's Constitution of Bangladesh provided for the Westminster type of parliamentary form of government it could not ensure, due to some of its repressive provisions, the conditions of responsible government. A cabinet form of government is directly responsible to the parliament in the sense that the cabinet as a whole has to be accountable to the parliament and an individual minister has to be responsible in respect of his departmental administration. In the Constitution of Bangladesh, there is no provision for ensuring the individual responsibility of ministers. Though Article 55 (3) provides that 'the cabinet shall be collectively responsible to the parliament' this responsibility cannot be ensured in practice due to the barricade created by Article 70 of the Constitution.

## **5.6 Uniqueness of the Constitution of Bangladesh**

The Constitution of Bangladesh is unique in various ways. It is a written document. It is a rigid document; therefore, no one can easily change its provisions. It includes four fundamental state policies namely, Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism and Secularism. The declaration of both democracy and socialism is also a unique combination. It vows the equal rights and proper distribution of wealth and opportunity to every citizen. Secularism is another unique characteristic of Bangladesh constitution which ensures communal harmony and promises to protect a pluralistic society. It also has declared the fundamental rights. There are 18 fundamental rights and also their better protection has been ensured in the constitution. However, the most important significance of the constitution is its

preamble which vows the rule of law, fundamental rights, political, economic and social equality etc. Although court cannot enforce preamble, it has other significance.

First, it is the preamble which identifies the legal source or base of the Constitution. Legal base of the Constitution means wherefrom the validity and power of the Constitution is derived,

Second, it indicates the moral basis or the philosophy of the whole nation. The logic which works behind obeying a Constitution as the supreme law is its moral philosophy.

Third, the preamble works as a guiding star for the whole nation .Because it is pledged in the preamble that all government al works would be administered in conformity with preamble and taking it as a pole star.

Fourth, the preamble has a great interpretative significance. Where any operative part of the Constitution is ambiguous the preamble can be resorted to clarify that part or wordings.

### **5.7 Major Amendments**

Till 2016 the constitution of Bangladesh is amended sixteen times. They are as follows:

#### **First Amendment Act**

The Constitution (First Amendment) Act 1973 was passed on 15 July 1973. It amended Article 47 of the constitution by inserting an additional clause which allowed prosecution and punishment of any person accused of ‘genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes and other crimes under international law’. After Article 47 it inserted a new Article 47A specifying inapplicability of certain fundamental rights in those cases.

#### **Second Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Second Amendment) Act 1973 was passed on 22 September 1973. This Act resulted in the (i) amendment of Articles 26, 63, 72 and 142 of the constitution; (ii) substitution of Article 33 and (iii) the insertion of a new part i.e. IXA in the constitution. Provisions were made through this amendment for the suspension of some fundamental rights of citizens in an emergency.

### **Third Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Third Amendment) Act 1974 was enacted on 28 November 1974 by bringing in changes in Article 2 of the constitution with a view to giving effect to an agreement between Bangladesh and India in respect of exchange of certain enclaves and fixation of boundary lines between India and Bangladesh.

### **Fourth Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act 1975 was passed on 25 January 1975. Major changes were brought into the constitution by this amendment. The presidential form of government was introduced in place of the parliamentary system; a one-party system in place of a multi-party system was introduced. This Act (i) amended articles 11, 66, 67, 72, 74, 76, 80, 88, 95, 98, 109, 116, 117, 119, 122, 123, 141A, 147 and 148 of the constitution; (ii) substituted Articles 44, 70, 102, 115 and 124 of the constitution; (iii) amended part III of the constitution out of existence; (iv) altered the Third and Fourth Schedule; (v) extended the term of the first Jatiya Sangsad; (vi) made special provisions relating to the office of the president and its incumbent; (vii) inserted a new part, i.e. part VIA in the constitution and (viii) inserted articles 73A and 116A in the constitution.

### **Fifth Amendment Act**

This Amendment Act was passed by the Jatiya Sangsad on 6 April 1979. This Act amended the Fourth Schedule to the constitution by adding a new paragraph 18 thereto, which provided that all amendments, additions, modifications, substitutions and omissions made in the constitution during the period between 15 August 1975 and 9 April 1979 (both days inclusive) by any Proclamation or Proclamation Order of the Martial Law Authorities had been validly made and would not be called in question in or before any court or tribunal or authority on any ground whatsoever.

### **Sixth Amendment Act**

The Sixth Amendment Act was enacted by the Jatiya Sangsad with a view to amending Articles 51 and 66 of the 1981 constitution.

### **Seventh Amendment Act**

This Act was passed on 11 November 1986. It amended Article 96 of the constitution; it also amended the Fourth Schedule to the constitution by inserting a new paragraph 19 thereto, providing among others that all proclamations, proclamation orders, Chief Martial Law Administrator's Orders, Martial Law Regulations, Martial Law Orders, Martial Law Instructions, ordinances and other laws made during the period between 24 March 1982 and 11 November 1986 (both days inclusive) had been validly made, and would not be called in question in or before any court or tribunal or authority on any ground whatsoever.

### **Eighth Amendment Act**

This Amendment Act was passed on 7 June 1988. It amended Articles 2, 3, 5, 30 and 100 of the constitution. This Amendment Act (i) declared Islam as the state religion; (ii) decentralized the judiciary by setting up six permanent benches of the High Court Division outside Dhaka; (iii) amended the word 'Bengali' into 'Bangla' and 'Dacca' into 'Dhaka' in Article 5 of the constitution; (iv) amended Article 30 of the constitution by prohibiting acceptance of any title, honours, award or decoration from any foreign state by any citizen of Bangladesh without the prior approval of the President. It may be noted here that the Supreme Court subsequently declared the amendment of Article 100 unconstitutional since it had altered the basic structure of the Constitution.

### **Ninth Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Ninth Amendment) Act 1989 was passed in July 1989. This amendment provided for the direct election of the Vice President; it restricted a person in holding the office of the President for two consecutive terms of five years each; it also provided that a Vice-President might be appointed in case of a vacancy, but the appointment must be approved by the Jatiya Sangsad.

### **Tenth Amendment Act**

The Tenth Amendment Act was enacted on 12 June 1990. It amended, among others, Article 65 of the constitution, providing for reservation of thirty seats for the next 10 years in the Jatiya Sangsad exclusively for women members, to be elected by the members of the Sangsad.

### **Eleventh Amendment Act**

This Act was passed on 6 August 1991. It amended the Fourth Schedule to the constitution by adding a new paragraph 21 thereto which legalized the appointment and oath of Shahabuddin Ahmed, Chief Justice of Bangladesh, as the Vice President of the Republic and the resignation tendered to him on 6 December 1990 by the then President Hussain M Ershad. This Act ratified, confirmed and validated all powers exercised, all laws and ordinances promulgated, all orders made and acts and things done, and actions and proceedings taken by the Vice President as acting President during the period between 6 December 1990 and the day (9 October 1991) of taking over the office of the President by the new President Abdur Rahman Biswas, duly elected under the amended provisions of the constitution. The Act also confirmed and made possible the return of Vice President Shahabuddin Ahmed to his previous position of the Chief Justice of Bangladesh.

### **Twelfth Amendment Act**

This Amendment Act, known as the most important landmark in the history of constitutional development in Bangladesh, was passed on 6 August 1991. It amended Articles 48, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 70, 72, 109, 119, 124, 141A and 142. Through this amendment the parliamentary form of government was re-introduced in Bangladesh; the President became the constitutional head of the state; the Prime Minister became the executive head; the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister became responsible to the Jatiya Sangsad; the post of the Vice President was abolished; the President was required to be elected by the members of the Jatiya Sangsad. Moreover, through Article 59 of the Constitution this Act ensured the participation of the people's representatives in local government bodies, thus stabilizing the base of democracy in the country.

### **Thirteenth Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Thirteenth Amendment) Act 1996 was passed on 26 March 1996. It provided for a non-party Caretaker Government which, acting as an interim government, would give all possible aid and assistance to the Election Commission for holding the general election of members of the Jatiya Sangsad peacefully, fairly and impartially. The non-party caretaker government, comprising the

Chief Adviser and not more than 10 other advisers, would be collectively responsible to the President and would stand dissolved on the date on which the Prime Minister entered upon his office after the constitution of the new Sangsad.

#### **Fourteenth Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Act 2004 was passed on 16 May 2004 providing, among others, the following provisions : Increase in the number of reservation of seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad from 30 to 45 on a provisional representation basis for the following ten years; increase in the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 years; and displaying of portraits of the President and the Prime Minister at the offices of the President and the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister's portrait in all government, semi-government and autonomous offices and diplomatic missions abroad were made mandatory.

#### **Fifteenth Amendment Act**

The Constitution (Fifteenth Amendment) Act 2011 was passed on 25 June 2011 having amendment to the Constitution restoring secularism and freedom of religion, incorporating nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism as the fundamental principles of the state policy. The Constitution now also acknowledges the country's liberation war hero Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Father of the Nation. The Amendment scrapped the system of Caretaker Government, increased number of women reserve seats to 50 from existing 45 and inserted Articles 7(a) and 7(b) in the Constitution after Article 7 in a bid to end takeover of power through extra-constitutional means.

#### **Sixteenth Amendment Act**

(Nov 10, 2014) Bangladesh Act No XIII of 2014 amended the Constitution of Bangladesh, empowering Parliament to impeach Supreme Court judges Part VI, chapter one, article 96, of the Bangladesh Constitution, which includes provisions on the tenure of office of the Supreme Court judges, now states:

- 1) Subject to the other provisions of this article, a Judge shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-seven years.

- 2) A Judge shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed pursuant to a resolution of Parliament supported by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of Parliament, on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapacity.
- 3) Parliament may by law regulate the procedure in relation to a resolution under clause (2) and for investigation and proof of the misbehavior or incapacity of a Judge.
- 4) A Judge may resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the President.

However, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has declared the Sixteenth amendment of the constitution as invalid. The executive branch of Bangladesh also decided to appeal against this rule. The decision on the matter remains pending now. (till September, 2016)

#### **Seventeenth Amendment Act**

On 8 July, 2018 the 10<sup>th</sup> parliament unanimously passed the 17th amendment to the constitution which increases the tenure of 50 lawmakers who are elected in the women reserved seat to 25 years.

According to the Article 65 (3) of the constitution, 50 seats would be reserved exclusively for women in the parliament for 10 years from the first meeting of parliament after the one that passed the 14th constitutional amendment in 2004. However, initially the reserved seats for the women were 30. The 8th parliament increased the number of reserved seats to 45 while the 9th parliament enhanced it to 50. The exiting 10-year tenure of the reserved seats is going to end on January 24, 2019.

According to the draft bill, the 25-year period of the reserved seats will be counted from the first day of the 11th parliament.

# **Chapter- Six**

## **Politics and Governance in Bangladesh**

### **Objectives**

To help the learners realize their role in a state, make aware of their political rights, give the conception of political structure of Bangladesh are the objectives of this chapter.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Party System of Bangladesh and its Characteristics: Definition of Politics and Political Party, Major Political Parties of Bangladesh and their Establishments, Structures, Activities, List of Parliamentary Parties in Bangladesh, Election Commission of Bangladesh, Government of Bangladesh, The Executive Branch: Structure, Functions, Power; The Legislature: Structure, Functions, Power; The Judiciary Branch: Structure, Functions, Freedom of Judiciary; Local Government and Agencies: Categories, Relation between Local and Central Government

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will know how a government works. They will also know about the different organs of the state and their interactions. This knowledge will help them develop their sense of responsibility in the state.

## **Chapter- Six**

### **Politics and Governance in Bangladesh**

Man is by nature a social and political animal. He cannot live alone, therefore, needs other's company. When he enters a social life, he is to share his views as well as to agree or disagree with the views of others. This leads him to a level of activities and at one point he becomes a supporter or activist of a political thought. Therefore, he cannot but to be a political animal. So as a member of a society, everyone is engaged in politics either he recognizes it or denies because we live within a political institution, i.e. state, the biggest and strongest unit of the society. So, what is politics then?

#### **6.1 Party System of Bangladesh and its Characteristics**

##### **● Politics**

The father of Political Science Aristotle first wrote detailed about politics in his renowned book *Politics*. In those days, Greece was divided into many small city states called 'Polis'. The word Politics, therefore, derived from the Greek word which means 'city-state'.

According to Robert Dhal, "Politics is one of the unavoidable facts of human existence. Everyone is involved in some fashion at some time in some kind of political system." According to Groucho Marx, "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." According to Lass well, Politics is the study of influence and the influential." In fact, politics refers to the political activities of everyday life. It includes achieving and exercising positions of governance, study and practice of distributions of power and interrelations among communities. Professor Garner defined politics as "The sum total activities which have to do with actual administration of public affairs."

##### **● Political Party**

Political party is an important element of political system because they form public opinions and also convey people's desires. When a number of people gathered under an umbrella with some addressed manifesto on the basis of similar thinking of solving state-problems and its goals, they become a political party. Different political

scientists have given different definitions of political party. According to Edmund Burk, "Party is a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principles in which they are all agreed." In the *Principle of Social and Political Theories* Barker wrote, "A party is a particular body of opinion (otherwise it would not be a party), which is none the less concerned with the general national interest and which forms, and presents to the choice of the electorate, a program of general national scope and width." R.M. MacIver said, "We may define a political party as an association organized in support of some principle or policy which by constitutional means endeavors to make the determinant Government.

Among the modern political scientists, Franz Neumann in his book *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State* wrote, "...most important instrument for the translation of social power is the political party." Another prominent modern political theorist Maurice Duverger wrote, "A party is a community with particular structure." Professor Alan R. Ball has given the easiest and clearest definition of political party. In his book *Modern Politics and Government* he wrote, "Political parties may be principally defined by their common aim. They seek political power either singly or in co-operation with other political parties." He also wrote, "The first and foremost aim of each political party is to prevail over others in order to get into power or to stay in it. . . it is this goal of attaining political power that distinguished political parties from other groups in the political system..."

## 6.2 Characteristics in the political parties

Political parties have some common characteristics through they are distinguished from other human institutions. They are:

- a. It wants to attain state power or to stay in it.
- b. It unites people having same political thoughts, trains them on the thought and mobilizes them to reach its goal.
- c. It creates public opinions by holding different activities, such as: press releases, seminars, public meetings, projecting posters-banners, wall writings, organizing rallies, human chains etc.

- d. It creates awareness among the citizens about their rights and responsibilities.
- e. It conveys the national interests.
- f. It has particular manifesto.
- g. It develops leadership.

### **6.3Party System of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a Peoples' republic. Its constitution offers multi-party democratic system and parliamentary democracy. Prime Minister is the head of the Government and President is the head of the state. Almost all the parties that are registered in the National Election Commission in Bangladesh have manifestos and their formation is also democratic in nature. However, after 1990 Bangladesh enters into a bipartisan political system where the center-left Awami League (AL) and center-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have been dominating for a long time. Therefore, it has become difficult for anybody to achieve electoral success under the banner of another party. Other two dominant parties are Jatio Party (JP) and Jamat-e-Islami, Bangladesh. Although the latter have no vast majority of support for electoral winning, they pose as a deciding factor in winning every election after 1991 for AL or BNP. In fact, they hold a percent of diehard voters which has given them a bargaining opportunity.

From the 1991, another significant characteristic has been developed and that is alliance of political parties. During the military democracy of nineties three major political alliances namely 8-party alliance led by Awami League, 7-party alliance led by Bangladesh Nationalist Party and 5-party alliance of leftist parties were emerged. After the election of 1991, 5-party alliance has broken and some of the prominent leaders have joined either AL or BNP. Therefore, another third party named Jatio Party has grabbed the third position. Now in Bangladesh, there are two major party alliances. One is 22-party alliance led by BNP and 14-party alliance led by Awami League. However, most of the parties in both alliances are banner based; their actual public support is ignorable.

## **6.4 Major Political Parties of Bangladesh and their Establishments, Structures, Activities**

### **Bangladesh Awami League (AL)**

The Bangladesh Awami League is one of the two major political parties in Bangladesh. It is the country's current governing party. The party is the final evolution of 'All Pakistan Awami Muslim League'.

#### **• Brief History of Awami League**

The 'All Pakistan Awami Muslim League' was founded in Dhaka in 1949 headed by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani as the chairman and Shamsul Huq as secretary. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was then in jail, yet elected as the first joint secretary of the party. The party was established as a counter of the domination of Muslim League. It quickly gained massive popular support in East Bengal because the ruling Muslim League took the position against Bengali interests. Later it dropped the word 'Muslim' from its name to open its membership for all community and to give it a secular character. It became the leader of Bengali Nationalism forces against West Pakistan's military and political establishment. The party has led some major movement against Pakistani oppressive rule.

It took strong stand against Pakistani colonial sentiment during Language Movement in 1952, took vigorous campaign during the election of 1954 and formed 4-party allied front and won the election, launched 6-point movement. 6-point movement, which was launched by its great leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is actually a liberation movement under the demand of full autonomy. The Pakistani military government arrested all the prominent leaders of Awami League including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and put them in jail to stop 6-point movement. At one point, Agartala Conspiracy Case was filed against its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other nationalists to sentence them to death. A mass upheaval occurred against the case and people forced the then government to release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman without any condition. Thereafter, Awami League won a landslide victory in the election of 1970 in both National Assembly and Provincial Assembly. But the Pakistani government did not want to transfer power to Bengalis. Therefore, Awami League launched a non-cooperation movement and then led the war of independence in 1971. Bangladesh became independent under its leadership in December 16, 1971.

After the emergence Awami League composed a fine constitution within extremely shortest time. Then it won the first general election in 1973 under the new constitution of 1972. However, in 1974 it launched a new party system named BAKSAL which displeased some ambitious groups. In 1975 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated and the party was overthrown from the power by a military coup. It remained out of power for the following 19 years.

After 1990, with a mass upheaval, Awami League again became an influential political party in Bangladesh but failed to win the election in 1991. In 1996 it won the general election and started a trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In the election of 2001 it again failed to win and faced serious political violence. In 2006 a major political movement against the election-engineering plan of the then ruling party was led by Awami League. Election was postponed and an army-led caretaker government grabbed the power. Head of Awami League Sheikh Hasina including the prominent Awami League leaders were arrested. However, the caretaker government did not last long. Awami League won a landslide victory in the election held in 2008. Again in the election of 2014 it won, although BNP-led alliance boycotted the election and launched a violent movement to postpone the election. Till now it is in power. Awami League has succeeded to trial the domestic war criminals of the war of independence in 1971. This trial is ongoing.

#### ● **Symbols, Flag and slogan**

Awami League's electoral symbol is boat, which signifies the attachment to rural Bengal. 'Joy Bangla' meaning 'Victory to Bengal' is the official slogan of the Awami League. It was the slogan and war cry of the Mukti Bahini that fought for the independence of Bangladesh during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. The phrase 'Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu' is used by the party members at the end of speeches.

The Awami League party flag is a green field with four red stars at its centre, and a vertical red stripe at the hoist side. The four stars on the flag represent the four fundamental principles of the party: nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy.

### **• Ideology**

The Bangladesh Awami League always addresses itself as the leader of the ‘pro-liberation’ forces in Bangladesh, promoting secular and social democratic sections of the political establishment in the country. It has four principal ideologies:

- Democracy
- Socialism
- Secularism
- Nationalism

### **Organization**

#### **• Party Constitution**

The Constitution of the Bangladesh Awami League has 24 Articles including contents of General Program, Membership, Organization System, Central Organizations, Name, Aims and Objectives, Fundamental Principles, Commitments. In accordance with the changing situation and tasks, revisions were made in some of the articles at the National Conference.

#### **• National Conference**

The National Conference (NC) is the party’s highest body. It has been convened every three years (sometimes on an irregular basis). The party constitution gives the NC following responsibilities:

- electing the President;
- electing the General Secretary;
- examining the report of the outgoing Central Working Committee;
- discussing and enacting party policies;
- revising the party’s constitution.

However, In the National Conference the most substantive discussion takes place before the Conference, in the preparation period, among a group of top party leaders to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. In between National Conferences, the Central Working Committee is the highest decision-making institution.

#### **• Central Working Committee**

The Central Working Committee of the Awami League is a political body that comprises the top leaders of the Party. It is currently composed of 81 full members and 29 alternate members. Members

are elected once every three years by the National Conference of the Bangladesh Awami League. The Central Working Committee is made up of the following:

● **Advisory Council**

Advisory council is made up of 38 members. They work as party's think-tanks. They are not a part of the Central Working Committee.

● **Wings**

- Bangladesh Awami Youth League (Youth wing)
- Bangladesh Students League (Students wing)
- Bangladesh Krishak League (Farmers wing)
- Jatio Sromik League (Trade union wing)
- Bangladesh Awami Swechasebak League (Volunteers wing)
- Bangladesh Mohila Awami League (Women wing)
- Awami Ainjibi Porisad (Lawyers wing)
- Bangladesh Tati League (Weavers wing)
- Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad-SWACHIP (Physicians wing)

**Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)**

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is one of the two major contemporary political parties of Bangladesh. Its core concept is Bangladeshi Nationalism. It adopted 19 points program in the founding manifesto. The party was founded on September 1, 1978 by Gen. Ziaur Rahman, the first military President of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia is currently serving as the Chairperson of the party with Tarique Rahman as the Senior Vice-Chairman and Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir as the Secretary-General.

The party has boycotted the National Election in 2014 and tried to postpone it. As it neither joined the election nor succeeded to postpone, it has no representation in the current parliament.

● **A Brief History of BNP**

The founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman ascended in power in November, 1975 as a military chief. The year was marked for the serious complex political situations. Father of the nation has been assassinated; the assassins were in power, coup and anti-coup were held, four great national leaders were also killed in the jail this year.

Panic seized everyone. In that situation, Ziaur Rahman grabbed the power and imposed martial law all over the country. He declared that he would give election after controlling the situation and establishing peace. He took two years to control the situation. Then he started to the non-militarization process following ex- military president Ayub Khan. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was the result of this process.

Multi-party system was revived again. With his patronization, some prominent intellectual of right wing formed a new party named Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal (JAGODAL). Justice Abdus Sattar was made coordinator of this party. Soon many political persons who were rivals to Awami League joined the process. JAGODAL was the first step of forming BNP.

On May 1, 1978 another political party named Jatiyatabadi Front headed by Ziaur Rahman was formed. JAGODAL joined the front and was dissolved on August 28, 1978. A large portion of NAP (Bhasani), leaders of Muslim League, a faction of United Peoples' Party, Labor Party, Tafsili Jati Federation joined the front. Among the known persons Kazi Jafar Ahmed, Mashuri Rahman, Shah Azizur Rahman, Rashraj Mandal joined the front. The front was actually an election alliance against Ganatantrik Oikya Jote (United Democratic Alliance) backed by Awami League led by Col. M. A. G. Osmani. Jatiyatabadi Front was the second step of forming BNP.

On June 3, 1978 a presidential election was held in Bangladesh. Ziaur Rahman was the presidential candidate of Jatiyatabadi Front and Col. M. A. G. Osmani was the presidential candidate of Ganatantrik Oikya Jote. Ziaur Rahman won the election and became a civilian president.

On September 1, 1978 Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was formed by dissolving the Jatiyatabadi Front. Persons having faith on Bangladeshi Nationalism joined the party. The constitution of the party was drafted within 21 days. A convener committee of 76 members was formed. Ziaur Rahman was made the chief convener.

The first parliament election under President Ziaur Rahman was held in 1979 and the ruling party BNP won 207 seats out of 300 seats. BNP formed its first government under Shah Azizur Rahman as the

Prime Minister. Mirza Golam Hafiz was elected Speaker. Awami League got only 39 seats and became the opposition. However, it was a presidential system of government.

After the formation of government BNP declared its first executive committee. A national standing committee of 12 members was also formed. NSC is the highest decision making forum of the party.

A youth wing of BNP named Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal was also formed in 1978. Abul Kashem and Saifur Rahman were declared as the President and General Secretary respectively.

After the assassination of Ziaur Rahman in 1981, Justice Abdus Sattar became the President and formed a National Security Council to let the Bangladesh Armed Forces to contribute to the development activities. In the mean time, Lt. Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad became the chief of Bangladesh Army. He forced President Abdus Sattar to resign the Sattar on March 24, 1982 in favor of Justice A.F.M. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury. BNP was overthrown from the power. Most of the BNP leaders were put into jail.

General Ershad followed his earlier military president to become president of Bangladesh. He formed a new political party like the way followed by Ziaur Rahman and some of the vital BNP leaders joined the Party. This way, Ershad became an elected President of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia was merely a house wife. However, she started to consolidate the party. From mid-1983 she started to active and formed 7-party alliance when Sheikh Hasina returned Bangladesh and formed 15-party alliance. It boycotted all the elections under Ershad government in 1986, 87 and 88. Up to 1990 BNP and its alliance struggled against Ershad Government along with Awami League led alliance. After a mass upsurge against Ershad government in December 1990, an election was held in 1991. BNP won the election and formed government.

In 1996 it lost the election. Again in 2001 it achieved a landslide victory and formed a government. However, in 2006 it was forced to resign and transfer power to the caretaker government. During the reign of Caretaker Government Begum Khaleda Zia and some

prominent BNP leaders were put into jail. In 2008 BNP joined the National election and defeated. In 2014, it boycotted the National Election and led a violent protest to postpone the election. But it could not succeed. Therefore, it had no representative in that parliament.

In the election of 2018 BNP formed an alliance named ‘Jatiyo Oikko Jot’ with Gono Forum and other parties. However, they could not succeed in the election. The BNP-led alliance got only 7 seats in the election, whereas AL-led alliance got 288 seats in the parliament. However, BNP rejected the result and declared not to participate any election under Awami League government in future.

## **6.2 List of Parliamentary Parties in Bangladesh**

The following is a list of the political parties, which participated in the Ninth National Parliamentary Elections 2008:

Islamic Front Bangladesh  
Islamic Movement Bangladesh  
Islami Oikya Jote  
United Citizens Movement  
Krishak Shramik Janata League  
Democratic Party  
People's Front  
Gano Forum  
Jamaat-e-Ulama Islam Bangladesh  
Zaker Party  
National Democratic Party  
Jatiya Party  
Jatiya Party-JP  
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-Jasad  
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-JSD  
National People's Party  
Progressive Democratic Party  
Freedom Party  
Bangladesh Awami League  
Bangladesh Islamic Front  
Bangladesh Kalayan Party  
Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan

Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis  
Bangladesh Jatiya Party  
Bangladesh Jatiya Party-BJP  
Bangladesh Nationalist Party  
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (non-registered)  
Bangladesh Tarikat Federation  
Bangladesh National Awami Party  
Bangladesh Muslim League  
Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal  
Workers Party of Bangladesh  
Communist Party of Bangladesh  
Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh  
Bangladesher Samayabadi Dal (ML)  
Bikalapdhara Bangladesh  
Liberal Democratic Party

### **6.5 Election Commission of Bangladesh**

An election commission is a body charged for overseeing the implementation of election procedures. The exact name used varies from country to country, including such terms as ‘electoral commission’, ‘central election commission’, ‘electoral branch’ or ‘electoral court’. It is an important institution in a democratic system. However, in Bangladesh Election Commission (EC) is a constitutional body, which has been working to ensure people’s right to vote to elect their representatives under the constitutional. ECB is the constitutional body to ensure that all powers in the republic are belonging to the people, and their exercise on behalf of the people lies only under and by this Constitution.

#### **6.5.1 Formation of Election Commission**

According to the Article-118 of the constitution of Bangladesh, there shall be an Election Commission for Bangladesh consisting of a Chief Election Commissioner and such number of the other Election Commissioners, if any, as the president may from time to time direct, and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (if any) shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf, be made by the President.

- When the Election Commission consists of more than person, the Chief Election Commissioner shall act as the chairman thereof.
- Subject to the provisions of this Constitution the term of office of an Election Commissioner shall be five years from the date on which he enters upon his office, and-
- A person who has held office as Chief Election Commissioner shall not be eligible for appointment in the service of the Republic;
- Any other Election Commissioner shall, on ceasing to hold office as such, be eligible for appointment as Chief Election Commissioner but shall not be otherwise, eligible for appointment in the service of the Republic.
- The Election Commission shall be independent in the exercise of its functions and subject only to this Constitution and any other law.
- Subject to the provisions of any law made by parliament, the conditions of service of Election Commissioners shall be such as the President may, by order, determine:
- Provide that an Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- An Election Commissioner may resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the president.

#### **6.5.2 Functions of the Election Commission**

According to the Bangladesh Constitution, Article 119 of Part-III, the functions of the election commission of Bangladesh are as follows:

1. The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for elections to the office of President and to Parliament and the conduct of such elections shall vest in the Election Commission which shall, in accordance with this Constitution and any other law –
  - a) To hold elections to the office of President;
  - b) To hold elections of members of Parliament;
  - c) To delimit the constituencies for the purpose of elections to Parliament;and,

- d) To prepare electoral rolls for the purpose of elections to the office of President and to Parliament.
2. To the Election Commission shall perform such functions, in addition to those specified in the foregoing clauses, as may be prescribed by this Constitution or by any other law.

## **6.6 Government of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a country of peoples' republic. Its politics takes place in a framework of Westminister type parliamentary democracy, where Prime Minister is the head of the government and the President is the head of the state. Here politics takes place within multi-party system. Executive power of the state is exercised by the government. The legislative power is rested upon both the government and the parliament. According to the constitution of Bangladesh (written in 1972 and undergoing sixteen amendments), the state has three branches: Executive, legislative and judiciary.

### **6.6.1 The Executive Branch: Structure, Functions, Power**

The executive branch is formed by the support of the majority of the elected representatives of the legislature. President, elected by the legislature for five years, is the head of the state. But this post is, in fact, a ceremonial post. He is to perform his duties as per the suggestion of the Prime Minister, except for some constituent posts. The real power is exercised by the Prime Minister. However, President's power is substantially expanded when a state of emergency or 'war' is declared. In our country, the president is nominated by the party having majority in the legislature. The President must be 35 or more years old. The president appoints the Prime Minister, the Justices of the High Court and the Supreme Court, Chief Election Comissioner or the election commissioners, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Comptroller Generaletc. However, the appointment of the Prime Minister is ceremonial because the President is bound to appoint the elected member of the parliament having majority in the legislature.

Prime Minister is the head of the government, the head of the Cabinet and the leader of the legislature. S(he) must be an elected member of the parliament. However, a number of his cabinet may be non-elected

or technocrat. Cabinet members are selected by the Prime Minister and appointed by the President.

The executive branch runs the state. It leads the bureaucracy, submits annual budgets in the parliament, performs daily activities of the government, monitors development works, law and order situations of the country, makes policies and implements them, maintains relations with the other countries, collects taxes and revenues and provide supports to the citizens in facing the challenges. It also creates job opportunities, develops trade and commerce, promotes education, protects human rights and gives the citizens security under law. To protect the life, possessions and the dignity of a citizen is the prime responsibility of the executive branch. According to the constitution of Bangladesh, it can impeach the President.

#### **6.6.2 The Legislature: Structure, Functions, Power**

The legislative branch of Bangladesh is formed by 350 members, among them 300 members are elected by universal suffrage, and the other 50 seats are reserved for the women for five years. The reserved seats are distributed to the parties in proportions to their overall share of the vote. Only people aged 25 or more can be a member of the parliament. Every citizen having 18 years old can vote to elect the members of the legislature. The legislature lasts up to five years unless the Prime Minister requests the President to dissolve the parliament. The legislature of Bangladesh is named as 'Jatiyo Sangsod' (House of the Nation). The parliament session can be run if it fills the quorum (at least the presence of sixty members). If the members remain less than sixty, the Speaker may suspend or adjourned the session. President delivers address to the parliament at the commencement of the first session after a general election and at the commencement of the first session of each year.

The legislative branch has some unique power. It elects the President, the Speaker and the deputy Speakers. The leader of the majority party in the parliament is the leader of the house. However, S/he is to prove his/her majority. The decisions in the parliament are passed by the support of majority (in most cases by voice vote and raising hands). Every 60 days after, the President calls for parliament session when the members of the parliament ask the ministers about his/her

ministrial activities. In the parliament, the members draw new laws or amend or dissolve the existent lawas. Every year the executive body is to place annual budget and series of discussions are carried on the budget. Then the parliament passes or amends or adds with the proposed budget. The policies of the government, the agreement, pacts or then treaties are to place in the legislature to ratify it. It can discuss on any matter of the state and the government.

The parliament may establish ombudsman having power to investigate any action taken by a Ministry or a public office or a statutory public authority.

#### **6.6.3 The Judiciary Branch: Structure, Functions, Freedom of Judiciary**

The Judiciary branch is formed according to the Article-14 of the constitution of Bangladesh. This article mentions that the Judiciary will be formed by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh which will be formed with High Court and Appelate Division. Supreme Court will be formed with Chief Justice and other required number of Justices in the High Court and the Appelate division. President will determine the number of the Justices in the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice and other Justices of the Appelate division will sit in the Appelate division and other Justices will sit in the High Court division. According to the constition, the Justices have the full freedom in their judicial procedures and decisions. To become a Justice, one must be the citizen of Bangladesh having at least 10 years experience as an advocate in Supreme Court or having three years experience as a district judge or 10 years practical experience as an advocate or having at least 10 years experience in any judicial post. There are other sub-ordinate courts within the Judiciary. They are as follows:

- Metropolitan Court
- Tribunal Court
- District Chief Court
- Sub-Judge Court
- Megistrate Court
- Munsef Court
- Upazilla Court

Chief Justice is the Head of the Judiciary. President appoints the Chief Justice and other Justices. The tenure of a justice is up to 67 years of age. After the retirement, a Justice cannot be appointed any profitable posts of the government.

Supreme Court is the protector of the constitution. The rule of the Supreme Court, for any constitutional disputes or confusion, is final. Supreme Court has the right to hear the petition of any citizen to enforce the fundamental rights. If it assumes that any public office is responsible for the violation of the fundamental rights, Supreme Court may summon that authority and if needed it can issue rule to withdraw that person or that illegal acts or orders. Supreme Court may ask to show cause the law enforcing authority for the confinement of any citizen without trial. In this case, it can issue orders to present the confine before the court. Sometimes, the President may seek clarification of any legal definition to the Supreme Court. Supreme Court helps the executive body within the country. All other sub-ordinate courts work according to the law and Supreme Court monitors the procedures. If needed, Supreme Court may issue orders to the lower courts to submit necessary documents for a particular case. Even, Supreme Court may issue any law passed in the parliament as invalid if it assumes contradictory to the constitution.

### **6.7 Local Government and Agencies: Historical Background, Categories, functions, Relation between Local and Central Government**

A Local Government is the administration of a particular town, county, or district, with representatives elected by those who live there.

#### **6.7.1 Functions of Local government**

The main functions included policy implementation, integration, public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication. The main functions included policy implementation, integration, public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication. These functions are divided into two categories:

- a. Reserved Functions: Police, Magistracy, Judiciary, Revenue etc.

- b. Development Functions: Agriculture, Fishery, Water, Power, Horticulture, Forestry, Livestock, Social welfare etc.

### **6.7.2 Historical Background of Local Government**

#### **Ancient Period**

From the remote past, there were always local governments in Bangladesh. However, their forms were different in every age. As Bangladesh was an agrarian country, the governments of the Ancient and the Middle Ages were heavily dependent on the village institutions. The king used to let the village society run its own governance if the taxes were duly paid. Of course, the state had its own institutions to collect taxes and to keep the people together for keeping production going and for keeping the kingdom happy and prosperous. For example, we see during the Pala rule the administration was divided into Bhukti, Bisoy, Mandal etc.

#### **• Medieval Period**

During the medieval period, the local governance was left to the ‘Panchayet’. Each village had its own council or ‘Panchayet’. It appointed or elected its own headman who served as a link between the village and the central government. ‘Patwari’ (accountant) used to keep records of crops and revenue. The headman used to supervise the record keeping. The panchayets looked after local education, irrigation, religious practices and moral conduct of the villagers. Holding fairs and festivals, and maintenance of law and order were also their functions. However, during Mughal period there was four tiers of administrative body, to collect revenue.

1. Subhas (Province)
2. Sarker (District)
3. Paragana (Thana/Mohkoma)
4. Mahallas

#### **Colonial Period**

During the British colonial period, the local governments had the following tiers:

- a. District board in each didrict
- b. Local bord in a sub-division of a district
- c. A union committee for a group of villages.

With the new Act of 1919, the British government abolished the ancient and medieval system of local government and introduced a new form. The act replaced the existing Chowkidari, Panchayet and Union committee by a new body called the Union Board. The supervision and control over the Union Board was exercised by the Circle Officer, who served as a link between the District Board and the Thana administration.

#### ● **Pakistan Period**

Pakistan's military dictator Ayub Khan changed the colonial system and introduced a new form of local government in 1959 with the ordinance of Basic Democracy. This system aimed at an authoritarian government at the top and qualified representative government at the local. With this ordinance, Ayub Khan divided East Pakistan into 60,000 electoral units with an average population of 1070. Basic Democracy system introduced the following four tiers from top to bottom:

- a. Divisional Council
- b. District Council
- c. Thana Council,
- d. Union Council

A Union Council generally consisted of ten elected members. The Thana Councils consisted of three categories of members, i.e. representative members, official members, and appointed members. Generally, 50 percent were representative and the rest 50 percent were official and appointed members. Under the Basic Democracies Order, the District Council was brought under the control of the bureaucracy. The Deputy Commissioner-cum-Collector was the ex-officio chairman of the District Council. All executive powers were vested in him. Divisional Council was the highest tier among the rural local bodies. The number of Divisional Council members differed from Council to Council which was to be decided by the government.

#### ● **Local Government in Bangladesh Period**

During the Bangladesh period, the local administration system was changed several times in line with the regime change.

#### ● **Mujib era**

After the independence of Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dissolved the Pakistani system of local government by the Presidential Order No. 7 in 1972. Certain committees were appointed in replace of the defuncted bodies. Names of the local bodies were also changed as follows: Union council to Union Panchayet (later Union Parisad), District Council to Zilla Board (later Zilla Parisad). However, no such committees were introduced in the Thana and Division level. After the assassination of Bangabandhu (1975), the development process in the local government experienced temporary setback.

#### ● **Zia Period**

In 1976, President Ziaur Rahman reorganized the local government system by the Presidential Order. He ordered for the three level of local government:

- a. Union Parisad
- b. Thana Parisad
- c. Zilla Parisad

#### ● **Ershad Period**

During Ershad regime, the local government system was further reorganized. He wanted the decentralized administration to some extent and wanted to reduce pressure on the capital. He promulgated the Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Ordinance on 2, December 1982. With this ordinance, Ershad made 'Thana' (later Upazila Parisad) as the focal point of all the development activities of the local government. Responsibility for all development activities at the local level was transferred to the Thana Parishad.

#### ● **Khaleda Zia Period (1991-1996)**

During this period, the system of Upazila Parisad was abandoned by the ruling party BNP and instead a designed decentralized structure was set up. For this, a bill was submitted to Jatiya Sangsad in 1992. However, the bill remained pending during the whole tenure. However, elections were held in the Union and Thana level on the basis of the Local Government (Union Parisad) Ordinance of 1983 and elected bodies appeared. However, the reformation process of the local government remained pending due to the pending political

decision. The development works, therefore, were done by the non-authorised political influence.

**• Sheikh Hasina Period (1996-2001)**

During this period, a commission of the reformation of local government was formed. The commission suggested four tiers of local government: Gram Parisad, Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad. Sheikh Hasina took a unique decision for the women empowerment. According to the Government decision, in the Union Parishad election of 1997, the women representatives were to elect by direct vote in the three wards of the Union Parishad. The Seventh Jatiya Sangsad has approved the formation of the Upazila Parishad.

**• Khaleda Zia Period (2001-2006)**

During this period there were four tiers of administrative body; functions included public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication.

- a. Gram sarker
- b. Union Parishad
- c. Upazill Parishad
- d. Zilla Parishad

**• Sheikh Hasina Period (2008-present)**

The Sheikh Hasina government abandoned the conception of Gram Sarkar and introduced the following three tiers of local government:

- a. Union Parishad
- b. Upazill Parishad
- c. Zilla Parishad

**• Relation between Local and Central Government**

Bangladesh, which emerged as an independent state in 1971, has not yet developed appropriate strategies, policies and institutions to cope with urban governance. The country has followed a centralised system of policy making and resource allocation, in which intergovernmental transfers are unstable, not well defined and lack an adequate system of incentives. The level of decentralised government that exists has been largely ineffective because of a lack of accountability, a concentration of power by the municipal executives, obsolete laws and regulatory framework, limited administrative

capacity, a lack of investment in human resources and weak supervision by central government agencies. As a result, deficiencies in urban infrastructure and services, including water supply, sanitation and transport, are severe.

Despite certain laws and regulations, in Bangladesh the following characteristics are seen in the relations between the local government and the central government:

- The central government makes laws and rules for all local bodies.
- The head of the local bodies may be removed from office at any time, without assigning any reason; the government may also supersede the entire local bodies or suspend a department of a particular local body.
- The government may assign or remove any function from the local body.
- The central government approves the budget of the local bodies and may call for any records of that local body. The local body has to send the central government an annual report on its activities and the government can inspect it at any time.
- The schedule of posts in a particular local body has to be sanctioned by the government, and sometimes, no appointment beyond the schedule is allowed. Sometimes, the local bodies have to obtain government approval to form standing committees.
- Some times the head of the local bodies (for an example: The Chief Executive Officer of a City Corporation) are appointed by the government. He has considerable powers and is the appointing authority for all subordinate posts.



# **Chapter- Seven**

## **Foreign Policy: Goals, Objectives, SAARC, and Bangladesh.**

### **Objectives**

The aim of this chapter is to enhance the knowledge of the learners on the challenges of Bangladesh in the international community. To help the learners develop their knowledge on the foreign affairs is the unique desire of this chapter.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Foreign Policy: Objectives of Foreign Policy, Principles of Foreign Policy, Goals, Bangladesh Foreign Policy during Different Governments: During Mujib Government, During Zia Government, During Ershad Government, During Khaleda Zia Government, During Sheikh Hasina Governments, During short term Caretaker Governments, SAARC and Bangladesh:History of Formation, Objectives, Structures, Functions, Challenges and Prospects, Achievements and Failures.

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will be able to discuss on different aspects of Bangladesh foreign policy, its fluctuations and continuations. They will also be able to realize the impact of external actors on Bangladesh foreign policy.

## **Chapter- Seven**

### **Foreign Policy: Goals, Objectives, SAARC, and Bangladesh.**

#### **7. Definition of Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy is a government's strategy by which it deals with the other nations. Bismarck said that 'foreign policy' is merely an extension of domestic policy. It is the method, which are designed to maintain relations with the international community to protect national interests. An ancient statesman and philosopher Kautilya once said, "Welfare of a state depends on an active foreign policy." However, it is not only confined to political and diplomatic relations with the other countries. It includes the entire external relations in the field of strategy, security, economy, foreign aid, environmental and humanitarian issues, cultural exchange etc. According to Norman Hill, "Foreign policy is the content or substance of a nation's efforts to promote its interests with other nations." James Frankle said, "Foreign policy indicates that types of decisions or collection of activities by any state, which is involved with the relation of state or states with that state."

According to George Modelska, "Foreign Policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment." In fact, nations have always been interdependent and these are bound to remain so even after attaining high levels of development. It compels every nation to get essentially involved in the process of establishing and conducting relations with other nations. Therefore, each and every nation establishes diplomatic, economic, trade, educational, cultural and political relations with other nations. Like other independent nations, Bangladesh has its own foreign policy. The spirit of our foreign policy is 'friendship to all, malice to none.'

#### **7.1 Objectives of Foreign Policy**

Generally, the purpose of a country's foreign policy is to maximize and secure its welfare. There are 195<sup>36</sup> countries in the world today

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<sup>36</sup> Among them, 193 countries are member-states of UNO, 02 (Holy See and the State of Palestine) are non-member observer states, Taiwan is considered as it is represented by the People's Republic of China; 'The Cook Islands' and 'Niue' are free

and each country aim to preserve itself on the international stage; therefore, the goal of each country, first and foremost, is the protection of the state, its interests, and its people. This can be accomplished through various methods: literal military protection, diplomatic cooperation, economic coercion.

The objectives of the foreign policy of a country may not be stagnant. It changes over times and in line with both the domestic and external necessities. Foreign policies of countries have varying rates of change and scopes of intent, which can be affected by factors that change the perceived national interests or even affect the stability of the country itself. However, generally, the objectives of a country's foreign policy depend on these determinants: state's ideology, geographical location, state's power, its leadership, its types of government, military capability, economic capability, activities of neighboring countries, international situation etc.

As we've stated earlier that the objective of Bangladesh foreign policy is to earn friendship and ensure malice to none. The constitution of Bangladesh has clear provisions in Article 25 which reveal the objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy. This article includes the following provisions:

- The State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international dispute, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of those principles shall strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament;
- Uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social economic and political system by ways and means of its own free choice; and

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states but associated with New Zealand, however, neither member states nor non-member observer states. There are some other countries in the world which are considered as dependencies (autonomous territories) and recognized by the United Nations as not being self-governing.

- Support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism colonialism or racialism.
- The State shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity.

The foreign policy of Bangladesh is determined by certain basic factors. They are as follows:

- a. Geographical-Strategic position
- b. Population
- c. Economic condition
- d. Ideological environment
- e. Military capability
- f. Quality of government, leadership and diplomacy
- g. National history
- h. Religion
- i. Culture and natural resources.

Geography has put Bangladesh as a neighbor of India and Myanmar in three sides except the south with the Bay of Bengal. India has surrounded Bangladesh from three sides and the position of Bangladesh is like a flannel from the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, Bangladesh is packed between two powerful regional actors— India and China. Therefore, it is a challenge for Bangladesh as to how to maintain a delicate balance of relations between China and India. Bangladesh is burdened with huge population of more than sixteen million squeezed into a territory of 147,570 square kilometers. So, it is a densely populated country with less natural resources and regular visitors of natural calamities. So, it cannot create a highly dynamic foreign policy for the economic constraint. Therefore, preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, economic security, energy security, environmental preservation and internal peace and cohesion are the important elements of its national interest.

## **7.2 Principles of Foreign Policy**

There are some principles maintained under the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a member of various international key organizations such as the UN, the NAM etc. So the principles of Bangladesh foreign policy can't be controversial with the principles

of these organizations. There are four basic principles of Bangladesh foreign policy. They are given below:

1. Friendship to all and malice towards none.
2. Respect to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other states.
3. Non-intervene in the domestic matter of any state.
4. World peace.

Bangladesh being a poor country has been dependent on the foreign aid provided by the states with various ideologies for a long time. That is why, the Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said, ‘We are a small country, and we want friendship to all and malice towards none.’

Bangladesh is an active member of the United Nations Organizations. Therefore, it has to abide by the UN regulations. The UN charter mentioned in article 2(4) that ‘All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations’. Article 2(7) of the UN Charter mentioned that, ‘Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Charter VII. As a member of United Nations, Bangladesh included this policy in to her principle of foreign policy which gives assurances to others about Bangladesh’s friendly respectful character.

### **7.3 Goals of Foreign Policy**

Under the principles of Bangladesh foreign policy, the government of Bangladesh also set some targets time to time as its goals. The goals of a country’s foreign policy depend on the nature and the ideology of its government. Not every government follows the same strategy. With a keen observation, it is seen, the governments of Bangladesh during the last 48 years were ideologically two types: rightist (allied with the radicals) and moderate (allied with the leftist). Though Bangladesh officially declares it’s non-align nature all the time, its

governments have always had a tendency of leaning toward their choices according to their party manifesto. Therefore, some governments did follow pro-US-China and Pro-Islamic line up and the others followed pro-Soviet-India and pro-secular line up. Among the governments, Mustaq-Zia-Ershad-Khaleda Zia led governments were pro-US-China and Pro-Islamist. On the other hand, Bangabandhu-Sheikh Hasina led governments were pro-Soviet-India and pro-secularist. Other short termed governments followed stagnant policies, according to the constitution. However, whatever may be the nature of the governments, the general goals of Bangladesh foreign policy were international recognition, achieving membership in different international bodies such as: UNO and its different organizations, World Bank, OIC, ADB and participation in the non-conflicting international affairs; collecting aids, grants, loans and FDI or other investments for poverty alleviation, social and economic development, ensure sovereignty, territorial integrity, scientific, educational and cultural development, proper water sharing of upstream rivers, border security, balance of trade and commerce, infrastructure development as well as enhancing bureaucratic and military skills.

The first government of Bangladesh had to face overwhelming challenges because it had to start its travel as an independent country with empty pocket. However, its initial targets were as follows:

- Recognition from foreign states
- Admission into the UN
- Repatriation of Bengali civilian and military officials, held up in Pakistan in camps to Bangladesh
- Trial of the 195 Pakistani military prisoners of war, alleged to have committed genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes on Bengali population.

Except the trial of Pakistani military officials, Bangladesh had been successful in achieving the goals. With the admission of Bangladesh into the UN on 17 September 1974 (136<sup>th</sup> member)<sup>37</sup>, Bangladesh was fully integrated into the international community. To expand relationship with other countries including Islamic nations, Sheikh

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<sup>37</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member\\_states\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_states_of_the_United_Nations), retrieved on 13 July, 2016

Mujib's visit to Washington, his attendance to the Non-Aligned Conference in September 1973 in Algiers and his participation in the Islamic conference in Lahore (Pakistan) in March 1974 was pragmatic and successful.

Sheikh Mujib declared that Bangladesh would be the "Switzerland of the East" and by this declaration he meant that Bangladesh would remain non-partisan in the tug of Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union.

The successive governments up to 1996 were of different ideology (except two caretaker governments in 1991 and 1996). President Zia's government did not abandoned Mujib's foreign policy fully. However, he adopted a policy of established relations with the Muslim countries on the basis of Islamic solidarity. For this an article [Article 25(2)] also appended in the constitution. He discarded the pro-Indian and pro-Soviet attitudes of his predecessor and tilted to pro-Chinese and pro-US line. He had to pay for it. During his tenure, Bangladesh-India relations became worse. Therefore, cross-border insurgencies in the Chittagong Hill Tracts increased, ethnic minority issue emerged as a strength, Bangladesh could not settle its right on the South Talpatti issue, water sharing. Successive Ershad government continued the same policy. He amended the constitution of Bangladesh and ratified 'Islam' as the state religion of Bangladesh. Khaleda Zia also followed almost the same policy. In addition, during her tenure she adopted 'look east' policy.

However, none of these governments dropped the national interests. Suppose, the United States' long cherished desire was to sign SOFA agreement with Bangladesh so that it could and build a base in the Bay of Bengal. For this series of talks and visits were held during the Zia-Ershad-Khaleda Zia governments. However, none of the governments agreed to this, rather they tactically carried on talks and restrained them from signing. During these governments, participation of Bangladesh in the peace core of the UNO increased, foreign aids also flowed, the international NGO activities on rehabilitation, poverty alleviation, healthcare, child and women education also increased. Similarly, the Sheikh Hasina government also did not give space to India in the cases of water sharing, border issues, cross-border insurgencies, gas exports etc. All the

governments of Bangladesh have tried to grab the full taste of bargaining opportunity within or without the cold war world system.

#### **7.4 Bangladesh Foreign Policy during Different Governments**

##### **• Mujib Government (1972-1975)**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation, formed the government soon after the independence in January 1972. Under his guidance, the nation fought for the liberation war. The leadership in the liberation struggle had given him an unprecedented international recognition and prestige, which has given him leverage in the foreign relation under his government. In fact, Mujib was not a mere individual. He was an institution. He is not a mere individual. He is an institution. The leader of the British humanist movement, the late Lord Fenner Brockway once remarked, "In a sense, Sheikh Mujib is a greater leader than George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi and De Valera." When Bangabandhu joined the Algiers' Non-aligned Summit in 1973, Cuba's Fidel Castro noted, "I have not seen the Himalayas. But I have seen Sheikh Mujib. In personality and in courage, this man is the Himalayas. I have thus had the experience of witnessing the Himalayas." These are some comments of the international leaders that help us sketch his influence in the international community. Mugib successfully tried to use his image for the welfare of the country. In the year 1972, 32 countries recognized Bangladesh. Among them Poland and Bulgaria recognized 12 January, the Soviet Union on 25 January, Australia on 26 January, 1972; Britain and Israel recognized on 4 February, 1972, Japan on 8 February, 1972, France on 14 February, the United States recognized Bangladesh on April 4, 1972. On the same day the United States of America recognized Bangladesh. Pakistan on 22 February 1974. Among the Arab countries, Iraq first recognized Bangladesh on 8 July, 1972. Among the African countries Senegal first recognized Bangladesh on 1 February 1972.

However, India was the first to recognize Bangladesh on 6 December 1971 and Bhutan was the second on 7 December, 1971.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>CBGR's Findings: India recognized Bangladesh first, on December 6, 1971 around 11 am. Bhutan recognized Bangladesh second on December 7, 1971. (see: [www.cbgr1971.org/.../49-recognition-of-bangladesh](http://www.cbgr1971.org/.../49-recognition-of-bangladesh)).



# BANGLADESH

বাংলাদেশ

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## INDIA & BHUTAN RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH DE JURE

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Urges World Community  
To Recognize The 8th Largest Nation

The People's Republic of Bangladesh was accorded de jure recognition by India on December 6. India's formal recognition came after the Bengali Mukti Bahini had liberated most of the territory of Bangladesh from the West Pakistani occupation forces. Bhutan, another close neighbor, accorded formal diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh on December 7.

Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her statement of recognition told the Parliament in New Delhi that "The people of Bangladesh battling for their very existence and the people of India fighting to defeat aggression now find themselves partisans in the same cause."

Mrs. Gandhi said, "Our thoughts at this moment are with the Father of this new state—Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I am sure that this house would wish me to convey to Their Excellencies the Acting President of Bangladesh and the Prime Minister and to their colleagues

RECOGNITION, page 2

U.S. Senators  
Urge Recognition  
of the Reality  
of Bangladesh

Speaking on the floor of the Senate on December 7, Senator Edward M. Kennedy emphatically urged the American Government "to recognize the fact that Bangladesh now exists, not only in the minds of the Bengali people, but in the reality of current events." He said "our government must come to understand that it is time for all of us" to recognize the reality of Bangladesh.

Never Again

Challenging the pro-Pakistan bias of American policy, Senator Frank Church, who recently returned from an on-the-spot inspection tour of the sub-continent said, "I came away from that scene of tragedy and despair, knowing in my bones . . . that the people of East Pakistan would never again submit to the rule of the West Pakistan government . . .

See U.S. SENATORS, page 3

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Rise up—for you the flag is flying—for you the bugle trills—Walt Whitman

বাংলাদেশকে ভারত ও ভূটানের স্বীকৃতি দান  
India and Bhutan officially recognised Bangladesh

Mujib government prepared the constitution within one year. In the Article No. 25 of the constitution, it was clearly mentioned that the foreign policy principle of Bangladesh would be ‘friendship to all, malice towards none’. This principle guided the cooperation of the Mujib government in the South Asia region. Cooperation with the neighboring states, the European countries, the Middle East countries, and the regional and global organizations such as, the Commonwealth, the OIC, the United Nations, were possible due to the friendly approach from the government.

During the liberation war of Bangladesh, the United States and almost all the Islamic countries opposed the birth of Bangladesh, for they wanted to check the dismemberment of Pakistan. However, after the liberation, Sheikh Mujib made a trip in Lahore in 1974 to attend Conference of the OIC and Islamic Development Bank. Although he had to pay for it, he followed the principle of the constitution.

Rahman and his Indian counterpart Indira Gandhi signed the 25-year Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace. In the Delhi Agreement of 1974, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan pledged to work for regional stability and peace. The agreement paved the way for the return of interned Bengali officials and their families stranded in Pakistan. Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth of Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement during his tenure. Israel was one of early countries to recognize Bangladesh, the government in Dhaka strongly supported Egypt during the Arab-Israel War of 1973. In return, Egypt gifted Bangladesh's military with 44 tanks. Japan became a major aid provider to the new country. The Soviet Union supplied several squadrons of Mig-21 planes for the Bangladesh Air Force.

Sheikh Mujib tried to reconcile relations with the USA along with the relation with the USSR. For this, even he dropped his loyal and wise leftist disciple Taj Uddin Ahmed from his cabinet before the visit of Henry Kissinger to prove his friendly notion to the United States. In fact, he desperately tried to win the US-heart to attract US food aid. However, the socialist policies and the allegation of Soviet intimacy gave no leverage from the US side. The United States did not supply the promised food aid under PL-480 program in allegation of supplying gunny bags to Cuba. Thus, Mujib lost the faith of the

Soviets as well as the proposed food aid from the USA. He could not prevent the famine of 1974.

**• Zia Government (1975-1981)**

After the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 15 August, 1975, the foreign policy of the Bangladesh drastically changed. The emphasis of foreign policy was shifted from Indo-Soviet alliance to China and Islamic countries. When President Ziaur Rahman re-orientated Bangladesh away from Socialism by favoring the opening up the private sector in 1975, it paved the way for Saudi recognition. Saudi Arabia and China recognized Bangladesh in August 31, 1975.

During President Zia's tenure, Indo-Bangladesh relations came to a delicate position. When President Zia took over power of the country after 7th November, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took a hard line in negotiations in bilateral issues. This trend continued until Morarji Desai became Prime Minister in 1977. However when Indira Gandhi resumed power in 1980, the old track of policy towards Bangladesh again was adopted.

President Zia was interested to win the friendship of China due to the cold relations with India. Zia's foreign policy makers thought that it would be valuable for Bangladesh to make good relations with the industrialist countries like the USA, China and the Muslim countries for economic assistance and aids. Although the recognition of Pakistan was earned during the Bangabandhu government, the actual bilateral diplomatic relations were opened during the Zia government. Zia took the opportunity of the dissatisfaction of India's neighboring countries for its 'big brotherly' attitude and proposed to establish SAARC. President Zia met one-to one with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi in 1980 but the meeting ended reportedly with candid exchange of words between them. During Zia's regime the diplomatic relations with the USSR became sour when Bangladesh accused Russian diplomats for some of their 'undiplomatic activities and expelled many Russian diplomats. However, when Bangladesh secured a seat in the Security Council in 1978, defeating Japan, its image in the international community increased to some extent. .

### **● Ershad Government (1982-1990)**

President H.M. Ershad came into power in March 1982 through a bloodless military coup. Fundamentally, there was no difference between his foreign policy and the Zia government. However, he reset his predecessor's foreign policy and realized the importance of the friendship of India. He directed his policy to strengthen with all powers, especially with the US, China, Japan and Islamic countries. He amended the Constitution and inserted a clause, '...the State religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony.' By this clause, he tactically attracts the attention of the Muslim countries of the Middle East and collected huge assistance from those countries. During Ershad regime, Bangladesh became the President of the UN General Assembly. Credit also went to him for the initiation of sending troops to the UN peacekeeping missions and it is being continued with enhanced number of troops of more than 10,000 in 13 countries at present. Credit also went to him for he took initiative to lay the foundation of the SAARC and his initiative succeeded in 1985 when the first SAARC conference was held. He also committed his nation's forces as an ally to the United States in the Gulf War.

### **● Khaleda Zia Government (1991-1996, 2001-2006)**

Begum Khaleda Zia led the Bangladesh government two times: during 1991-1996 and 2001-2006. In 1996, she again formed a government forcefully, however, only a couple of days after she compelled to resign to a caretaker government.

The foreign policy of Khaleda Zia government was actually an extension of previous Zia and Ershad Governments. Therefore, she had to face difficulties to engage in working relationship with India to resolve bilateral issues such as water sharing, cross-border insurgency, bilateral trades due to her anti-Indian stand. However, she followed the policy of strengthening bilateral relations with China, Japan, and Islamic countries. She also succeeded to restore balance in relations with both Iraq and Iran which became deteriorated during Ershad regime.

The foreign policy of Khaleda Zia's first term includes the following characteristics:

- Promoting relation with the United States.
- Making rapport with China.

- Making close relation with Muslim World.
- To make SAARC as an effective organization.
- Maintaining good relation with India.
- To increase investment.
- Emphasize on economic diplomacy.

During this term, her government accelerated the CHT Peace Accord although it was signed during earlier Sheikh Hasina government. Troops from Bangladesh in UN peace keeping activities increased, SAPTA treaty played a vital role in the South Asian trade, Bangladesh got a lease of 'Tin Bigha Corridor' by contacting with India. During his time, Rohingya push back from Myanmar became an important issue. However, her government succeeded to sign a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Myanmar.

During her second term, Khaleda Zia tried to lessen border collision between BDR and BSF. Pakistan President Parvez Mosharraf visited Bangladesh to promoting commercial relation. Begum Zia visited China, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia and the United States to promoting bilateral relations.

#### **• Sheikh Hasina Governments (1996-2001, 2008-2013, 2013- continuing)**

Sheikh Hasina also formed government three times like Begum Khaleda Zia. She formed her first government in 1996, thus her party, Awami League came into power 19 years after the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibor Rahman. Again, Bangladesh stepped in the track of Indo-Soviet line. However, the international theatre has been changed by this time and the Cold War world system has been receded. That's why, she has to adopt newer policies to keep Bangladesh withstand in the unipolar worlds. However, her first term government's policy includes the following agenda,

- Resolving bilateral problem with neighboring countries.
- Economic diplomacy.
- Commercial investment.
- Upholding national ideologies.
- Promoting friendship.
- Implementing CHT accord in June 02,1997 etc.

After returning to power, Awami League started a fresh beginning to strengthen the relations with India. It gave instant positive outcome. For example, the 30-year Ganges Water Treaty was concluded with India in 1996 and with the help and cooperation co-operation with India, the Peace Agreement with Tribal Representatives on Chittagong Hill Tracts was signed in 1997. On international stage, Bangladesh was elected in 1999 for a two-year period at the UN Security Council for the second time.

During the first tenure of Sheikh Hasina Government, Bangladesh achieved ICC test status (in 2000). This time, Bangladesh gradually came back from socialist economic agenda to market economy. The Government of Bangladesh gave an utmost try to attract foreign investment in Bangladesh. This positive approach attracted the world leader. As a result, the President of the United States of America Bill Clinton, for the first time, visited Bangladesh. The CEO of Microsoft Corporation also visited Bangladesh with his wife to see the activities of Grameen Bank. However, Sheikh Hasina government helped the Grameen Bank expand its micro-credit enterprise. During this period Prime Minister of India H. D. Debgoura, Palestine's President Yaasir Arafat, Nelson Mandela also gave visits to promoting foreign relation.

During the second tenure of Sheikh Hasina Government (2008-2013), one unique policy was adopted to enhance its relation with its old friends who gave support in the liberation war in 1971. The government took a program to award those persons in the different countries who were vocal for Bangladesh in the days of the war with Gold Medals, certificates and official celebrations. This Track-II diplomacy raised the prestige of Bangladesh government. Indo-Bangladesh relation has been reached its apex level. With this warm relation, Bangladesh resolved its maritime disputed through International Tribunals of the United Nations. In July 2014 a United Nations tribunal awarding Bangladesh 19,467 sq. km of the 25,602 sq. km sea area of the Bay of Bengal. India also accepted this UN order.

India and Bangladesh also resolved their 68 years land disputes. On 6 June 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ratified an agreement during his visit to the Bangladesh capital Dhaka. Under

this agreement, the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974 has been operationalized. As a result, total 111 border enclaves have been transferred to Bangladesh in exchange for 51 that have become part of India. India and Bangladesh formally exchanged 162 enclaves on August 1, 2015 accordingly.

Sheikh Hasina Government also signed Transit Treaty, Border security Treaty, and Water Sharing of Tista River Agreement with India. The latter is now in the process of ratification.

During the UN General Assembly session in 2010, both the Secretary General Ban ki-Moon and US President Obama conveyed their appreciation of the role of Bangladesh peacekeeping forces to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

However, despite utmost try, the relation between Bangladesh and the Western world, especially, during the second and the beginning of third tenure became worse due to several issues: International Crimes Tribunal, Safety Measures of Garments Sectors, World Bank's investment in the Padma Bridge Project, Dr. Yunus and Grameen Bank, national election of Bangladesh etc. For this the United States withdrew GSP facilities for Bangladesh. However, the government successfully handle those matters, therefore, it is seen the relation is gradually developing.

### **Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar and Toll of Bangladesh**

In the recent years Bangladesh has been burdened with a flood of unexpected drainage of Rohingya people through its south-eastern border, i.e. Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas spill out into Bangladesh, fleeing a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar since August 25, 2017. At first, Bangladesh did not want to open the border. However, soon it revised its policy and opened its border to save the unprocted Rohingya people from a decessive genocide launched by Myanmar military. At present, nearly one million Rohingya people are living in Bangladesh.

Along with sheltering the helpless Rohingya people, Bangladesh urged the international community to come forward with aid and also raise voice against the illegal military insurgence and ethnic cleansing occurred by the Myanmar military. The Prime Minister of

Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina placed three recommendations for solving the Rohingya crisis through her address entitled “High-level Event on the Global Compact on Refugees: A Model for Greater Solidarity and Cooperation” at the UN headquarters in New York on September 24, 2018. The recommendations include:

- a. Abolition of discriminatory laws, policies and practices of Myanmar against the minority group.
- b. Myanmar government should create a “safe zone” inside the country to protect all civilians if needed;
- c. Atrocious crimes against Rohingyas in Myanmar should be prevented by bringing accountability and justice, particularly in the light of recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission of the UN Human Rights Council.

This crisis has already become a serious threat for the economy, social structure of the Chittagong-Cox's bazar area and also for the national security of Bangladesh. The natural vegetation of Cox's bazar area has become endangered and it should be stopped without any delay. By any means, the international community should create a congenial atmosphere so that the Rohingya people can return to Myanmar immediately. Although, Bangladesh government is trying to solve the problem peacefully with international participation, the crisis is going to become a long-standing burden for Bangladesh. Infact, Bangladesdh is being trapped into a regional economic interest in Myanmar.

Although Bangladesh and Myanmar government pleaded to begin the repatriation of Rohingya refugees in 2018, no official return have begun. The Myanmar authority is giving controversial statements time to time. Even the Myanmar army published a map of Myanmar recently indicating Saint Martin as their territory. Bangladesh officially protested the manner and the Myanmar authority sought apology for the deed and addressed it as their unwanted mistake. It seems, the Myanmar authority is trying to make a way not to let the Rohingyas return to Myanmar. Therefore, we need a charismatic policy to come out of the cocoon.

## **7.5 SAARC and Bangladesh**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is an economic and geopolitical organization of eight South Asian countries. It plays the role of a guiding force for the member countries.

### **7.5.1 History of SAARC**

It was back in 1980 when the concept of regional political and economic cooperation in South Asia was first thought of and fired the public imagination. Even before that, the idea was discussed in three major conferences: Asian Relations Conference (New Delhi), Baguio Conference (Philippines) and Colombo Powers Conference (Sri Lanka), which were held between 1947 and 1954. Ex-president of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman was the one who made a formal proposal on May 2, 1980. The first SAARC summit was held in Dhaka on 8 December 1985, during the Presidency of H. M. Ershad, when the organization was established. Initially the number of SAARC members was seven, which include Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan. Afghanistan is the only new inclusion that happened since SAARC was established.

### **7.5.2 Objective of SAARC**

SAARC's foundation was built upon some strong set of objectives. Every decision SAARC takes and every policy it frames is guided by the overall objectives it had set for itself in the charter. Although promoting 'welfare economics' and 'collective self-reliance' among the South Asian nations are the commonly quoted objectives, yet there are some equally important focus areas, which need a mention.

- To accelerate the economic growth and cultural development in South Asia to improve quality of life.
- To give every individual the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potentials.
- To understand and appreciate one another's problems.
- To collaborate in the field of economics, culture, technology and science.
- To cooperate with other developing countries.
- To strengthen cooperation among the member countries in the international forums on matters of common interests.

- To cooperate with the regional and international organizations

### **7.5.3 SAARC Recognized**

As an organization, SAARC mainly operates through six apex bodies, which ensure regional cooperation on multiple levels:

- **SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI):** The entity encourages intra-regional trade by creating business linkages among the entrepreneurs. Its primary focus is on the holistic growth of service sector and small & medium enterprises.
- **SAARCLAW (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Law):** The desire to establish an association within the SAARC region “to disseminate information” and “promote an understanding of the concerns and developments” prompted the birth of SAARCLAW in 1991. This association of legal communities of SAARC nations was established in Colombo.
- **South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA):** In 1984, this organization came into existence with an objective of strengthening and serving the accountancy profession in the South Asian Region.
- **South Asia Foundation (SAF):** A non-profit and non-political organisation founded by UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Madanjeet Singh in 2000, SAF encourages regional cooperation through UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institutions of Excellence. The institutions offer courses on varied subjects ranging from Climate and Green Energy to Human Rights and Visual Arts.
- **South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC):** Founded in 2005, this regional forum aims at “ending all forms of violence against children in South Asia.”
- **Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL):** It’s the first non-government organisation working towards nurturing and strengthening cultural connectivity through interactions among SAARC nations.

#### **7.5.4 SAFTA**

In a landmark move, SAARC nations unanimously decided to form South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). Although the agreement was reached at the 12th SAARC summit in 2004, it came into force on 1 January 2006. The agreement not only created a free trade area of 1.8 billion people in SAARC nations (except Afghanistan), but also removed trade barriers to increase the level of economic cooperation.

#### **7.5.5 SAARC Secretariat**

The SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu (Nepal) facilitates and monitors implementation of activities of the organisation and acts as a communication channel between SAARC and its member states. Presently, the Secretariat is headed by Nepal's ex-foreign secretary—Arjun Bahadur Thapa.

#### **7.5.6 Achievements & Criticism of SAARC**

According to the declaration of the 16th SAARC Summit (April 2010), SAARC's scope and substance of cooperation had expanded to diverse fields. The SAARC Summits have indeed created a platform for closed-door bilateral talks exclusive to the participating nations. These meetings have somewhat led to the progress in regional cooperation. The scope of regional cooperation in SAARC has proliferated, and it has started to engage political, economic, social, cultural and other aspects in its dialogue. Even the member nations' interactions with the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the corporate sectors seem to be developing gradually.

However, SAARC is seen as a failure by many analysts. According to observers, it has achieved very little over the last three decades. Besides deteriorating regional security environment and growth of terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan, inter-state disputes are also a nagging concern for the grouping. Social and economic sectors have registered a dismal growth, and so is the intra-regional trade.

There's a need for India and other member states to collectively tackle challenges such as poverty, energy crisis, and terrorism among others. India should take the centre stage and remove the perceived mistrust and a sense of insecurity among the member nations. But first, India and Pakistan should focus on improving bilateral ties.

# **Chapter- Eight**

## **Society and Social Structure: Culture and Religion, Education**

### **Objectives**

The aim of this chapter is to enhance the knowledge of the learners about the tiers of the society in the Bangladesh, the status of education, religions of Bengali people as well as the communal harmony of Bangladesh.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Definition of the Society and its General Structures, Social System in Ancient Bengal, Social System in Medieval Period, Social System in British Period, Society in Pakistan Period, The Present Social System in Bangladesh, Causes of Social Inequalities in Bangladesh, Definition of Culture, Bangali Culture, Elements of Bangali Culture, Culture of Ethnic Minorities, Religion: Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, Christianity, Other Religions in Bangladesh, Communal Harmony in Bangladesh, Education: Definition of Education and Education System, Education Policy of Bangladesh, Education System in Bangladesh: Categories/Types, Educational Administration/Education Management, Incentives in Education, Economy: Economic Structure of Bangladesh, Common and Major Economic Problems, Major Economic Sectors, Causes of Poverty and Poverty Reduction Programs, Present Economic Status of the Country, Economic Prospects of Bangladesh

### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will be able to discuss on the existing religions in Bangladesh, their teachings and their developments. They will also be able to gather knowledge on the education system, education management, and incentives in the education sectors as well as different cultures of Bangladesh.

## Chapter-8

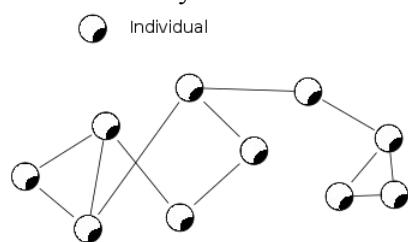
### Religion, Education

#### Society

##### 8.1 Definition of Society and its General Structures

A society is a grouping of individuals. In other words, it is a network of relationships between people. It is the largest human association. The English word ‘society’ derives from the French word ‘societe’, which is further derived from the Latin word ‘societas’, which means ‘a friendly association with others’. Again, ‘societas’ is derived from a noun ‘socius’, which means ‘companion, associate, and comrade or business partner.’ So, ‘society’ describes a group of people who share similar values, laws and traditions living in organized communities for mutual benefits. Members of society often share religions, politics or culture. It is an interpersonal network that is invested in maintaining these connections to encourage survival of the thoughts and ideas associated with the core values of the group. This allows the group to maintain stability and persist for a long period of time. Each society creates its own ideas as to what is best to emulate and stand for, generating unique cultural and ideological methods of conduct and thought that are specific to these groups.

In the study of social science ‘society’ has been used to mean a group of people that form a semi-closed social system, in which most interactions are with other individuals belonging to the group. On the other hand, in political science, ‘society’ is often used to mean the totality of human relationships, generally in contrast to the ‘state’, the apparatus of rule or government within a territory. Let us see, how the scholars have defined the ‘society’.

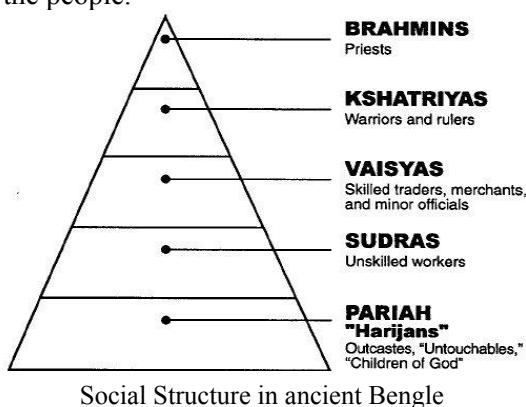


An example of a social network diagram

According to Professor Wright, "Society is the system of relationships that exists among the individuals of the groups." Linton says, "Any group of people who have lived and worked together long enough to get themselves organized and to think of themselves as a social unit with well defined limits." According to A. W. Green, "It is the largest group in which individual have relationships." According to MacIver, "It is a web of social relationship, which is always changing." Adam Smith says, "Society is an artificial device of natural economy."

### 8.2.1 Social System in Ancient Bengal

Before the advent of the Aryans, the ancient people of Bengal developed a distinct social life. As it was basically an alluvial land with a network of a large number of small and big rivers, people established here an agro-based social system. Most of them lived in the rural areas. The political structure grew up before the rule of Mauryas. However, the inhabitants of ancient Bengal were mixed races formed by three main elements, namely, the original non-Aryan people, the Dravidians, and the Aryans. Society was divided into different tribes. Later, the religious thoughts of pre-Aryan and Aryan period spread over Hinduism. On the whole, the Hindu, Buddhists and the low caste people formed the ancient society, which maintained a rigid social structure based mainly on religious principles and largely characterized by caste restrictions including food and attire. During the Sena rule, caste system was imposed heavily over the people.



During the ancient time, the Brahmins were on the top of the social system. They used to enjoy all the privileges of the society. Only they had the access to cultivate knowledge. They did not do any physical labor. All the religious activities were performed by the Brahmins. The king used to give them lands and other facilities to the Bramins. People of all classes provided them the best gifts to satisfy the god and goddess such as Vishwakarma, Sitala, Manasha, Banadurga, Chandi, Sasthi, Kali and Shiva.

Kshatriyas were the warriers. They were also included to the upper class. The Vaisyas used to engage themselves with trade and commerce. The sudras were unskilled workers. They did the odd jobs. There were a large number people at the lowest section of the society who were untouchable. They did the odd and filthy jobs. According to the modern class system, it assumed that the Kings and his relatives, royal service holders, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas belonged to upper class. The The Vaisyas and some other Sudras belonged to the middle class and the Sudras and the Harijans were the lower class people.

In the ancient societies, the Brahmins were very much oppressive. Nobody dared to challenge them, nor even the king. The lives of the common people, rich or poor, during the reign of the Sena Kings were not happy. The main power was in the hands of the upper class (the Brahmins). They used to inflict oppressions over the lower caste people. Their torture was directed to the followers of the Buddhists. They oftern snatched away the wealth of the Buddhists. The lower class Hindus could not even hear the words of the Veda. If anybody heard, hot liquid led was poured into his ears. Sometimes, their young was cut if the utter Veda. General people were treambled to see a Brahmin.

### **8.2.2 Social System in Medieval Period**

At the advent of the Muslims the lower class people were converted to Islamism since the Muslims called for the abolition of inequality and injustice. They got free access to the society according to their skill. During the Muslim rule, many lower class people were included to the upper class by their education, skill and courage. Alivardi Khan was the ready example.

After coming of the Muslims, the society in Bengal was broadly divided into Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus formed the great majority of the population; they included the Jains, the Buddhists and the Sikhs among them. The upper classes of the Hindu society mostly belonged to the Brahman, Kayastha, Rajput and Vaishya castes and did neither inter-dine nor inter-marry between them. There were many other mixed classes in the society. The Baidyas were a mixed class next to the Brahmins. These apart there were various other castes and sub-castes which grew up as a result of social mixture i.e. intermarriage between castes. There was much conservatism among the Hindus of upper classes.

The Muslims were also divided into two major sections:

- a) **Overseas Muslims:** Those who came with the conquerors or for trade and commerce or employment from countries like Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Abyssinia etc. and;
- b) **Native Muslims:** The converts from the indigenous Hindu population and their descendants, inter-marriages with the converted Muslims and the overseas Muslims and their descendants.

The society during the Mediaval period was feudal in nature. Nobility and the officials of the state belonged to upper class. Their standard of living was very high. The nobility was characterized by mutual jealousy, conspiracy and recrimination.

A small number of middle class was also existent below the nobility. They include working class, lower grade officials and traders. Their standard of living was moderate and far below that of the nobles and state officials.

The condition of the common people was miserable. They used to work hard in the fields since Bengal was mainly an agrarian society. However, they had very limited purchasing capacity. High land taxes, crop taxes and the suction of the money lenders reduced their income. However, they could have led a normal life but unexpected natural calamities like flood, drought and famine worsened their condition.

### 8.2.3 Social System in British Period

A great change occurred in the social and private life in Bengal after the battle of Plassey. The first half century of the British rule in Bengal experienced frequent famine, drainage of wealth to Europe, irregularity and uncertainty in the revenue collection system, indiscriminate torture on the common people. Moreover, misrule added new dimension of social and political disorder. During the great famine of 1770, one third of the population of Bengal died for want of food due to the misrule of the English. As a result, the social base of Bengal almost broke down.

During the British period, some changes occurred in the social structure, particularly, due to the enactment of permanent settlement Act in 1793. New land relations were evolved, which had an adverse effect on many categories of landed interests. A new class of zamindars, mainly evolving from upper caste rich Hindus, the Hindu merchants and money-lending groups, emerged. The Muslims lagged behind. This development restructured the relations between the ruling elites and the rising landed elite. The permanent settlement began the process of sub-feudalism in which the zamindar class grabbed the upper class of the society and the vast majority of peasant went to the lower class. The permanent settlement also created an intermediary rent collecting clusters like jotedar, gantidar, hawladar, talukdar and bhuiyan. Most elite Muslim families could not retain their zamindary and gradually ruined.

During nineteenth century, especially after the Sepoy Mutiny, a new urban class emerged, which included rich people belonging almost entirely to the highest Hindu castes, Brahman, Kayastha, and Baishya. They were known as Bhaddarlok (gentlemen). It is estimated that nearly one half of this class were landlords who supported themselves partly or wholly by rents paid by their tenants; a quarter were professionals like lawyers, medical practitioners and priests; the reminder were clerks who worked either in government offices or under landlords or traders.

#### **8.2.4 Society in Pakistan Period**

The partition of India in 1947 occurred serious impact in the social system and conditions in Bengal. With the partition, a part of Bengal (East Bengal) went under Pakistan which was later re-named as East

Pakistan. The social structure of East Bengal (later East Pakistan) experienced drastic changes as a result of large scale migration of Hindus to India as well as the Muslims from India. Moreover, the acquisition of zamindaries by the state, rapid urbanization process, the financial policy of the dominant elite groups, and the implementation of development programs, benefits of which went more to the privileged few than to the masses. Bengal had been always an agrarian country and had long been used as a raw material supplier of the industries of Calcutta. However, after the emergence of Pakistan urbanization process and a growth in commercial activities and industrial development created a professional and commercial middle class within the Muslim society. It created a change in the social structure of East Bengal. Feudal society was abolished and gradually developed a capitalist social system. The leadership of the upper class gradually was transferred to the middle class. The newly educated persons of Dhaka University gradually entered into the provincial bureaucracy. Therefore, middle class became dominant in the society in the East Bengal, although the state power remained in the hands of the elite politicians related to West Pakistani authority. Islamic culture became dominant in the state run activities. The Hindus became squeezed during the beginning years of Pakistan as a result of the impact of horrible riot of 1946. A section of non-Bengali and the Begali Muslim League activists imposed torture even on the Bengali Muslims. The social shape became clear: the elite class included the non-Bengali bureaucrats both civil and military, non-Bengali businessmen, Bengali Muslim League collaborators; middle class developed, which included Bengali small businessmen, service holders or other intermediary classes. The lower class remained in the same miseries. The growing middle class started to achieve more share of the state opportunities, therefore, during the Pakistan period the disparities between East Pakistan and the West Pakistan revealed before the mass people which led them towards political movement. This pain of the have-nots created movements on numerous issues, which at last led them to the independence movements.

### **8.2.5 The Present Social System in Bangladesh**

Sociologists have given three-fold classification of classes which consists of—upper class, middle class and lower class. Sorokin has spoken of three major types of class stratification. They are economic, political and occupational classes. Lloyd Warner shows how class distinctions contribute to social stability. However, there are great difficulties involved studying the social structure of the present society of Bangladesh because of its extraordinary complexities and because of reliable sources. However, in the present Bangladesh we see four classes: Upper class, Middle class, Working class, and Lower class both in rural and urban societies in Bangladesh.

#### ● **Upper Class**

The upper class in the present society comprises only 1 to 3 percent of the population. However, it holds more than 25 percent of the nation's wealth. There are two segments in the upper class: upper-upper and lower-upper. The upper-upper class includes those aristocratic and 'high-society' families with 'old money' who have been rich for generations and the lower-upper class includes those with 'new money' or money made from investments, business ventures, and so forth. These extremely wealthy people live off the income from their inherited riches. The upper-upper class is more prestigious than the lower-upper class. Wherever their money comes from, both segments of the upper class are exceptionally rich. They live in exclusive neighborhoods, gather at expensive social clubs, and send their children to the finest schools. As might be expected, they also exercise a great deal of influence and power both nationally and globally.

#### ● **Middle Class**

The middle class is often defined as the 'sandwich' class. These white collar workers have more money than those below them on the 'social ladder, but less than those above them. They are divided into two levels according to wealth, education, and prestige: the upper middle class and lower middle class. The upper middle class is often made up of highly educated business and professional people with high incomes, such as doctors, lawyers, stockbrokers, and CEOs. On the other hand, the lower middle class is often made up of less educated

people with lower incomes, such as managers, small business owners, teachers, and secretaries.

● **Working Class**

The working class belongs to those minimally educated people who remain engaged in ‘manual labor’ with little or no prestige. Unskilled workers, such as— dishwashers, cashiers, maids, and waitresses— usually are underpaid and have no opportunity for career advancement. They are often called the working poor. There are also some skilled workers in this class. They are— carpenter, plumbers, and electricians—are often called blue collar workers. They may make more money than workers in the middle class, such as— secretaries, teachers, and computer technicians; however, their jobs are usually more physically taxing, and in some cases quite dangerous.

● **Lower Class**

Lower class is typified by poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. People of this class, few of whom have finished high school, suffer from lack of medical care, adequate housing and food, decent clothing, safety, and vocational training.

**8.2.6 Causes of Social Inequalities in Bangladesh**

People in a society face inequality for many reasons. Inequality prevails in the society through ages. However, when the inequality reaches to an overwhelming extent, it should be addressed and needs to find out the causes and remedies. One of the root causes of the emergence of Bangladesh is the severe inequality imposed upon East Pakistan by the state. So it is expected that the new born Bangladesh will be a suction free society where the people enjoy equal rights and opportunities. However, after approximately fifty years of experience, we see that the Bangladesh state and its society largely failed to ensure inequality among the inhabitants, although the constitution of Bangladesh has clear indication about this. Why does Bangladesh fail to ensure equality in the society? What causes inequality? A new report from the New Economics Foundation recently has outlined the following five general causes behind inequality in a society:

- a. Starting points
- b. Early life opportunities
- c. Global influences

- d. National economy
- e. Tax and policy

Researchers observe that family is the starting point to exert inequality. If you're born into a family with wealth and assets, you get a head start. If your family is impoverished, you will lag behind. A recent LSE report shows that it also helps to be male and white. Women earn 21% less than men, and men of Bangladeshi earn 13-21% less on average than their white counterparts. Again, families with wealth are able to pay for better education for their children, opening doors to all kinds of opportunities.

Inequality in a society or a state may occur due to global influences. We know, Globalization has brought lots of advantages, but it's also been a driver of inequality. One of the many effects of this has been to lower the value of unskilled labour, right around the world, pushing wages for skilled workers and unskilled workers in different directions. Economic liberalization is another global trend that has exacerbated inequality in almost every country where it has been pursued.

The make-up of individual economies within a state also affects equality. The balance between different producing sectors, such as manufacturing, garments industries, service sectors, and business-small and big, foreign wage earners etc. are continuously causing inequality in the society.

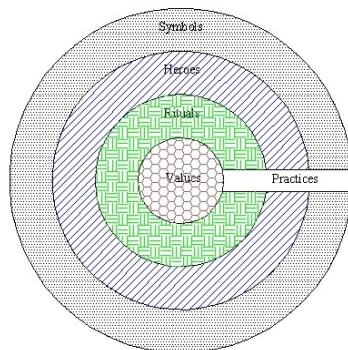
The tax system of any country can be progressive or regressive, redistributing wealth around the economy. Taxation is one of the first things we think of when talking about sharing the wealth, but it's much better to prevent inequality from developing in the first place than to redistribute it afterwards. However, a progressive tax system can move society in the right direction and help prevent inequality passing from one generation to the next.

Finally, there are many other reasons which are continuously causing inequality in the society of Bangladesh. They are: absence of true democracy, poor education system, social prejudices, religious misinterpretations, corruptions, nepotism etc.

## 8.3 Culture

### 8.3.1 Definition of Culture, Bengali Culture

Culture is a powerful human tool for survival. The word culture has many different meanings. According to many, culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns. Others say, culture is a way of life of a group of people—the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next. According to Edward B. Tylor Culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” [see: *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871] Of course, it is not only limited to men. Women possess and create it as well.



Similarly, the Bengali culture refers to the way of life of the people of Bangladesh. It has evolved over the centuries and encompasses the cultural diversity of several social groups of Bangladesh. It includes language, dress and food, way of hospitality, rituals of birth, marriage and after death formalities, festivals, music, art and literature, games and sports, religious beliefs, manner and etiquette materials used in everyday life etc. In all sectors Bengali culture has rich and distinct characteristics.

### 8.3.2 Elements of Bengali Culture

#### • Languages

The first official language is Bangla, also known as Bengali. It is the first language of more than 98 percent of the population. It is written in its own script, derived from that of Sanskrit through various changes. Bangla as a language had been struggled for its existence since the ancient times. The Aryans condemned it saying as the language of impoverished people. During the Hindu period, it has to survive from the challenge of Sanskrit; during the Muslim period, from the influence of Arabic-Farsi; during the British period, from English and Hindi; and finally during Pakistan period, from the challenge of Urdu. In all ages, Bangla successfully faced the challenges and survived for its eternal strength. Now, it is one of the prominent languages of the world. However, vocabularies of many foreign languages are also adapted to this language. Among the foreign languages, the vocabularies of English, Arabia, Farsi, Hindi, and Portuguese are prominent in Bangla language. Azan (call for prayer), Quran (holy book), Hadith [speeches of Prophet Muhammad (sm.)], Sahabi [companion of Muhammad (sm.)], Miraj (holy night), Kalam (knowledge), Faraj (mandatory works), Haram (prohibited), Halal (accepted), Dokan (shop), Tarikh (date), Bonduk (gun) etc. are some widely used Arabic words in Bangla language. Namaj (prayer), Roja (fasting), Khoda (God) are from Farsi; lungyi (a kind of dress), Paipa, Balti (bucket, Janala (window), Toale (towel) are some of Portuguese words. Table, Chair, Tiffin, Truck, Bus, School, College, Restaurant, Ticket, Telephone, Television, Mobile, Fee, Cinema, Photo, Video, Radio etc. are some of widely used English words.

The English ruled approximately two hundred years in India. Therefore, the influence of English language is also prominent in Bangla language. Now, English is the second official language in Bangladesh. However, the people of Bangladesh never felt the need of 'English' as a lingua Franka.

### ● Etiquette

Majority of the people of Bangladesh are Muslims. That's why Muslim etiquette has strong influence in Bengali culture. When a Muslim Bengali sees another, he utters "Assalaam Aleykum" (Peace be unto you) at the beginning and "Khoda hafez" (God Bless you) at the end. The Hindus greet each other by uttering "Namashkar". On

the other hand, Both Hindu and Muslim address them by uttering 'Adab'. There are some other characteristics in etiquette as follows:

- Greetings usually take place between members of the same sex.
- The hand shake is common although they may feel rather limp.
- Women will only really be met within business contexts and even so, it is best to wait to see if a hand is extended before doing so.
- Naming conventions are very much based on the hierarchical nature of Bangladeshi society.
- Bangladeshis will append a suffix to a person's name to denote respect and the level of closeness between the two people.
- In general, age dictates how people are addressed.
- If people are of the same age, they use first names.
- If the person being addressed is older than the speaker, the person is called by their first name and a suffix that denotes the family relationship.
- Gifts are mainly given between family members at religious holidays, especially after Ramadan and Hajj.
- In cities, it is becoming more common for gifts to be given on birthdays.
- When visiting a Bangladeshi's home, it is more common to bring pastries, sweets or good quality chocolates.
- As a dining etiquette, guests are generally served first, then the oldest, continuing in order of seniority. Women in the family generally take meal after the male members. However, this tradition is changing. Now-a-days both male and female members take their meal at the same time.
- Many people comment on the lack of smiles in Bangladesh. This has nothing to do with unfriendliness but rather related to the fact that a serious face is believed to demonstrate maturity.

- **Hierarchy**

- Bangladesh is a hierarchical society.
- People are respected because of their age and position.
- Elderly people are naturally viewed as wise and are granted respect.

- Bangladeshis expect the most senior male, by age or position, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.

### **• Religion**

Religion plays vital role in every aspects of life of the people of Bangladesh. Most of the people are God-fearing. From the cradle to the grave, they practice religious rituals. However, most of them do not prefer fundamentalism. The following are some of the characteristics in reference to religion:

- Children are named after their birth according to their religious belief.
- During the marriage and after death, the formalities are performed according to the religion.
- The majority of Bangladeshis are Muslim. However, most still very much mix this with pre-Islam folk traditions.
- Mostly in the rural societies, people identify with the folk traditions of Bengali culture. This includes belief in the powers of fakirs (Muslim holy men who are exorcists and faith healers), ojhaa (shamans with magical healing powers), and Bauls (religious mendicants and wandering musicians).
- There is a strong tradition of music, dance, and literature that includes classical devotions of Hindu and Muslim music.

### **• Festivals**

- Islam defines many of the festivals in Bangladesh. These include two Eids (one after Ramadan and one after the Hajj) Shab-e-Qadr (the night of power), Milad un-Nabi (birth date of the Prophet Muhammad) and Shab-e-Barat (the night of the fortune).
- Hindu influences festivals include Durga Puja and Kali Puja (community worshipping of Goddess Durga and Kali).
- On the whole an entire community participates in each other's religious ceremonies.
- The ethnic minorities also have their distinct festivals.

### **8.3.3 Culture of Ethnic Minorities [discussed in Chapter-Nine]**

## **8.4 Religion**

### **8.4.1 Islam**

Islam is the religion of the majority of the population of Bangladesh. Now, it is constitutionally the state religion. Islam was preached by generation after generation before the establishment of Muslim rule through a period of six centuries. Arab merchants had links with Chittagong port since pre-Islamic period. It has been proven in recent

studies that a group of Sahabis including Abu Okkas Malik, Quyes Ibn Sairadi, Tameem Ansary, Urrah Ibn Assasa, Abu Quyes Ibn Harisa came to Chittagong in 618 during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PUB). They preached Islam for few years and then went to China. Thereafter, many Islamic saints known as sufis (Baezid Bostami, Shah Muhammad Sultan Balkhi, Shah Muhammad Sultan Rumi, Bab Shah Adam, Shah Makdum Ruposh etc.) came to Bengal and contributed to the spread of Islam. The Muslim invasion in India started at the first decade of eighth century. During Twelfth century, Muslim rule was established in Delhi and series of Muslims from Arab, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan came to India and resided here both for religion and living. Since then, the number of Muslims gradually increased. Now Muslims constitute over 87% percent of the population (approximately 146.6 million, which is the fourth largest Muslim population in the world).

In Bangladesh most of the Muslims are Sunnys. There are also Shiyas, Ahmadias and Bahai. The Shiyas mostly reside in the urban areas and observe commemoration of the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali's sons.

Islamism spread in Bangladesh mainly by the sufis. The sufis prescribe a direct personal devotion to Allah. They used to emphasize on the 'love of Allah' in place of 'fear of Allah.' Within Sufi tradition, people developed a faith within them that the friends of Allah, whom they used to call 'Pir' or 'Fakirs', have the power of spiritual guide. However, there was always a conflict between the sufism and the Ulama. Both the tradition advocates for their path and claim that theirs is the right path for the salvation.

In the rural areas, Fakirs and Pirs have strong influence. People believe that they have miraculous power. Some of the Pirs have strong followers who considered them as murshid. The followers of a murshid worked as a disciple, stay associated with his murshid and works for him to get spiritual enlightenment.

On the Other hand, the Ulema include the Moulavi, Imams or Mollahs. Moulavi and the Imams are trained on Islamic theology and on the Muslim laws. A Moulavi has higher studies in the Madrasas. Maulana is the title of graduate level Islamic knowledge. In the rural areas it is strongly believed that a Mullah can cure all kinds of

physical diseases from snakebite to sexual impotence. However, either Mollah or a Sufi—no one is against the basic teachings of Islam. And, what are the basic teachings of Islam? It's the faith on Kolema, then perform five times prayers a day, month long fasting, to perform Haj and give Zakat.

The confession of faith is that there is only one god, which is Allah, and that Muhammad was his final prophet. The teachings of the Qur'an are considered to be eternal and for all humans. Prayer includes the five daily prayers, community prayers, individual meritorious prayers, and prayers that go above and beyond what is required.

Giving alms is considered a religious duty and requires no less than 2.5 percent of the income over what one needs to survive. The duty of fasting during Ramadaan applies to all Muslims, with exceptions made for pregnant women, sick people, travellers, children and nursing mothers. The pilgrimage to Mecca is to take place during the month of Zu'l-Hijjah and must be done once in a lifetime.

#### **8.4.2 Hinduism**

Hinduism is the second largest religious affiliation in Bangladesh covering 1.70 Crore (10.7% in 2015). Previous BBS studies showed Bangladesh's Hindu population size was 1.55 crore in 2014 suggesting that the numbers of the country's largest minority community increased by 1.5 million in one year. According to the 1951 census, the country then known as East Bengal, Hindus were 22 per cent of the population. In 1974 the figure came down to 14 per cent and the last 2011 census suggests the followers of faith consists only 8.4 per cent of the population.

Hinduism is not an organized religion and has no single, systematic approach to teaching its value system. Nor do Hindus have a simple set of rules to follow like the Ten Commandments. Local, regional, caste, and community-driven practices influence the interpretation and practice of beliefs throughout the Hindu world. Yet a common thread among all these variations is belief in a Supreme Being and adherence to certain concepts such as Truth, dharma, and karma. Here are some of the key beliefs shared among Hindus:

- **Truth is eternal.**

Hindus pursue knowledge and understanding of the truth: the very essence of the universe and the only reality. According to the Vedas, Truth is one, but the wise express it in a variety of ways.

- **Brahman is Truth and Reality.**

Hindus believe in Brahman as the one true God who is formless, limitless, all-inclusive, and eternal. Brahman is not an abstract concept; it is a real entity that encompasses everything (seen and unseen) in the universe.

- **The Vedas are the ultimate authority.**

The Vedas are Hindu scriptures that contain revelations received by ancient saints and sages. Hindus believe that the Vedas are without beginning and without end; when everything else in the universe is destroyed (at the end of a cycle of time), the Vedas remain.

- **Everyone should strive to achieve dharma.**

Understanding the concept of dharma helps you understand the Hindu faith. Unfortunately, no single English word adequately covers its meaning. Dharma can be described as right conduct, righteousness, moral law, and duty. Anyone who makes dharma central to one's life strives to do the right thing, according to one's duty and abilities, at all times.

- **Individual souls are immortal.**

A Hindu believes that the individual soul (*atman*) is neither created nor destroyed; it has been, it is, and it will be. Actions of the soul while residing in a body require that it reap the consequences of those actions in the next life — the same soul in a different body.

The process of movement of the *atman* from one body to another is known as *transmigration*. The kind of body the soul inhabits next is determined by *karma* (actions accumulated in previous lives).

- **The goal of the individual soul is moksha.**

*Moksha* is liberation: the soul's release from the cycle of death and rebirth. It occurs when the soul unites with Brahman by realizing its true nature. Several paths can lead to this realization and unity: the path of duty, the path of knowledge, and the path of devotion (unconditional surrender to God).

### **8.4.3 Buddhism**

Once Bangladesh has been a part of greater India and was known only as Bengal. Though the number of the Buddhists in Bangladesh is not significant, Buddhism in Bangladesh is no small player in the nation's history and culture. It's the third major religion. In certain areas, such as Chittagong, Buddhists make up an impressive 12 percent of the population.

- **Historical background of Buddhism**

- **Buddhism in Ancient Period**

Recently scholars have found one Asokan Pillar in Damrai near Dhaka and they are now trying to find out how it came to Bangladesh. There are number of other discoveries such as two Votive inscriptions found at Sanchi recording the gifts of two inhabitants of Purnavardhan (Pundravardhan) to guess the existence of Buddhism in Bangladesh before the Christian era.

By the reign of the Emperor Ashoka (304—232 BC), Buddhism was firmly entrenched as the number one religion of Bengal and, it continued to thrive in the region until the 12th century AD.

Between 750 AD and 1150 AD Buddhism reached the pinnacle in the history of Bangladesh under the guidance of Pala Kings such as Gopala, Dharmapala and Devapala. They were devout Buddhists and under their patronage several world famous monasteries such as Somapura Mahavihara, Shalban Vihara, Paharpur Maha Vihara, Vickrampuri Mahavihara, Pandit Vihara were established in Bangladesh.

- **Buddhism in Sena Period**

Between 1150 AD and 1200 AD, Buddhism began to disappear from the Bangladeshi soil. Following the decline of the Palas, Hindu Sena armies came to rule Bengal, and crushed Buddhism. Surviving Buddhists retreated to the Chittagong area. However, in less than a century later, the Senas also were swamped by the tide of Islam.

- **Buddhism in Muslim Period**

The decline of Buddhism continued during the Muslim rule. The Muslim invaders destroyed many monasteries with the establishment of their rule in Bengal. This cultural conflict continued up to 1760. Today Buddhists constitute a little over one million in Bangladesh.

- **Buddhism in British period**

The British were liberal to the Buddhists, which enabled the Buddhists, though a smaller number, to re-establish themselves in Bangladesh on a solid foundation. After the fall of the Palas, the Buddhists were influenced by Hinduism and performed various categories Hindu rites and rituals instead of Buddhist ceremonies. It was rectified in the British period. During the British rule, the Buddhists texts were again made available in Bengal.

In the meantime the Chakma Kingdom was a feudal state under the British government and its ruler was Queen Kalindi (1830-1873). She also invited Ven. Sangharaj Saramedha Mahasthavir from Arakan State in Burma to come to Bangladesh. In 1864 Ven. Sangharaj Saramedha came to Chittagong and brought with him a full chapter of trained monks in order to give higher ordination to those who were willing. He was then staying at Pahartali Mahamuni in Chittagong. During the annual 'Mahamuni Fair many Buddhists assembled there and on that auspicious occasion he gave higher ordination afresh to seven monks of Chittagong in the Udaka-Ukkhepa.

#### **● Buddhism in Pakistan period**

In 1959, a Buddhist religious association named Parbatya Chattagram Bhikkhu Samiti (Chittagong Hill Tracts Bhikkhu Association) under the leadership of Ven. Aggavansa Mahathero was formed. It played a significant role in spreading Buddhism in Chittagong. Based on this organization, a considerable number of Buddhist monks and Buddhist monasteries were increased in this part. It is still prevalent in Chittagong and playing the same role. The revival of forest meditation took place in this period.

#### **● Bangladesh period**

In 1972, a Buddhist temple named Dharmarajik Bouddha Vihara was established in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. In addition to this, Shakyamuni Buddhist Vihara, in Dhaka was also established. At present, there are 4 Buddhist temples in Dhaka.

Today Bangladesh is admittedly a commendable country of interfaith harmony. Nevertheless, the Government maintains that there is enough history and tradition to make Bangladesh a land of interfaith and intercultural harmony.

#### **● Classification in the Buddhists Society**

According to the historians, the Tibeto-Burman Buddhism consists of 3 tribes— the Pyu, the Kanyan and the Thet (Chakma). The Chakma tribes are living in their historical land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Kanyan tribe is known as the Rakhine (Arakanese) group who still live in the South-Eastern part of Chittagong. The plain Buddhists of Bangladesh known as the Burua-Buddhist are the ancient peoples of Bangladesh who have lived here for five thousand years according to Arakanese chronology. They insist that they came from the Aryavarta or the country of the Aryans which is practically identical to the country later known as the Majjhimadesha or Madhyadesha in Pali literature.

### ● Teachings of Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion and dharma that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices largely based on teachings attributed to the Buddha.

The basic doctrines of early Buddhism, which remain common to all Buddhism, include the ‘four noble truths’: existence is suffering (*dukkha*); suffering has a cause, namely craving and attachment (*trishna*); there is a cessation of suffering, which is nirvana; and there is a path to the cessation of suffering, the ‘eightfold path’ of right views, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Buddhism characteristically describes reality in terms of process and relation rather than entity or substance.

Experience is analyzed into five aggregates (*skandhas*). The first, form (*rupa*), refers to material existence; the following four, sensations (*vedana*), perceptions (*samjna*), psychic constructs (*samskara*), and consciousness (*vijnana*), refer to psychological processes. The central Buddhist teaching of non-self (*anatman*) asserts that in the five aggregates no independently existent, immutable self, or soul, can be found. All phenomena arise in interrelation and in dependence on causes and conditions, and thus are subject to inevitable decay and cessation. The causal conditions are defined in a 12-membered chain called dependent origination (*pratityasamutpada*) whose links are: ignorance, predisposition,

consciousness, name-form, the senses, contact, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, old age, and death, whence again ignorance.

With this distinctive view of cause and effect, Buddhism accepts the pan-Indian presupposition of samsara, in which living beings are trapped in a continual cycle of birth-and-death, with the momentum to rebirth provided by one's previous physical and mental actions (see karma). The release from this cycle of rebirth and suffering is the total transcendence called nirvana.

From the beginning, meditation and observance of moral precepts were the foundation of Buddhist practice. The five basic moral precepts, undertaken by members of monastic orders and the laity, are to refrain from taking life, stealing, acting unchastely, speaking falsely, and drinking intoxicants. Members of monastic orders also take five additional precepts: to refrain from eating at improper times, from viewing secular entertainments, from using garlands, perfumes, and other bodily adornments, from sleeping in high and wide beds, and from receiving money. Their lives are further regulated by a large number of rules known as the Pratimoksa. The monastic order (sangha) is venerated as one of the 'three jewels,' along with the dharma, or religious teaching, and the Buddha. Lay practices such as the worship of stupas (burial mounds containing relics) predate Buddhism and gave rise to later ritualistic and devotional practices.

#### **8.4.4 Christianity**

Christianity is a minority religion in Bangladesh. Christianity arrived in Bangladesh during the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century CE, through the Portuguese traders and missionaries. Then other European Christians came to Bengal for both trade and religion. Finally the English succeeded to grab the state power of Bengal and they ruled India for approximately two hundred years. However, despite the state-sponsored or private Christian missionary efforts, the Christianity could not win the heart of the mass people. Therefore, Christians account for less than 1% of the total population in Bangladesh. According to the census report 2011, the total Christian population is around 142,319 (3% of total population), out of which 221,000 are Roman Catholics, the rest being Orthodox and non-denominational.

The central teachings of traditional Christianity are that Jesus is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that his life on earth, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven are proof of God's love for humanity and God's forgiveness of human sins; and that by faith in Jesus one may attain salvation and eternal life. This teaching is embodied in *the Bible*, specifically in the *New Testament*, but Christians accept also the *Old Testament* as sacred and authoritative Scripture.

Christian ethics derive to a large extent from the Jewish tradition as presented in the *Old Testament*, particularly the Ten Commandments, but with some difference of interpretation based on the practice and teachings of Jesus. Christianity may be further generally defined in terms of its practice of corporate worship and rites that usually include the use of sacraments and that are usually conducted by trained clergy within organized churches. There are, however, many different forms of worship, many interpretations of the role of the organized clergy, and many variations in polity and church organization within Christianity.

#### **8.4.5 Other Religions in Bangladesh**

There are some other religious believers in Bangladesh although they are small in number. They are Shikism, Jainasm, Bahai etc. There are approximately 100,000 people adhering to the religion of Shikism. The presence of this religion goes back to the visiting of Guru Nanak at 1506–07 with some of his followers to spread Sikhism in the region of the present day Bangladesh. When some Bengali people accepted this faith then a Sikh community was born. This community had become bigger when almost 10,000 Sikhs came from India during the Bangladesh Liberation War. This community had made a great progress to the country. Today there are almost 10 Gurdwaras in Bangladesh. Among them only 7 are well-known especially the Gurdwara Nanak Shahi beside the University of Dhaka in Dhaka which was built in 1830, the oldest gurdwara in Bangladesh.

#### **8.4.6 Communal Harmony in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a role model of communal harmony. Here, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhists and Christians live side by side considering themselves as the same brotherhood. They all inherit the same Bengali culture, same language and the same national festivals such as Pahela Baishakh, 21 February as the mourning day, and 16th December as the victory day. This is undoubtedly a matter of pride for the people of Bangladesh. Although different religious groups have distinct religious festivals, everybody celebrates each other in their festivals. The entire population of the country irrespective of religion, caste and creed share the joy of each other's religious festivities. This is why Eid, Durga Puja, Buddha Purnima and Christmas are termed as universal festivals. People of a certain faith exchange greetings with the people of other faiths on the joyous occasions. In the Constitution of Bangladesh, equal status of all religions is guaranteed. This also serves as a shield against intolerance. Although the country has experienced some pathetic incidents time to time, they do not represent the national spirit. The sense is that "Religion is personal but festival is for all." However, sometimes the minorities are attacked in some areas by the group of fundamentalists; it is observed that it is not for religion but mainly for the evil intentions of ugly local politics. Moreover, generally the wealthy minorities are not attacked; only poor and impoverished minorities have to face these sudden attacks. So, if the economic interests of a section of people who address this as religious ventures as coverage. Almost the entire society of Bangladesh hates these activities and call for the tough actions for acting those social crimes. This proves that the Bangladeshi society believes in communal harmony.

### **Education in Bangladesh**

#### **8.5.1 Definition of education**

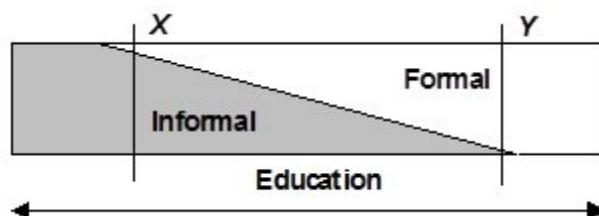
Education is the wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life.

It is often said that we are learning all the time and that we may not be conscious of it happening. Learning is both a process and an

outcome. As a process it is part of living in the world, part of the way our bodies work. As an outcome it is a new understanding or appreciation of something.

According to John Dewey (1916), education is a social process—a process of living and not a preparation for future living. According to Greek notion, education is the process to bring out or develop potential.

John Ellis (1990) has developed a useful continuum – arguing that most education involves a mix of the informal and formal, of conversation and curriculum (i.e. between points X and Y).



Those that describe themselves as informal educators, social pedagogues or as animators of community learning and development tend to work towards the X; those working as subject teachers or lecturers tend to the Y. Educators when facilitating tutor groups might, overall, work somewhere in the middle.

However, the primary purpose of education is the liberation of man from the restrictions of habits and attitudes which limits his humanity.

### 8.5.2 Education Policy of Bangladesh

After Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibor Rahman formed a national commission in 1972 to formulate an effective and progressive education policy for the newborn nation. The Chairman of the Commission was Dr Kudrat-e-Khuda. The commission published the first education policy of Bangladesh in 1974. It was a reflection of the country's purely secular constitution. However, after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib the education

policy was abandoned and the country's education system continued to run with centuries old ideals and infrastructure.

During the Ershad period in 1988, a new education commission was formed. Committees have been formed to introduce the prescribed education policies of that commission. From 1988 to 2010, the country got five fresh education policies, however, very few of those policies managed to bring any significant change and improvement in its education sector.

In 2010, Bangladesh got the first education policy that was made open to all for corrective and constructive opinion before final publication. Thus, the national education policy 2010, filled with pledges for reformations and progress, became the true embodiment of the nation's principles and conscience.

The directives as noted in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh have been taken into consideration in the formulation of National Education Policy 2010. The UN Child Rights Convention that emphasizes the ensuring of rights of children in every member state has been a further area of consideration. The primary objectives of this policy are directed toward the cultivation of human values. It seeks to prescribe ways through which citizens can be groomed to become leaders in pro-people development programs and progress of the society. They will become rational and intellectually accomplished human beings with ethical perceptions, who have respect for their own religion as well as for others' faiths. Education will help them to grow up as non-communal, patriotic and efficient persons free from superstitions. And simultaneously, it is only education that can equip the nation to acquire the qualities and skills that will strengthen Bangladesh to work with equal capacity and pace of the global community. This education policy will work as a basis for an education system suitable for the delivery of education which will be pro-people, easily available, uniform, universal, well planned, science oriented and of high standard according to the constitutional directives and it will also work as a strategy to counter all problems.

Some magnitudes of the education policy of 2010-

1. to reflect the Constitutional guarantee at all levels of education and make learners aware of the freedom, sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh;
2. to stimulate the intellectual and practical qualities of the learners so that moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values are established at personal and national levels;
3. to inspire the students with the spirit of our war of liberation and develop patriotism, nationalism and qualities of good citizens (i.e, sense of justice, non-communalism, dutifulness, awareness of human rights, cultivation of free thinking and discipline, love for honest living, the tolerance of corporate life, friendliness and perseverance);
4. to promote the continuity of national history, tradition and culture through an intergenerational process;
5. to foster creative and thinking faculties among the learners through a system of education that contains indigenous spirit and elements and which will lead to a life-oriented development of knowledge of the learners;
6. to evolve an education process that is oriented to creativity, practicability and productivity to achieve advancement in the economic and social fields of the country; to create a scientific mindset of the students and to develop in them the qualities of leadership;
7. to remove socio-economic discrimination irrespective of race, religion and creed and to eradicate gender disparity; to develop non-communalism, friendliness, global fraternity, fellow-feeling and respect for human rights;
8. to create unhindered and equal opportunities of education for all as per learners' talents and aptitudes, irrespective of geographical, social and economical situations to establish a society that is free from discrimination; to resist use of education as a commodity to reap profits;
9. to show tolerance for different ideologies for the development of a democratic culture and to help develop a life-oriented, realistic and positive outlook;
10. to ensure the marginal competencies of learners at each level so that they are discouraged from rote learning, rather use their own thoughtfulness, imagination and urge for curiosity;

11. to ensure skills of high standard at different areas and levels of education so that learners can successfully compete at the global context;
12. to attach substantial importance to information and communication technology (ICT) along with maths, science and English in order to build up a digital Bangladesh based on knowledge-orientation and cultivation of ICT;
13. to put special emphasis on the extension of education; to give priority to primary and secondary education; to motivate the students to show dignity of labour; to enable students to acquire skills in vocational education to facilitate self-employment, irrespective of levels of education;
14. to develop some uniform and basic ideas amongst all learners; to establish a sense of equal status amongst all citizens of the country to implement a uniform curriculum of certain basic subjects at the primary level schools of diverse delivery systems; to prescribe and ascertain the learning of some uniform textbooks to attain that; to initiate some method of teaching in some basic subjects at the secondary level to achieve similar objectives;
15. to ensure a creative, favorable and joyful environment for the students at the primary and secondary levels for their proper protection and congenial development;
16. to help students grow up with sound moral character through lessons from their respective religious teachings and moral sciences;
17. to ensure proper quality of education at each level and to correlate the competencies learnt at the earlier level (as per the aims and objectives of education) with the next one to consolidate the formations of knowledge and skills; to promote extension of such knowledge and skills; to enable the learners to acquire these skills; to motivate the people to participate in the educational process, at the primary, secondary and vocational levels, in particular to realize the objectives of education;
18. to build students as skilled human resources to fight the challenges of the world threatened by climate change and other natural disasters and to create in them a social awareness about environment;

19. to ensure quality of the higher education in all disciplines and motivate students in research and to create a congenial and necessary environment of research within the country through the cultivation of knowledge and sciences;
20. to ensure the proper context and situations in the education system at the higher level that facilitates ideal cultivation of learning;
21. to extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT) instrumental in educational process at every level
22. to take special measures for the development of education of the backward classes of the country including the street-children;
22. to promote and develop the languages and cultures of the indigenous and small ethnic groups;
23. to ensure the education of the physically and mentally challenged learners;
24. to create a society free from the curse of illiteracy ;
25. to initiate special measures to promote education in the areas identified as backward in education;
26. to ensure efficient and correct teaching of Bangla language;
27. to take necessary steps to create facilities of playground, sports, games and physical exercises in all educational institutions for the healthy growth of the physical and mental qualities of the learners;
28. to take various steps to foster hygienic awareness of the students;
29. to caution the students and make them aware of the dangers of taking drugs or similar items.

### **8.5.3 Education System**

The term education system generally refers to public schooling. The system of giving education is education system. There are many countries in the world. Each one uses their own system of education. The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government of Bangladesh operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It also subsidizes parts of the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government also funds more than 15 state universities through the University Grants Commission.

At present, in Bangladesh, there are three main educational systems in Bangladesh. They are as follows:

- General Education System
- Madrasah Education System
- Technical - Vocational Education System

Each of these three main systems is divided into three levels:

- Primary Level (Class 1-8)
- Secondary Level (Class 9-12)
- Tertiary Level

#### **Education System in Bangladesh**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Age level</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Primary	1-5 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	6-10	5 years	PSC Certificate
Junior Secondary	6-8 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	11-13	3 years	JSC Certificate
Secondary Schooling	9-10 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	14-16	2 years	SSC Certificate
Higher Secondary	11-12 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	15-16	2 years	HSC Certificate
Vocational (Diploma in Engineering degree- not a Bachelors, similar to associates)	11-12 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	16-20	4 years	Diploma in Engineering & Nursing, HSC Vocational
Tertiary (Fazil - Similar to Associates Degree)	13-14 (14 <sup>th</sup> )	16-17	2 years	Degree
Tertiary (Kamil - Similar to Bachelor's degree)	15-16 (16 <sup>th</sup> )	18-19	2 years	Degree
Tertiary (Bachelor degree - Engineering & Technology)	15-16 (16 <sup>th</sup> )	18-20	3 years	Degree
Tertiary (Honors), Medical	13-16 (16 <sup>th</sup> )	17-20	4 years	Honors Degree
Tertiary (Masters)	17 (17 <sup>th</sup> )	21	1 year	Master's Degree

M.Phil		2 years	Higher Degree
Ph.D		3 years	

### ● Primary Education

The Bangladeshi education system is unusually complex. Primary, middle, senior and tertiary education are oriented towards general, madresh (religious) or technical/ vocational preferences. Even private schools and universities are heavily subsidized in fact the constitution decrees that children between ages 6 and 10 shall pay nothing. To complicate things further, local education is controlled by a hierarchy of school boards. In the prevailing education system of Bangladesh, Primary Education is the first step of education, which lasts 5 years. The primary school-going children receive this education as a fundamental right. There is no doubt that for the socio-economic uplift of any country, it is essential to open the door of primary education for all children and at the same time to ensure that they all receive quality education. We also must bear in mind that the main objectives are to prepare the children to face the realities of life by acquiring knowledge and skills as well as developing the desired healthy attitude towards life in a vaster canvas. The Goals of Primary Education in Bangladesh are, therefore, to help in the physical, mental, social, spiritual, moral, human and aesthetic development of the children of Bangladesh and to inspire them to have a vision for a prosperous life.

**Table-01: Primary Education, 2002**

Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Number of teachers	Number of pupils
Government	37671	157236	10669819
Non-government primary schools and other primary level institutions	40692	157819	6892009
Total	78363	315055	17561828

Source: BANBEIS, MOE, 2003

### ● Middle and Secondary Education

Pupils aged approximately 11 years of age enter junior secondary school. This is a critical phase in their young lives, for here they must confirm an educational choice that may dictate their futures irrevocably.

Those who choose to complete the last 2 of their 10 school grades at general secondary schools may specialize in humanities, science or commerce to mention but a few. At the end of this they may write a secondary school certificate examination supervised by no less than 7 school boards. Alternatively, they may elect to follow the madrash religious education route that culminates in a different series of similar level tests.

The Overall Aims and General Objectives of Secondary Curriculum are to achieve the learners' overall growth and development. In order to reach this goal, aims and objectives have been determined which are to be achieved through imparting secondary level education.

**Table-02: Post-primary Education, 2002**

Type of schools based on streams	Number of Institutions	Number of teachers	Enrolment
Secondary (general)	16562	186949	8162134
Madrasah	5536	70247	216844
Technical/Vocational	1562	8623	134016
Total	23660	265819	10464591

Source: Pocket Book on Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2003

### ● Vocational Education

Other students switch across to vocational training institutes or technical training centers administered by the ministry of education and the ministry of labor and employment respectively. Choices here are between longer-term professional certification and shorter term job-specific orientation.

### ● Tertiary Education

Tertiary education, meant and designed for the post higher secondary (18-23 age group) students comprise a 3-year Pass course or a 4-year honors course (in the general stream) for Bachelor Degree followed by a 2-year and 1-year Master's course for pass graduates and honors

graduates, respectively. Except for studies in the field of medicine, which requires the completion of a 5-year course of study for graduation, bachelor degrees in the fields of engineering, agriculture, textile and leather technology require the completion of 4-year courses of studies. Tertiary education is imparted by 21 public and 54 private universities, 2600 degree colleges (pass, honors and masters) affiliated with the National University, 5 regional Engineering Universities, 12 government and 14 private medical colleges, and by the Bangladesh Open University through its distance learning programs.

The agency responsible for the guidance and oversight of the academic programs and management of the university level institutions is the University Grants Commission (UGC). The UGC also acts as the agency for channeling government subventions to the public universities, and for recommending the approval of prospective public universities. It is an autonomous entity headed by a chairman.

#### **8.5.4 Education Management System**

In 1992 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) was set up which is responsible for the overall management of primary and mass education. However, it mainly conducts the policy formulations. The implementations of those policies lie on the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) headed by a Director General.

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and its subordinate offices in the district and upazilla are responsible for the management and supervision of primary education. It include recruitment, posting, and transfer of teachers and other staff; arranging in-service training of teachers; distribution of free textbooks; and supervision of schools. The responsibility of school construction, repair and supply of school furniture lies with the DPE executed through the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is responsible for the development of curriculum and production of textbooks.

There are nine Education Boards to conduct the management of Primary and Secondary education, namely—

- Barisal Board of Education for Barisal Division

- Chittagong Board of Education for Chittagong Division
- Comilla Board of Education for Comilla Division
- Dhaka Board of Education for Dhaka Division
- Dinajpur Board of Education for Dinajpur Division
- Jessore Board of Education for Jessore Division
- Rajshahi Board of Education for Rajshahi Division
- Sylhet Board of Education for Sylhet Division
- Mymensingh Board of Education for Mymensingh Division

Nine region-based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) are responsible for conducting the following four public examinations:

- Primary School Certificate (PSC)
- Junior School Certificate (JSC)
- Secondary School Certificate (SSC)
- Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC)

At the school level, in the case of non-government secondary schools, School Management Committees (SMC), and at the intermediate college level, in the case of non-government colleges, Governing Bodies (GB), formed as per government directives, are responsible for mobilizing resources, approving budgets, controlling expenditures, and appointing and disciplining staff. While teachers of non-government secondary schools are recruited by concerned SMCs observing relevant government rules, teachers of government secondary schools are recruited centrally by the DSHE through a competitive examination.

In government secondary schools, there is not an SMC. The headmaster is solely responsible for running the school and is supervised by the deputy director of the respective zone. Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), however, exist to ensure a better teaching and learning environment.

The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) is responsible for the planning, development, and implementation of technical and vocational education in the country. Curriculum is implemented by BTEB.

At the tertiary level, universities are regulated by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The colleges providing tertiary education

are under the National University. Each of the medical colleges is affiliated with a public university. Public universities in Bangladesh are autonomous bodies administered by statutory bodies such as Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council, etc. in accordance with provisions laid down in their respective acts.

#### **8.5.5 Incentives in Education**

In 1990, the GOB enacted the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act to ensure that no child is deprived of a primary education, due to inadequate school places, poor instructional quality, and discrimination arising from gender, income, ethnicity and residence. This has resulted over the years in a variety of policies and practices, such as the elimination of official school fees, the provision of textbooks free-of-charge, and incentives to encourage the participation of vulnerable children.

In Bangladesh education incentives are given in Primary to Higher Secondary Level. In Primary and Secondary level, the government gives text books free of cost. Girl's education up to the secondary level is tuition fee free under Bangladesh's Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP). To retain the students in the primary level, the students are given food in return of their presence in the classes. Education materials are also free for and tuition fees are also exempted for the primary level students.

Along with the direct government initiatives, the government also launched project under the aid of World Bank from 2008. Prior to 2008, the primary school completion rate was 50%, and fewer of these children moved onto secondary education. Only one in five children entering Grade 6 managed to complete Grade 10. Income played a crucial part in the education of a child as gross enrolment rate for the richest 50% of children was 75% but enrolment for the poorest 50% was only 30%.

To address these challenges, the government of Bangladesh launched SEQAEP in 2008, with the support of the World Bank. SEQAEP provides proxy means tested stipends and tuition to disadvantaged girls and boys as well as incentives to students, teachers and schools in 125 upazilas so that they can perform better. Students eligible for the stipend receive from \$15 to \$40 a year, depending on their grades, and benefits are conditional on students maintaining 75% average

attendance, achieving a passing grade in final examinations, and remaining unmarried until they complete Grade 10.

The government of Bangladesh signed a \$265 million additional financing agreement with IDA, for the ongoing SEQEAP. The financing will help 4.5 million poor rural children annually, in 215 upazilas across the country, to continue secondary level education. With this additional financing, the project will continue to provide poverty-targeted stipends and tuition to poor students. It will give incentives to students, teachers and schools to increase enrolment and retention in secondary level education. It will also scale up activities within 125 upazilas where the project is being implemented and expand in 90 more upazilas to improve secondary education quality and systematically monitor learning outcomes and ensure greater accountability at school level.

## 8.5 Economy

### 8.5.1 Economic Structure of Bangladesh

The economy of Bangladesh has earned a prestigious position during the last five fiscal years. Bangladesh is now among the top 12 developing countries (the world's 48<sup>th</sup> largest economy as of FY2011-12 as regarded by the International Monetary Fund, and going to be the world's 41<sup>st</sup> largest economy in 2019<sup>39</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economy in Asia), with a population of over 20 million, who achieved GDP7.28 in FY2016-17 and 7.86 in FY 2017-2018. This year in 2019 it is expected to raise upto 7.9.<sup>40</sup>

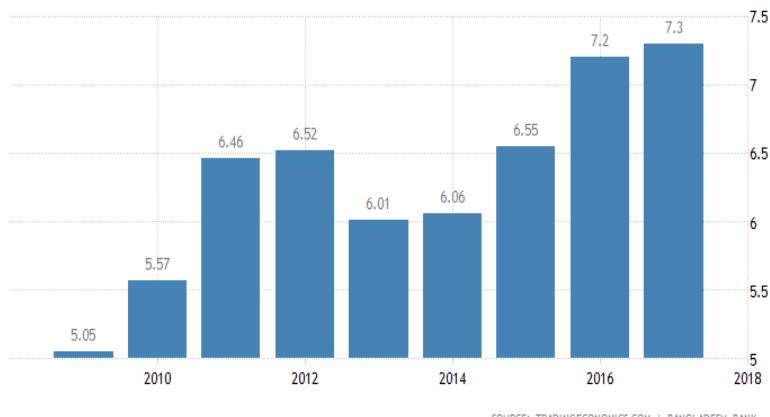
This achievement has been possible due to the present dynamic policy, a good rice harvest, declining international food prices and a stable exchange rate.

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<sup>39</sup>*The Daily Star*, January 08, 2019

<sup>40</sup>Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics said at the regular meeting of Ecneic in Dhaka on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at NEC Conference Room, Dhaka. It was recorded as the highest in the history of Bangladesh.

Table: GDP development rate in the recent years



The balance of payment (BoP) remains comfortable with a large surplus in both current and financial accounts, due to recovery in export, increased Foreign Direct Investment and aid disbursements. Monetary targets are underachieved due to limited growth in domestic credit.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, per capita income rises to \$1466 in 2016, which was \$1316 in fiscal year 2014-15. The per capita income in Bangladesh has increased by 11.39 percent. However, in 2018, per-capita income was estimated as per IMF data at US\$4,561 (PPP) and US\$1,754 (Nominal). During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bangladesh's economy grew at a rate of 6%-7% annually.

Although more than half of GDP is generated through the services sector, almost half of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector (45%), with rice as the single-most-important product. Garment exports, the backbone of Bangladesh's industrial sector, accounted for more than 80% of total exports and surpassed \$25 billion in 2015.

Exports in Bangladesh increased to 233.67 BDT Billion in December from 227.07 BDT Billion in November of 2018.

Steady garment export growth combined with remittances from overseas Bangladeshis, which totaled about \$15 billion and 8% of GDP in 2015 are the largest contributors to Bangladesh's sustained economic growth and rising foreign exchange reserves. According to the data provided by the Export Promotion Bureau for the fiscal year 2017-2018, the apparel sector contributed USD 30.61 billion, or 83.49 percent, to Bangladesh's total exports of USD 36.66 billion. And during July-November of the current fiscal year 2018-19, the growth stood at 20 percent.

The economic structure of Bangladesh can be divided into the following three sectors:

#### **● Primary Sector**

The primary sector of the economy extracts or harvests products from the earth. The primary sector includes the production of raw material and basic foods. Activities associated with the primary sector include agriculture (both subsistence and commercial), mining, forestry, farming, grazing, hunting and gathering, fishing, and quarrying. The packaging and processing of the raw material associated with this sector is also considered to be part of this sector. With 45% of the workforce engaged in the primary sector (estimated in 2011), Bangladesh can be called an agrarian economy. GDP From Agriculture in Bangladesh increased to 10468.80 BDT Million in 2018 from 10117.30 BDT Million in 2017. GDP From Agriculture in Bangladesh averaged 8879.79 BDT Million from 2006 until 2018, reaching an all time high of 10468.80 BDT Million in 2018 and a record low of 7017.10 BDT Million in 2006.

and enables Bangladesh to achieve its macroeconomic objectives, including food security, poverty alleviation, human resources development and employment generation. Cooperatives are increasingly motivating farmers to employ modern machinery. Bangladesh primarily produces jute, rice, tobacco, tea, sugarcane, pulses and wheat. According to the composition of sub-sectors, the crop sector contributes 72% of the production, followed by fisheries at 10.33%, livestock at 10.11% and forestry at 7.33%. The unpredictable weather and natural calamities disrupt the country's

economy frequently. To overcome this problem, the government has several irrigation projects to conserve rainwater and control floods. The projects also include controlling pests and using high quality seeds.

#### ● **Secondary Sector**

The secondary sector of the economy manufactures finished goods. All of manufacturing, processing, and construction lies within the secondary sector. Activities associated with the secondary sector include metal working and smelting, automobile production, textile production, chemical and engineering industries, aerospace manufacturing, energy utilities, engineering, breweries and bottlers, construction, and shipbuilding. This sector mainly comprises of small and medium enterprises that give employment to 30% of the country's workforce (estimated in 2011). It generates 28.6% (estimated in 2016) of the GDP and 40% of the gross manufacturing output. The present industrial production growth rate is 8.4% (estimated in 2016). This growth rate raised Bangladesh economy in 9<sup>th</sup> position in the industrial production sector. Bangladesh's light engineering sector is one of the largest and most diverse, producing a wide variety of machinery and spare parts. There are several mills and factories, producing jute, garments, cotton, paper, textile, pharmaceuticals and fertilizers, among other things. Some major manufacturing industries are railways, tea plantation & processing industries, construction sector, ferry and transport. Infrastructure is developing swiftly in terms of water distribution, power supply, communications and transportation. Bangladesh features a prominent wealth of coal mines.

#### ● **Tertiary Sector**

The tertiary sector of the economy is the service industry. This sector provides services to the general population and to businesses. Activities associated with this sector include retail and wholesale sales, transportation and distribution, entertainment (movies, television, radio, music, theater, etc.), restaurants, clerical services, media, tourism, insurance, banking, healthcare, and law.

In the last two decades, Bangladesh has seen incredible growth in its service sector. As of 2011, 25% (2011 est.) of the country's

workforce was employed in this sector. Although this percentage is lesser than the primary and secondary sectors, a large part of the country's GDP comes from service sector. It is 56.5% of total GDP in 2018. The hospitality industry, in particular, has shown considerable growth.

#### ● Some latest economic data

"Bangladesh economy has maintained sustainable growth and achieved GDP growth of more than 6 percent on an average during the last decade. The GDP growth surpassed the 7 percent in FY2015-16 and stood at 7.11 percent. According to the final estimate of BBS, the GDP growth stood at 7.86 percent in FY2017-18. Among the 3 broad sectors growth of agriculture sector increased to 4.19 percent of GDP, which was 2.97 percent in previous fiscal year. Growth of agriculture and forestry sector under broad agriculture sector rose to 3.47 percent of GDP. Besides, growth of fishing sector under broad agriculture sector also increased. According to the final data, growth of broad industry sector increased to 12.06 percent of GDP in FY2017-18; which was 10.22 percent in preceding fiscal year. Growth of broad service sector slightly decreased to 6.39 percent in FY2017-18 from 6.69 percent in FY2016-17. According to the final data sectoral share of broad agriculture, industry and service stood at 14.23 percent, 33.66 percent and 52.11 percent respectively; which were 14.74 percent, 32.42 percent and 52.85 percent respectively in previous fiscal year. In demand side, the consumption expenditure stood at 77.17 percent in FY2017-18. Gross domestic savings slightly decreased to 22.83 percent of GDP in FY2017-18, from 25.33 percent a year earlier. However, national savings as percent of GDP reduced to 27.42 percent in FY2017-18 from 29.64 percent in FY2016-17. On the other hand, investment-GDP ratio increased to 31.23 percent in FY2017-18, from 30.51 percent in previous fiscal year."<sup>41</sup>

GDP by sector		
Item	Fiscle Year	Result (crore) BDT

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<sup>41</sup> The statement taken from *Bangladesh Economic Review 2018*

GDP	FY2017-18,	22,50,479
Per capita GDP	FY2017-18	1,37,518
Agriculture and Forestry	FY2017-18	227353
Fishing	FY2017-18	66882
Mining and Quarrying	FY2017-18	38884
Manufacturing	FY2017-18	404144
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	FY2017-18	29336
Construction	FY2017-18	169855
Wholesale and Retail Trade	FY2017-18	279823
. Hotel and Restaurants	FY2017-18	22123
Transport, Storage & Communication	FY2017-18	204630
Financial Intermediations	FY2017-18	83728
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	FY2017-18	166419
Public Administration and Defence	FY2017-18	90228
Education	FY2017-18	64478
Health and Social Works		44064
Community, Social and Personal Services		236378
Tax less subsidy		2128324
GDP at current market price		2250479

Growth rate		13.90
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Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

### 8.6.2 Common and Major Economic Problems

Though the economy of Bangladesh is on the rise now, the following factors are still acting as the common and major impediments:

- a. Population;
- b. Natural calamities & Environmental problems;
- c. Political instability.
- d. Inequality.
- e. Corruption.

#### ● Population

The current population of Bangladesh is 164,205,692 as of Monday, March 6, 2017, based on the latest United Nations estimates. The population explosion has long been the number one problem to the economic growth of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the eighth densely populated country in the world, having above 160 million people. The density of population is almost 1266 per square Kilometer<sup>42</sup> (3,279 people per square mile). The estimated crude birth rate is 21.14/1000 (estimated in 2015) and the crude death rate is 5.61/1000 (estimated in 2015).<sup>43</sup> Annual growth rate is 1.6 (estimated in 2015). If the population growth rate continues to the present rate, it is assumed the total population will be more than 200+ million by 2050.<sup>44</sup> This huge population is acting as a barricade against economic advancement in many ways. The increasing population is occupying more and more lands for infrastructures such as housing, residence, educational institutions, medical centers etc. which ultimately is reducing cultivable lands, forests, open fields, marshy lands, canals etc. As a result, pollutions are spreading unabatedly, which ultimately is affecting human health, life of the live stocks and on natural vegetations. It's creating a chain reaction which ultimately affects the national budget and increasing expenditure in non-productive sector. It compels the economic development to slow down.

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<sup>42</sup>United Nations data, 2015

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

<sup>44</sup>*ibid*

### ● Natural Calamities and Its Effect

Natural calamities and the environmental degradation are causing serious detrimental situations for the economy of Bangladesh. Natural calamities are the regular visitors in Bangladesh. It is a land of different natural calamities such as floods, storms, droughts and erosions. Generally 20.5% Bangladeshi inhabitants are flooded annually. In 1998, flood had devastation effect on the economy and the agriculture of Bangladesh, where 75% of the land was submerged, loss of crops in 700,000 hectares cultivated land and infrastructure damages were experienced.<sup>45</sup> It took years to re-build the infrastructures, which was destroyed by that devastating flood and it hampered the national economic mobilizations. Flash flood occurs regularly, rendering damages to crops, live-stocks and makes million people homeless. The loss of navigability of rivers and sudden flow of water from upstream are main reasons for erosion and has been a major problem for the inhabitants on the river bank. The effect of the second tropical storm ‘Alea’ still has the negative impact on the economy of Bangladesh, therefore, economy suffered a loss of \$14.4million from the disaster. Storm ‘Alea’ made most of cultivatable land of Southern Bangladesh saline.

Scientists predict that Bangladesh lies in the risky zone for earthquake. The recent experience of several small scale earthquakes is indicating the possible effect of the disastrous earthquake in the near future. Poor infrastructural base and neglecting building codes and guidelines, small earthquakes have had enough impact on the lives and infrastructure of the nation’s major cities. The effect of any big earthquake, such with a magnitude of 7.5 Richter scale or above, would prove disastrous to the nation; its population, infrastructure and the economy would suffer for couple of decades. Arsenic poisoning in the northern part of Bangladesh, due to deteriorating the level of ground water and arsenic-rich materials in the region’s river system has caused a big alarm to the world community. As per UNICEF report in 2008, about 20 million people in the country’s 8,000 villages are using tube-well water contaminated with arsenic. Random testing of 4.7 million tube-wells were carried out of which

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<sup>45</sup>According to the report of BBC, 1998.

1.4 million has been found to have arsenic above the government-set drinking water level of 50ppb (parts per billion), whereas WHO guideline states that 10ppb is the highest limit of arsenic present in water is drinkable(UNICEF, 2008).

#### ● **Political Instability**

Political instability has become an unending fate of Bangladesh. Bangladesh achieved its independence 45 years ago, out of which 16 years (1975-91) were passed through unrest. The country's second phase of democratic government began 25 years back; however, the country is still at the infant stage of democracy so a mature democratic environment is a far cry. This instability of politics has imparted severe problems in education system, economy and poverty reduction. A country which follows a democratic form of government is still in the hands of politicians and business syndicate groups. Political conflicts, inefficiency of local administration, taxation fraudulent, corruption at government levels, lobby of the business syndicates are barricading the country from prospering ahead and achieve development. The political instability is one of the main causes, which are responsible for the reluctance of foreign investment in Bangladesh.

#### ● **Inequality**

Although there is debate whether the economic growth and the gap between the poor and the rich have co-relations, growth and equality are important factors for the development objectives. According to UNESCAP, the rate of poverty reduction is positively related to the rate of economic growth. This means, the inequality in the society acts as an impediment of the acceleration of national economic growth.

According to a recent paper by NBER Research Associate Robert Barro, it is assumed that high levels of inequality reduce growth in relatively poor countries but encourage growth in richer countries. Therefore, we've seen in the last one and a half decades (1991-2005), the growth rate was on average of 5% per year. Despite 5% per year growth trend, the poverty has not declined fast enough in the country. The percentage of people below the poverty line fell to 44.3% in 2000 and to 40.4% in 2005. The improvement in the poverty rate was not

strong enough in relation to population growth to reduce the absolute number of poor people. The absolute number increased continuously from 55.3 million in 1995-96 to 55.9 million in 2000 and again to 56.0 million in the year 2005. The above linear statistics shows that the percentage of people under the poverty line decreased by 7.4% in 16 years but the number of poor people increased by 11.3%.

Bangladesh has been experiencing a double-digit figure of inflation of 10.2% (2009 est.), which has put a lot of people under the poverty line. The persistent devaluation of Bangladesh's domestic currency, Taka, to favor garments export has increased the rate of inflation, which has compelled the importers of the nation to pay more for import bills and has ultimately being passed to the consumer resulting into more inflation transmission into the economy.

The hike in the price shall relatively increase the transportation fares and carrying costs of goods including foods items, which shall badly affect the lives of low and fixed income people. Government is subsidizing the price of fuel to its citizen. In 2010, fuel subsidy cost the government \$1.1 billion. Even after the subsidized rate, farmers are finding it tough to cope up with the fuel cost for cultivation and irrigation, which in turn is raising the cost of rice, wheat, etc.

One of the important aspects in Bangladesh to notice is the taxation system. According to the National Board Of Revenue(NBR), despite having a population of 160 million, only 2 million people pays tax. The growing tendency of tax evasion resulted rampant roll of black money in the economy. Tax incentives and evasion costs the economy of the nation a loss of US\$15 billion per year. The growing black money economy has made a lot of people ultra rich. It is a very common scene on the streets of Dhaka that the poor and half-clothed children, aged between 8years to 15years old, turns into wiping luxurious cars in traffic-jam with an expectation for US\$0.013-US\$0.020 in return of their work.

### • **Corruption in Bangladesh**

Corruption is one of the greatest obstacles to economic development. It hinders proper allocation of resources as well as the performance of government. Poor governance and dysfunctional institutions have made the present situation worse. The pervasiveness and rampant

abuse of power has earned the country a dubious reputation as one of the most corrupted country in the world. It is also a root cause of reducing foreign investment in Bangladesh.

### **8.6.3 Major Economic Sectors**

#### **a. Agriculture and Agro-business**

Over 90 varieties of vegetable are grown in Bangladesh, yet for such a fertile land there are huge gaps in local resources and under-utilisation of the country's agricultural capacity. This presents many opportunities for investors seeking to export agricultural products, or to meet the rapidly growing local demand. Here are just some of the investment opportunities:

- Cold storage facilities to serve all stages of the supply chain, and especially for fresh produce for export.
- Fresh produce production for local and export markets. Production of fertilizers and cultivation of seeds
- Eco-friendly jute production, with the support of several jute industry technology development institutes
- Shrimp farming
- Halal foods
- Milk and dairy products
- High value added-value foods for export, including herbs, spices, nuts and pulses

#### **b. Garment Sector**

Bangladesh has a thriving industrial sector with a diverse range of sectors outperforming global growth rates. The country's competitive high quality labour and a business friendly environment, make Bangladesh a compelling proposition for companies investing in the region. From spinning to weaving, from knitwear to leisurewear and high street fashions, the textiles and clothing industry is Bangladesh's biggest export earner with over USD 9.3bn of exports in 2007.

Bangladesh's export earnings rose by 5.8% to \$36.66 billion in the last fiscal year, while the country earned \$34.65 billion from exports in FY17

The Bangladesh government is going to set the export target at \$39 billion for FY19, amounting to 6.36% growth for the current fiscal year.

The garment industry of the country remains the strongest root of its economy, with 76% contribution in its foreign exchange. Approximately, 2.2 million Bangladeshis are employed in this industry, of which 80% are women. In FY2007, a total of US\$9.2 billion worth of garments were exported. The figure reached US\$12.3 billion in FY09, as was expected. The textile industry is made up of several small- and large-scale, private and public companies. The United States is the biggest garment importer for Bangladesh, with \$5 billion in imports annually.

**c. Power and Energy**

The power and energy sector of Bangladesh is still lagged behind. Bangladesh has small reserves of oil and coal, but very large natural gas resources. Commercial energy consumption is mostly natural gas (around 66%), followed by oil, hydropower and coal.

Currently Bangladesh is producing 3,800 MW of electricity. However, the demand is estimated at 5,500 MW and growing at ~500 MW a year. Per capita power generation is ~183 Kwh and it is among the lowest in the world.

Currently the capacity of gas production in Bangladesh is 1,800 MMCFD. However, the demand is 2,300 MMCFD. Close to 50% of population do not have access to gas and electricity

**d. Pharmaceuticals and life sciences**

Pharmaceutical companies worldwide can benefit from setting up a facility in Bangladesh. The country has tremendous potential to build a pharmaceuticals and life sciences workforce for international companies.

- The World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPs) agreement permits Bangladesh to reverse-engineer patented generic pharmaceutical products to sell locally and export to markets around the world.
- Bangladesh is developing a strong manufacturing and technically experienced industrial base with growth in excess of 10% most years.
- The scientific talent pool is not only plentiful but also offers excellent cost/quality opportunities.

- Bangladesh also offers significant potential for R&D, contract research outsourcing (CRO) and clinical trials development.

**e. ICT and Business Service**

Businesses ranging from inbound call centers to the latest in Web 2.0 software development can be successfully operated in Bangladesh. Widespread use of English helps to make Bangladesh a fast emerging option for the global business services industry. Our open minded ICT sector is ready to win you over.

**f. Leather products**

Bangladesh has a long established tanning industry that already produces around 2-3% of the world's leather from a ready supply of raw materials. Bangladesh is therefore an established and attractive location to source and outsource the manufacture of finished leather products. Three key enabling business factors are:

- Attractive export incentives
- Tariff and quota free access to major markets such as the EU
- A skills pool and rural/industrial locations to support foreign investors

**g. Banking and insurance sector**

Credit flow from banking sector has not increased as expected in the current fiscal year. Recently, it seen high default culture in banking sector as around BDT 426 billion of bank money is stuck up in court cases now. Non Performing Loan has augmented due to less governance, supervision as well as more window dressing of classified loans through rescheduling. Besides, in the current fiscal year we have not seen any significant structural reform in banking sector however we have found some small initiatives from Bangladesh Bank to introduce new product lines. Ensuring Capital Adequacy Ratio of 10% has become challenging for few banks where BASEL III will require ensuring Capital Adequacy Ratio of 12.5% including additional 2.5% of RWA as Capital Conservation Buffer. Traditionally, 85% of the income of bank comes from interest on loan. Interest rate of banking sector is comparatively quite low now as a whole but it seems burden for the small investors yet. The Government and Bangladesh Bank together are trying to cut bank interest rate to 9% or below from the existing effective interest rate of 18% to 22%. The highest interest rate paid by Financial Institutions is

10% and the spread is around 5% to 7%. The reasons for high spread are high operating cost, financial depression, lack of adequate competition, market power of few large dominant banks, high inflation rate, high risk premium due to high risk of most borrowers, burden of Non-performing Loan, limitations in using Open Market Operation etc. High interest rate spread increases the likelihood of NPLs. It causes inflation increasing cost of production or cost of goods sold. Opening Back to Back L/C and machinery import have increased to support investment. Private commercial banks are the major market share holders in trade facilitation. They have contributed over four-fifths of export proceeds and three-fourths of import payments during current fiscal year. PCBs also dominate as a major market share holders in trade financing, remittance services and maintaining foreign currency accounts.

#### **8.6.4 Causes of Poverty and Poverty Reduction Programs**

##### **a. Causes of poverty in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has long been considered as the poor country. According to the World Bank statistics 31% people in Bangladesh live below the national poverty line (estimated in 2016). 28% of our population is facing extreme poverty. Almost 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Many people live in remote areas that lack services such as education, health clinics, and adequate roads, particularly road links to markets. Although the recent economic indicators show that the economy of Bangladesh is strengthening, the condition of the general people is not satisfactory. Most of the people of Bangladesh cannot meet the demand of daily needs. Still, there are people in the rural areas, even in the cities who do not afford three meals a day. About 19% of rural households cannot have 'full three meals' a day; about 10% subsist on two meals or less for a number of months every year. A large number of people are homeless, therefore, live in the slums or pass their nights at the street sides, in parks or bus and railway stations. A large number of wage-earner families do not afford sufficient calories. Females of these families suffer from malnutrition and anemia.

The following are considered as the general causes of poverty in Bangladesh:

- Agriculture dependent economy.

- Slower industrialization.
- Conservative outlook
- Superstitions
- Rapid growth of population.
- Inequitable distribution of land, income and productive assets.
- Death of chief wage-earner.
- Incapability of chief wage- earner through accident, illness, and old age.
- Chronic irregularity of work.
- Largeness of family.
- Low wage.
- Habits drinking, betting, and gambling.
- Careless housekeeping for improvident expenditure.
- Chronic shortage of cash.
- Absence of food reserves.
- Natural calamities (river erosion, cyclone, tidal surge, excessive rain).
- Under developed communications system.
- Lack of education and skilled labour.
- Lack of administrative fairness and accountability.
- Limited access to public services.
- Lack of mass people's participation in local government etc.

### **b. Poverty Reduction Programs**

Both the government and non-government organizations have been implementing a number of programs for employment and income generating and the uplifting of the poor. About 54 percent of development and non-development budget have been allocated for direct and indirect poverty reduction activities. These programs continue to enhance the entitlement of the poor and at the same time, their empowerment and awareness building.

Now in Bangladesh, numerous programs and projects both governmental and non-governmental are running for the poverty alleviation. Some of them are as follows:

#### **Social safety programs**

- Cash transfers programs
- Food transfers programs
- Special poverty alleviation programs

- Micro-credit programs for self employment and
- Other Special poverty alleviation activities.

### **Cash transfer programs**

- Old-age allowance programs
- Allowances program for widowed, deserted and destitute women.
- Honorarium program for insolvent freedom fighters
- Training and self-employment program for insolvent freedom fighters and their wards
- Fund for rehabilitation of the acid burnt and the physically handicapped.
- Allowance for the fully retarded.
- Cash transfers program for education.

### **Food for Work program (Cash)**

### **Food Transfers Program**

- Food for works program
- Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program
- Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGD) program
- Test Relief (TR) program; and
- Gratuitous Relief (GR) program.

### **Special Poverty Alleviation Program**

- Poverty Alleviation and Goat Development Project;
- Providing incentives and financial assistance to poultry and livestock sector;
- Poverty Alleviation and Micro-credit Programmes undertaken by Department of Fisheries;
- Fund for Housing the Homeless;
- Program for generating employment for the unemployed youth by the karmasangsthan Bank;
- Abashan (poverty Alleviation and Rehabilitation) Project;
- Fund for mitigating Risks due to Natural Disaster;
- Program for mitigating Economic shocks;
- Fund to meet sudden natural disaster;
- Fund for Housing the Homeless;

- The following institutions have specialized activities for poverty alleviation:
- Information and communication Technology (ICT) for poverty alleviation;
- Rural infrastructure Development program;
- Local Government Engineering Department (LGED);
- Urban poverty Reduction program;
- Poverty alleviation and socio-economic Development,
- Palli Daridrya Bimochan Foundation (PDBF);
- Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD), Comilla;
- Rural Development Academy (Bogra); and
- Department of social services.

### **8.6.5 Present Economic Status of the Country**

At present, the economy of Bangladesh is passing through a good time with some favourable economic indicators such as macroeconomic, modest low cost concessional external borrowing, ample foreign exchange reserve, declining inflation rate, declining interest rate of loan, stable foreign exchange rate, controlled budget deficit, surplus in Balance of Payment, less pressure in government subsidy etc. But, we are moving around the GDP growth rate of 6% over the last decade, which is not improving significantly.

Inflation rate is under control now. It is around the targeted 6.5% in this fiscal year. Inflation rate is high for food items compared to non food items. Inflation rate is likely to be controlled as the Bangladesh Bank is committed to maintain monetary policy. However, the present declining inflation rate may be the result of steady demand in economy due to less economic activities which can be detrimental for the GDP growth in long run.

Private sector investment has declined mainly due to lack of confidence in entrepreneurs. Agricultural credit is steady, investment in manufacturing is low and machinery import has increased but not being reflected in investment. Large term loan disbursement has increased but small loan disbursement is low, which is risky for the banking sector. Infrastructure development is also required for creating favourable environment of private investment.

Remittance has slightly declined but Bangladeshi labor force has got the opportunity again to go Saudi Arabia recently. Hence, skill development of the labor force is highly required to sustain in the competition and ensure remittance growth as neighbouring countries are also sending labor force in Saudi Arabia. Besides, remittance from Saudi Arabia may not come as expected due to decline in oil price and less employment opportunity in that country followed by less economic growth. Balance of Payment situation seems good with surplus but current account balance is slightly in under pressure with deficit of around \$1.3 billion in the first seven months of current fiscal year due to pick up of import. BoP shows surplus balance now but it may not remain satisfactory for long run as repayment period of foreign debt is not far away. Reserve has increased significantly as the figure has reached to \$2407 crore on April 29, 2015. It is adequate to meet the import requirement of 8-9 months. The reasons for such upward reserve are reduction of oil price in world economy, growing export, increasing remittance, reduction of purchasing power of USD internationally and more USD can be gained now against gold and other foreign currency as reserve of foreign currency is calculated at USD. Bangladesh is holding the second position in foreign currency reserve among the members of SAARC.

#### **8.6.6 Economic Prospects of Bangladesh**

The economic prospect of Bangladesh is positive. Bangladesh has already been recognized as a lower middle income country and almost all indicators of its economy are on the rise. After being restricted to 6 percent growth for about a decade, Bangladesh's economy posted a 7.11 percent GDP growth in the 2015-16 fiscal. However, the World Bank did not fully agree with the government but has since somewhat moved away from its earlier skepticism. The WB report said that private expenditure and investment were both suffering due to sluggish foreign currency flow. It also warned that weakening remittance and exports may lower economic growth to 6.5 percent in the 2017-18 fiscal years. It further said, growth may suffer further if stabilising measures are not taken for revenue, financial and corporate sectors. However, the government set a 7.2 percent growth target for 2016-17 fiscal.

Experts observe that the income growth prospects in Bangladesh's main export markets are uneven, but sustained low oil prices bode

well for external and internal balance. Again, it is observed that few factors continue to hinder growth: infrastructure bottlenecks; power and primary energy shortage; credit shocks in the banking system; difficulties of doing business; and lack of reform continuity. Bangladesh needs strong structural reforms and effective public investment efforts to be on a higher and faster growth path. Further, weakness in the financial sector also disrupts investment and growth. Weak bank balance sheets and governance in the State owned Banks limit lending capacity, divert credit away from productive investment, and impose large fiscal recapitalization costs. High levels of non-performing loans and the high rates on national savings certificates increase banks' operating and funding costs, keeping interest rates high despite large excess liquidity.

## **Chapter- Nine**

### **Tribal People, Insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Peace Accord (December 1997)**

#### **Objectives**

The aim of this chapter is to enhance the knowledge of the learners about the different tribal groups, their languages, religions, family structures, professions, their life-styles, their beliefs, their utensils etc. To provide the learners a clear picture of the beginning, development and the end of insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts and ‘the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord’ is also an aim of the study.

#### **Chapter Outlines**

Definition of Tribal People: Indigenous, Tribal or Ethnic Minority, Description of Some Tribal Groups, Present Condition of Tribal People, Definition of Insurgency, Terrorism; Background of Insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Major Causes of Insurgency, Background of Peace Accord (Dec. 1997), Salient Features of Peace Accord, Reactions of Peace Accord among the Tribal groups, Recent Developments in Chittagong Hill Tracts Area.

#### **Learning Outcome**

By the end of the study, the learners will realize the challenges and prospects of tribal people. They will also be able to realize the causes and effects of insurgency in this area. They will also be able to narrate the salient features of ‘the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord’.

## **Tribal People, Insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Peace Accord (December 1997)**

### **9. Tribal People**

#### **9.1 Definition of Tribal People: Indigenous, Tribal or Ethnic Minority**

Around the world there are approximately five thousand tribal or indigenous or ethnic minority groups, in total approximately five crore people. In Bangladesh we are mainly Bengalis, speaking the same language- Bangla, with age-old Bengali culture. However, like many other countries of the world, there are also some people in Bangladesh, although few in number, who preserve their own distinct culture different from the culture of mainstream population. Generally, we call them tribal people, indigenous people or ethnic minority. Although the terms echo the same sound, they have quite different meanings. In our constitution they are defined as ‘ethnic minority’. All over the country there are 45 ethnic or tribal groups. Half of the Christians belong to indigenous communities. However, people have different opinions regarding the definition of those terms. Let us first clarify the definition of Tribal People: are they indigenous people or ethnic minority?

##### **• Tribal People**

Generally tribe means a social group that developed after bands or groups (i.e. bands of hunter/gatherers) but before the development of states or countries. Many anthropologists used the term ‘tribal society’ to refer to societies organized largely on the basis of kinship (extended families) and unique social customs. Therefore, the definition of ‘tribal’ is relating to a group or community with similar ancestors, customs and traditions. According to Oxford *Dictionary*: A

*tribe* is a group of *people* in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor. In fact, the term ‘tribal people’ developed during the rise of European colonization. When the process of colonization reached its height, the colonials termed some human groups as ‘tribal people’.

● **Indigenous People**

There is no universally accepted *definition* for ‘*Indigenous*’ though there are characteristics that tend to be common among *indigenous peoples*. According to the United Nations:

“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.”

ILO Convention No. 169 (1989), gave the following definitions of indigenous people:

“People in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their social, economic, cultural and political institutions.”

According to the Operational Directive 4.0, 1991 of World Bank,

“The terms ‘indigenous people’, ‘indigenous ethnic minorities’ and ‘scheduled tribes’ describe social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process.”

However, being failed to give a universal definition of ‘indigenous people’ the United Nations mentioned that the most fruitful approach

is to identify, rather than define indigenous peoples. This is based on the fundamental criterion of self-identification as underlined in a number of human rights documents. It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. The United Nations also has identified some characteristics through which we may develop a modern understanding of this term. These are:

- Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

### ● **Ethnic Minority**

Every large society contains ethnic minorities. They are different from the mainstream population. According to Cambridge Dictionary, Ethnic Minority is a group of people of a particular race or nationality living in a country or area where most people are from different race or nationality. So, the term Ethnic Minority is associated with or belonging to a particular race or group of people who have a culture that is different from the main culture of a country.

In Bangladesh, tribal people have different culture, creed and languages. They live in Chittagong hill tracts, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Cox's Bazar, Moymensing, Rajshahi etc. But majority of them live in Chittagong hill tracts. As many as eleven tribal groups live there. They are: Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Lushai, Pankho, Bawm, Mro, Khyang, Khumi and Chak. Majority of them are Buddhists and the rest are Hindus, Christians.

In Sylhet there live many tribal groups. They represent just about 1.5 per cent of population of Sylhet Division. They reside mostly in tiny villages near to the Indian border, or in colonies on tea estates where they live and work as laborers. The indigenous communities in Sylhet Division are scattered and disunited in preserving their

traditional and cultural practices. The tribal people in Sylhet are Khasi, Garo, Manipuri, Pangal, Bishnupriya, Patro, Hajong, Santal, Oraon, Telegu, Koch, Shabdakor, Munda, Bormon, Deshwali, Bewri, Robidas, Bhenia, Bhumija, Painkha, Baraik, Rajbhor, Kumi, Pande, Naek, Pasi, U-ria, Madraji, Lohar, Mahali. Among them Khasi, Patro and Manipuri are majority in number. In Dinajpur the Santal is the main tribal community. There are also some Oraon, the Munda and Malo. In Mymensingh Garo and Hajong are the main tribal groups.

### **9.2 Description of Some Tribal Groups**

In Bangladesh the total population of indigenous ethnic minorities in Bangladesh was estimated to be over 2 million in 2010. The primary census report of 2011 gives the number of ethnic population groups of Bangladesh as 27. However, some claim that the number would be 35 or 45. Perhaps they are confused and mention the same tribe of different names as different tribes. Suppose, some people think that 'Mro' and 'Murong' are two tribes; in fact, they are same tribe having different names. Same thing happened in the case of Tripura, Uchei and Riang. People regard them as three tribes, but they belong to same tribe. However, with the number of population, the first is Chakma, consisting of 444,748 people while the Marma, the second largest ethnic group compares with 202,974 persons.

In fact, 35 smaller groups of indigenous people covering about two percent of the total population have been living in different pockets of the hilly zones and some areas of the plain lands in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Mymensing, Rajshahi and Rangpurr divisions. Among them the main tribal groups such as Garo, Mandi and Hajong live in the northern part, the Manipuri and Khasia in the northeast, the Chakma, Tripura, Marma, Rakhain, Mru, Tanchyanga, Murong in the eastern and southeastern parts, and the Santal and Rajbangshi in the western part of the country. Here is a brief description of some ethnic minority groups in Bangladesh:

#### **● The Chakmas**

The Chakmas are the largest ethnic tribal minority in Bangladesh. They are concentrated in the central and northern parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts where they live amidst several other ethnic groups. According to the 1991 population census, there were about 2,53,000 Chakmas. More than 90 percent of them are concentrated in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts.

The Chakmas are Buddhists. Chakmas officially follow the Southern, or Theravada, form of the Buddhism. But their form of Buddhism has aspects of Hinduism and traditional religions as well.

Almost every Chakma village has a Buddhist temple (*kaang*). Buddhist priests or monks are called *Bhikhus*. They preside at religious festivals and ceremonies. The villagers support their monks with food, gifts, and offerings to Buddha.

The Chakmas also worship Hindu deities. Lakshmi, for example, is worshipped as the Goddess of the Harvest. Chakmas offer the sacrifice of goats, chickens, or ducks to calm the spirits that are believed to bring fevers and disease.

The staple food of the Chakmas is rice, supplemented by millet, corn (maize), vegetables, and mustard. Vegetables include yams, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers. Vegetables and fruit gathered from the forest may be added to the diet. Fish, poultry, and meat (even pork) are eaten, despite the Buddhist taboo on consuming animal flesh. But they don't like milk. They drink alcoholic beverages freely, and every household makes its own rice liquor.

Chakmas celebrate various Buddhist festivals. The Main festival is Buddha Purnima which is observed on the full moon day of the month of Vaisakh (usually in May).

### ● The Marmas

The Marmas are the second largest ethnic minority in Bangladesh. Most Marmas live in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari. Some Marmas, however, live in the coastal districts of Cox's Bazar and Patuakhali.

The name 'Marma' is derived from the word Myanmar and refers to the nationality of the tribe's ancestors who originated in Pegu of Burma before it came under the rule of Arakanese King Mong Raja Gree in the 16th century. The Marmas speak an Arakanese dialect, with their written language making use of intricate Burmese script.

Marmas belong to the Mongoloid race. They are relatively short and have prominent cheekbones. They have a yellow complexion, black hair, small eyes and snub noses.

The Marmas are primarily followers of Theravada Buddhism – an ancient form of Buddhist teachings dating back to around 250 BC.

Marriage is a very important part of the social life of Marmas. Cross-cousin marriage and monogamy are predominant features of this society. Polygamy is also allowed. Child marriage is practically forbidden. Premarital love is common. Marma communities consist of nuclear families, with the husband as head of the household. Family and community ties going back through generations are respected, and both sons and daughters can inherit their parent's property. Their staple food is rice and vegetables. Nappi, a paste made of dried fish, is a favourite food item. They also supplement their food requirement by gathering tree leaves, roots, and tubers from the hill forests. They also enjoy rice beer and smoke indigenous cigars.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Marmas and Jhum cultivation is their primary agricultural pursuit. They are skilled at basketry and weaving.

Although they are becoming habituated to make use of aluminum cookware and glass or china crockery in place of their traditional pottery, Bamboo and wood utensils, they still follow many of the traditional ways of life. Their bamboo, straw and wild grass houses are built on wooden or bamboo platforms raised above the ground. The space below the floor is used for storage, or as shelter for livestock. Their clothing typically consists of a sarong for both men and women, with women wearing a blouse and men wearing a type of waistcoat.

### ● The Manipuris

The Manipuri people are of Mongolian descent and speak a Language called Meithei. They are one of the major ethnic communities of Bangladesh. They migrated to Bangladesh during the reign of Rajarshi Bhagyachandra (1764-1789) and the process was accelerated by the Manipuri-Burma war. After the war with Burma, Manipur was ruled by the Burmese invaders for about seven years. During that period, King Chourajit Singh accompanied by a large following of Manipuri subjects moved to areas- now in Bangladesh. However, most Manipuri people lived in northeastern India. They fled from

their homeland in the northeastern Indian kingdom of Manipur to settle in East Bengal, which was then ruled by Britain. However, in 1947 East Bengal gained its independence and today most Manipuri people live in the district of Sylhet of northeastern Bangladesh.

Most of the Manipuri peoples are farmers and they have succeeded in growing crops of rice, sugarcane, tobacco, oranges and pineapples. The Manipuris do not eat meat, but they do eat fish. They are fond of following primitive life-style and, therefore, still wash their clothes and bathe in the rivers.

Their huts of mud and reeds are commonly built near the river's edge.

The Manipuri People generally do not marry within their own clan, therefore, must find a spouse from another clan

The Manipuri are very religious people. They worship the Hindu gods but also worship many other gods of nature- the snake being one of them.

### ● **The Garos**

Garo is a hilly tribe who form one of the important matrilineal tribe inhabiting in Mymensingh, Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Sylhet and Gazipur districts in Bangladesh. The Garo tribe also largely inhabited in the North-eastern India, Kamrup, Goalpara and Khasi hill regions of Assam, Jalpaiguri, Cooch-Behar districts of West Bengal. Their original home was in Tibet. They represent Mongoloid racial stock.

The Garo have a tradition of 'shifting hill cultivation' which is locally named as Jhum cultivation. However, at present they practice both permanent and 'shifting hill cultivation'.

### ● **The Santals**

The Santals are known as one of the oldest and largest indigenous communities in the northwestern belt of Bangladesh. They have been living in the pristine natural surroundings of the area for thousands of years. They might be described as children of nature who are nurtured and reared by its bounty. Santals are largely seen in the northern districts of Dinajpur, Naogaon, Thakurgaon, Panchagar etc.

At present agriculture is their main source of livelihood. However, once hunting and fishing was the main be part of Santal-living. Most

of their houses are usually neat and clean even though built of mud. They build their houses with bamboo and elementary materials. Their houses have small and low doors and almost no window. In most houses they do not use much furniture.

Principal food items of Santals are rice, fish and vegetables. They also eat crabs, pork, chicken, beef and the meat of squirrels. Liquor distilled from putrefied rice called hadia or (pachai) is their favourite drink.

Santal families are joint or extended families. Husband is the head of a family. According to the Santals, marriage is a union between a man and a woman, which is socially recognized; culturally and religiously it allows the couple to live in a family. Through marriage the bride loses her paternal legal identity and acquires the identity of the groom's family. The women in Santal society are not eligible for the inheritance of properties.

Santal women, especially young girls, are fond of ornaments. Santal women wear ornaments on their hands, feet, nose, ears and neck and also wear peculiarly shaped ornaments on their ankles. Both men and women wear tattoos on their bodies. Santal dresses are called panchi, panchatat and matha.

The Santal society is marked with feasts, festivals and ritual celebrations. Dancing and singing have a very important role at every festival occasion. It brings a Santal to forget worries and stresses of his or her day-to-day life.

### ● **The Rajbangshi**

The Rajbangshi is another small ethnic group of Bangladesh. They entered this country from the Himalayan region and the Brahmaputra valley. They live mostly in Rangpur, Dinajpur and Rajshahi districts and a small number of them in Bogra and Mymensingh.

Rajbangshis are mainly agriculturalist. They also catch and sell fish. Rajbangshi women are skilled in handicrafts and cottage industry. Father is the head of the family. Women do not inherit the property of their father after his death. Rajbangshis worship Hindu gods and goddesses (Shiva, Vishnu, Durga and Kali) and observe the Baridhara brata (vow). They also perform religious rites and rituals related to fertility and procreation. There are animists and worshippers of the nature, including mountains, rivers, forests and the soil within

Rajbangshi community. They perform indigenous songs and dances in religious festivities.

Marriage rituals of Rajbangshis are alike the rituals of the Santals. Divorce, remarriage and widow marriages are allowed in the Rajbangshi community. However, in case of widow marriage, the younger brother, if there is any, of the deceased husband gets the preferential right to marry her.

#### ● **The Khasias**

The origin of the Khasias is in the province of Meghalaya in north east India. They are the majority there. The Khasi people who reside in the hilly areas of Sylhet, Bangladesh are of the War sub-tribe. ‘Better the dance, better the crop...’ a saying of the Khasias, one of the ethnic groups of Bangladesh. Earlier, Khasia people used to live along the northeast border of Sunamganj district. At present they are spread over Bishwamvarpur, Tahirpur and Chhatak in Sunamganj. Most Khasias live in the border region. Many Khasia children are found working in the tea gardens in Kulaura.

The dress of the men is very simple, consisting of a small waist-cloth and a garment over it, similar to the smock frock worn by the English peasantry. Women’s dresses are shorter than men. They women are fond of dresses like native silk of different colors. They are extremely fond of ornaments also and wear ear rings and necklace of gold mixed with coral. They also wear bracelets of silver.

They made their houses with wood and thatched it with either grass or the leaves of cane.

The main crops produced by the Khasi people living in Bangladesh, are betel leaf, areca nut and oranges. Their language ‘Khasi’ is the northernmost Austroasiatic language. The Khasis are a matrilineal society.

#### ● **The Tripuras**

The Tripuras are another large ethnic group in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region. At present they live in CHT, especially in Ramgarh and Khagrachhari. It is also believed that Tripuras currently living in Bangladesh originally came from the Indian state of Tripura. The number of Tripuras in CHT areas was close to 80,000 in 1991,

and it has no doubt increased considerably by this time. In Bangladesh there are at least 10 clans of Tripura people.

Most Tripura in Khagrachari are agriculturalists and they practice a type of farming often referred to as ‘slash and burn’ farming.

According to the 2001 census, majority of the Tripuri people are considered to adhere to Hinduism. There is also significant number of Christians.

The Tripuris live on the slopes of hills in a group of five to fifty families. Their houses in these areas are built of bamboo or *ua* as it is called in Kokborok and raised five to six feet height to save themselves from the dangers of the wild animals.

### • The Mandis

Mandis are short but usually have stout bodies with wide chest and thick arms and legs. They live in different areas of Bangladesh and in the adjacent parts of India. Their faces are round, black hair and eyes, deep eyebrows, small eyes, flat noses and high jaws. Beards rarely grow on their cheeks and they have almost no hair on their body. Their skin is yellow and smooth.

### • The Rakhain

The Rakhain, belonging to the Bhotbarmi community of the Mongoloids, came from the land Rakhain Pre, which is now known as Arakan in Myanmar. The word Rakhain originates from the word Rakshan, which means the people who preserve and safeguard their heritage and culture. This ethnic group has been living for many generations in the hilly parts of Mymensingh district. Some of them also live in the Sherpur, Sylhet and Netrokona regions.

Agriculture, handloom, fishing and crabbing were the main occupations of Rakhaine community; but now their main occupation is crab collection. Both males and females take part in agricultural work. But women take the leading role in livestock rearing and poultry. In some remote areas, Rakhain women are engaged in fishing and some of them are involved in small business and in making handicrafts.

Rakhains are Buddhists by faith. However, like other tribes and sub-tribes, they believe in superstitions, magic and supernatural powers.

They lead very simple lives. The common dress of Rakhain men is the lungi and fatua and women wear a dress known as nima. They wear turbans and use self-woven lungis and bags. While the women wear embroidered lungis and blouses of colourful designs and also various types of ornaments on their bodies and flowers on their heads, some of them also use blouses similar to the angi in design. The language of Rakhains belongs to the Bhotbarmi group of languages. Rakhain children start their education at Buddhist Patshalas (primary schools) or khyangs (monastery). They receive both religious and linguistic education there. At present the rate of literacy in the Rakhain community is very high and some of them are highly educated.

Marriage is a religious and social obligation in Rakhain society. Dowry is not accepted among Rakhains. Father is the formal head of the family. However, male and female members have equal rights. Sons and daughters inherit parental property in equal proportion.

### ● **The Tanchyanga**

The Tanchyanga are a small ethnic community living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In terms of population they rank 5th among the ethnic communities of Bangladesh. According to the 1991 census, their number was 21,057 and the number of Tanchyanga households was 4,043.

They speak Pali, Prakrit and ancient Bengali, all belonging to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. Agriculture is their main occupation. They cultivate crops and practise horticulture on hill slopes. Even today they do Jhum cultivation.

Tanchyangas wear traditional costumes. Their women wear colourful clothes and ornaments. Among the variety of their ornaments are Rajjur and jhangra for ears, baghors and kuchikhadu for wrists, tajjur for arms, chandrahara, hachuli and sikichada for the neck. Usually these ornaments are made of silver. However, there have been changes in their attire and ornaments in recent years. Now-a-days their women wear sarees, blouse, salwar and kameez and their men wear shirt, trousers and lungi. The men of this tribe wear simple clothes without designs. Tanchyanga men usually wear loincloth and long-sleeved shirts.

Tanchyangas are Buddhists. They observe the values of a patriarchal society. The male children inherit the property of a deceased Tanchyanga father and daughters cannot claim any share of the property except when they have no brothers.

### ● The Murongs

Murons are one of the famous tribes of aborigines of Arakan and two Murong Kings ruled Arakan in the tenth century AD. Murongs live in Lama, Ruma, Alikadam and Thanchi upazilas near Chimbuk Mountain of Bandarban district.

Murons are patriarchal. Sons inherit the property. They have different clans and many sub-clans. Murongs do not marry within the same clan or sub-clan. Most Murongs are Buddhists and some are Christian converts. However, some of them are still animists and they worship nature. They have also many superstitions. They believe in signs and omens and their immediate undertakings are affected by these beliefs.

The main profession of the Murongs is jhum cultivation and lumbering wood from the jungle. The women work harder than the men.

Murong men wear length and women wear wanglai (short skirt). These are all locally made. Murongs build houses on machangs (platforms) on hilltops. Their houses are bigger than the houses of other tribes.

Murons love songs and dances. They use homemade musical instruments, which are made of bamboo. The flute is the dominant instrument. Rice and homemade beer are their main food and drink. They eat the tiger, dog, goat, pig, cow and many other animals. Their delicacy is nappi, made of the fermented fat of fish, frog, deer or boar, mixed with fermented rice.

### 9.3 Present Condition of Tribal People

In Bangladesh tribal peoples are of two types- Plain land tribal people and Hill tracts' tribal people. The socio-economic conditions of the two types are different. Bangladesh is the home of many plain land tribal communities. The accurate number of tribal people in Bangladesh is uncertain. According to the Bangladesh *Khudra Nregosthi Sankskritic Prothithan Ain*, there are 27 different tribal groups spread out across the national territory with the north, northwest and north-east, southeast region. However, some other research shows that there are 45 different indigenous communities living in

Bangladesh. Since the ancient time, they have been living here, however, majority of them are now landless. Therefore, their economic conditions are also in trouble.

A tribal economy is generally characterized by the collection of their social, institutional, technological and finally economic arrangements through which the community seeks to enhance their materials and social well-being. There is always an interaction between the environment in which the community lives and their practices that led to sustain their livelihood. Natural environment, surrounding the people, provides several goods, services and amenities to them.

Traditionally, the livelihoods of these tribal groups are based on their access to the surrounding natural environment and its resources. Now their livelihoods are being damaged due to market economies. Therefore, ethnic communities are a part of the ultra-poor and live in highly food insecure areas. More than 80 percent of the ethnic population live in rural areas and depends on agriculture and natural resources for their survival.

Most importantly the tribal people who depend on natural resources face lots of problem which make their socio-economic condition vulnerable. The growing population of the country puts serious pressure on their land, water, forest and other natural resources.

According to a recent research, it is found that among the plain land tribal people, 60.94% households are involved in agricultural day labor activities. Only around 22.14% household depend on their own cultivable land for production, 5.99% in various formal and non-formal service sectors (Offices support staff, Security guard and Garments factory), 2.34% household are involved in livestock rearing. 2.86% tribal households were found involved with small business activities (Petty shop, tea stall). Some tribal are involved in service/professional (7.8%), fishing (4.8%) and tenant farmer (2.5%).

Among the Mahali and Roabidas tribal community have their own tradition occupation *e.g.* cobbler, bamboo material small cottage *etc.* Regarding average monthly income of the households, majority (50.26%) of the households are up to 4000.00 BDT (U\$ 50) per month. According to the research, only 3.13% of them have monthly income more than 6000.00 BDT

As many as 700,000 indigenous people live in CHT areas which occupies a physical area of 5,093 square miles, constituting 10 percent of the total land area of Bangladesh. The region comprises three districts: Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban.

As the Chittagong is a hilly area, the opportunities for diverse kinds of occupation are very limited. One of the most prominent economist in Bangladesh Dr. Abul Barkat has characterized the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh as ‘one of the most vulnerable’ because of its income and employment opportunities, poverty, housing, health, water, sanitation, education and inter-community confidence. Researches show that the main problems of the indigenous people are land dispossession (through development and forestry projects), limited access to education and other social services and discrimination from the part of the non-indigenous people. The scope of cultivation and agriculture is also dependent mainly on the primitive techniques and technologies. A recent survey in Chittagong area finds the following as the main occupations of the households of the indigenous people in CHT: i. Agriculture; ii. Business; iii. Service/professional; iv. Agricultural labor; v. Tenant farmers; vi. Fishing.

Agriculture is the main attribute of the indigenous economy in the CHT. The main form of cultivation is the Swidden/Slash and Burn cultivation. In local indigenous language this cultivation is called ‘Jum’. This is a thousand year old cultivation. This special form of cultivation is also common in several hilly areas of different parts of the world. The hill dwellers cut a good amount of trees and burn them to clear the land for cultivation. They produce several kinds of crop on that land. The main crops that are cultivated include rice, maize, millet, sesame, cotton, ginger, cucumber, pumpkin, melon and some others.

## **1.1 Insurgency**

### **1.1.1 Definition of Insurgency, Terrorism**

#### **● Insurgency**

The term ‘insurgency’ has been used for years in professional military literature. According to Bernard Fall, a French expert on

Indochina and Vietnam, insurgency is actually a ‘revolutionary warfare’ (guerrilla warfare plus political action). It indicates such movement within a country dedicated to overthrowing the government. An insurgency is a rebellion when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents. According to the United States Department of Defense (DOD) insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. However, the nature of insurgencies is an ambiguous concept. Therefore, not all rebellions are insurgencies. For an example, the United States was founded by an insurgency, when the colonies fought England for independence. The use of the term ‘insurgency’ recognizes the political motivation of those who participate in an insurgency.

#### ● **Terrorism**

According to the United States Department of Defense (DOD), Terrorism is ‘the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.’ It also defines ‘terrorism’ as ‘an organized resistance movement that uses subversion, sabotage, and armed conflict to achieve its aims.’

However, terrorism is, in most cases, essentially a political act. It is meant to inflict dramatic and deadly injury on civilians and to create an atmosphere of fear, generally for a political or ideological (whether secular or religious) purpose. Terrorism is a criminal act, but it is more than mere criminality.

#### ● **Defference between ‘terrorism’ and ‘insurgency’**

Though both the terms— ‘terrorism’ and ‘insurgency’— involve violence and armed conflict. A key difference is that an insurgency is a movement — a political effort with a specific aim. On the other hand ‘terrorism’ pursues the goals of the political movement.

#### **1.1.2 Background of Insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts**

During the colonial period, the tribal people living in the Chittagong hill tracts continued to preserve self-domination by themselves. During Mughal period, these areas were like king-states under the Mughal Suba. The Mughals did not interfere on their administration.

Under British control the Chittagong Hill Tracts were made into a separate district in 1860; by special regulation in 1900 the district was declared an ‘excluded area’ under direct control of the Provincial Governor of Bengal. From then on, the three administrative subdivisions of the district were controlled by the major ‘Tribal Chiefs’— or Rajas. Revenue collecting and dispute settlement functions were allocated to the Chiefs/Rajas (one Chakma and two Marma), who exercised these roles through a hierarchy of sub-collectors and village headmen.

In 1947 when the Indian sub continent was divided, this area was included to new born Pakistan. From the beginning, the Pakistan government took initiatives to turn this area to a Muslim majority area. For this purpose, thousands of plain-land people were let to settle there. In 1960s, Pakistan government amended ‘Chittagong Hill Tracts Act 1900’ and abandoned the definition ‘excluded area’. Instead, the phrase ‘tribal area’ was inserted in the act. Many other regulations of the act were also amended to open the area for new settlers. Pakistan government took a scheme of ‘Hydro-electricity project’ in 1960 for which at least 54 thousand acres of land went under water which caused lacs of Jumma inhabitants homeless.

Land alienation of the Hill people accelerated after the independence of Bangladesh. As Bangladesh proceeded with the framing of its state constitution, a Hill people’s delegation, led by Manobendra Narayan Larma, called on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then Prime Minister and made the following demands:

- Autonomy for the CHT with its own legislature;
- Retention of the 1900 CHT Manual;
- Continuation of the offices of tribal chiefs;
- Provisions restricting the amendment of the CHT Manual and imposing a ban on the influx of non-tribal people into the CHT.

Bangabandhu rejected the demands, advising the Hill people to assimilate with the new, nationalist Bengali identity. The constitution of Bangladesh, adopted on November 4, 1972, incorporated the ideals of Bengali Nationalism to the exclusion of the state’s non-Bengali population. In its preamble, reiterated in Article 8, the constitution accepted “Nationalism”, “Socialism”, “Democracy” and “Secularism”.

M.N.Larma, leader of Hill people's delegation, refused to endorse the constitution and argued against it in Parliament:

You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali... They [Hill people] can never become Bengali.

Larma's contentions failed to make any impact on the Bengali policymakers. As a state, Bangladesh was the outcome of an intensely nationalist movement, and Bengali Nationalism was seen by policymakers as all encompassing. Having successfully led the country to independence, the Awami League could perceive the dangers of secession inherent within such demands for autonomy.

Article 1 of the constitution declared Bangladesh to be a unitary state, ruling out any possibility of a separate legislature or autonomy for the CHT. Article 3 specified Bengali as the state language, and Article 6 declared that the citizens of Bangladesh were to be known as 'Bengalis'. These provisions aggrieved the minority communities and were seen as clear acts of the state's identification and patronization of the dominant community at the cost of minorities.

By the mid-1970s, a full-blown insurgency had erupted in the CHT under the leadership of the United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (PCJSS), with its military wing, the Shanti Bahini (SB). It is alleged that the Shanti Bahini was actively aided by the Indian government. However, during Mujib era PCJSS did not have violent acts against the government rather Manobendra Narayan Larma along with his fellows joined BAKSAL in 1975.

After the assassination of Bnagabandhu the pro-Pakistani government was established and the situation in CHT became deteriorated.

The crisis intensified during the emergency rule of Sheikh Mujib, who had banned all political parties other than his BAKSAL and the successive military that followed after his assassination in 1975. In 1977, the Shanti Bahini launched their first attack on a Bangladesh Army convoy. It is alleged that the Indian government helped the Shanti Bahini set up bases across the border from Bangladesh.

In 1979, during the tenure of General Ziaur Rahman, government rescinded restrictions against settling non-residents on CHT lands and also appreciated non-tribal people to reside there. The government declared that every new settler will be given 7.5 acres of land and a ration for unlimited time. As there was no land left for the new settlers for cultivation, the tribals claim, the settlers grabbed their lands by force with the help of the then government.

After the assassination of President Zia, the new military President Ershad continued the policy of his predecessor. According to one estimate, approximately 400,000 Bengalis were settled in the CHT between 1980 and 1984.

The Shanti Bahini, from its formation in 1973, not only violently challenged the state but did so with the covert assistance of India, which, after its initial patronage of Bangladesh, had turned into its main enemy. The government adopted a counter-insurgency strategy, the Bengali settlement programme, resulted in large-scale land alienation of the Hill people, with far-reaching implications not only for the Hill people themselves, but also for relations between the Hill people and Bengalis. Whereas in 1947, the non-tribal people in CHT area were 3%, at the end of the military regime of Zia-Ershad non-tribal population raised up to 48.5%. (According to the census report of 1991)

The collapse of the military regime in Bangladesh in 1992 led to its replacement by the first civilian government under Begum Khaleda Zia. There were some illusions at the time that this would open up prospects for a legal jumma participation in the emerging bourgeois democratic regime. This changing political climate contributed to persuading the Shanti Bahini to declare a unilateral ceasefire in August 1992, although some have speculated that a more likely cause was the intense international pressure upon the new government to engage in talks with the PCJSS (United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts).

With 85,000 troops in the region, regular fighting despite the supposed ceasefire with the Shanti Bahini, continued maltreatment and killing of jumma, including three massacres after the advent of 'civilian' rule, one of them, at Logang village, Khagrachari, in April

1992, the largest single massacre of all, military, if not government intransigence against compromise has remained the rule. In fact, the main superficial difference compared with previous years has been the Bangladesh military operation of its anti-jumma campaign behind proxy bodies. One of these is the Parbatya Gana Parishad, the Hill Tracts People's Council, a militant organisation for defending Bengali settlers, largely recruited from membership of the fundamentalist Jamat-e-Islami party. Another is the so-called Tiger Force, a militia composed of Marma and Mru tribesmen, whose traditional rivalries with the Chakma, and hence Chakma dominated PCJSS, are clearly exploitable. Not that it has stopped the military intervening on its own account. On the very day of the June 1996 elections, Kalpana Chakma, the young and popular organising secretary of the CHT Women's Federation, was abducted from her home in Baghaichari by military personnel. Although the government promised an enquiry, Kalpana Chakma has not been seen since.

When Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League became Prime Minister in 1996, she promised to end the insurgency. After seven rounds of talks, the PCJSS and the government signed a peace accord in December 1997 to end the two-decade long rebellion that had cost over 25,000 lives.

The agreement provided some measure of autonomy for the Chittagong tribes. The region is governed by a local council, the majority of whose members are tribals. The current chairman of the council is the leader of the PCJSS. The council's responsibilities include maintaining public administration, law and order and promoting development. The Shanti Bahini was disbanded in 1998 and the PCJSS subsequently became a political party. Some PCJSS members believe that the peace agreement does not adequately address issues such as the status of the Bengali settlers.

In July 2009 Bangladesh ordered troops to pull out from the CHT region 12 years after signing a peace deal. The Defence Ministry of Bangladesh in a statement promised withdrawal of troops would start immediately and all the 35 camps under three infantry brigades would be completely wound up by the end of September 2009.

### **1.1.3 The Death Toll of Bangladesh Army during insurgency in CHT Area**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Army</b>	<b>BDR</b>	<b>Armed Police</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Ansar</b>	<b>VDP</b>	<b>Total Death</b>
Upto 1979	57	11	11	27	-	-	106
1980	24	22	-	02	-	-	48
1981	03	-	-	02	01	-	06
1982	03	17	-	-	-	-	20
1983	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
1984	01	01	-	-	-	-	02
1985	01	02	-	-	-	-	03
1986	06	-	01	01	02	-	10
1987	08	12	04	-	01	-	25
1988	14	02	-	-	-	-	16
1989	24	05	03	-	02	-	38
1990	08	15	-	02	-	-	25
1991	09	04	-	02	01	-	16
1992	04	02	04	01	-	-	11
1993	02	-	-	-	-	-	02
1994	01	-	-	-	-	-	01
1995	01	-	-	-	-	-	01
1996	02	02	-	01	-	03	08
1997 upto 03 May	01	01	-	03	-	-	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>343</b>

### **9.4.4 Major Causes of Insurgency**

The initial demands of the tribal people of the Chittagong hill tracts area were:

- Autonomy for the CHT with its own legislature;
- Retention of the 1900 CHT Manual;
- Continuation of the offices of tribal chiefs;
- Provisions restricting the amendment of the CHT Manual and imposing a ban on the influx of non-tribal people into the CHT.

But the new born Bangladesh struggled for independence to recognize itself as a Bengali nation. So it is not easy to fulfill the demands of the tribal representatives as there were allegations against some of the tribal groups to act against the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971.

### **● Identity Crisis**

The government of Bangladesh, from the very beginning of its journey as a new nation, ignored the demanded nationality of the tribal people and wanted to merge them with the mainstream population. In the constitution, they were addressed as ethnic minority of Bengali nation. However, the leaders of the tribal people did not want to become Bengali. They formed militant groups to consolidate their power so that they could achieve autonomy within the hill tracts. The military government of Bangladesh also searched solutions in the insurgencies.

### **● Bengali settlement**

The military government of Bangladesh started a project of Bengali settlement in the hill tracts areas to reorganize the demographic structure to prevent any future threat of separatism might be posed by tribal people. As a result, the ratio of Bengali- hilly people was changing dramatically which caused dissatisfaction among the tribal groups. The tribal militants started insurgency to push back the Bengali settlers by creating horror among them. The government also launched insurgency against those militants to protect the settlers.

### **● Demand of Autonomy**

The tribal leaders wanted autonomy and own legislature. But the constitution does not permit the demand as Bangladesh is established as a unitary system of government. As their demand was rejected, they started to fight for autonomy through insurgency.

### **● Jhum Cultivation**

The new settlers started plough-cultivation in the hilly areas by clearing the jungles which posed a great threat to the age old Jhum cultivation in the hill tracts. Jhum cultivation is not a mere method of cultivation, it is a culture. This culture holds the distinct features of the tribal society. If the culture is destroyed, the age-old distinctions of the tribal culture will be abolished. Therefore, the tribal militants wanted to stop the plough-cultivation. They tried to evacuate the areas occupied by the settlers by insurgency.

### **9.5 Peace Accord(Dec. 1997)**

The Peace Accord signed between the Government of Bangladesh and Shanti Bahini in the CHT area on December 10, 1997 has been

regarded as the most successful event in the history of conflict resolution. It utterly ended more than three decades of insurgency and terrorism in the area. It proved that any conflict can be resolute by expanding honest procedures of conflicting parties.

#### **9.5.1 Background of Peace Accord (Dec. 1997)**

To find out a political solution of the problem in 1982, Ershad government formed a Liaison Committee headed by Upendra Lal Chakma. With the help of Liaison Committee, the first dialogue between the government of Bangladesh and PCJSS held on 1985. As a result, with two years of negotiation and talks with PCJSS, a National Committee (NC) was formed in 1987, headed by the then Planning Minister. The only outcome of the first dialogue was the recognition that the CHT problem was a political problem. At the time of second dialogue in 1987 with government of Bangladesh, PCJSS put forward five point demands. Remarkable portions of the five points are:

- i. Autonomy for CHT with its legislature and recognition of Jumma nation's right of self determination which included provincial status to CHT and naming CHT as Jummaland;
- ii. Retention of the Regulation of 1900 and a constitutional provision for restricting amendment of this regulation;
- iii. Removal of non-tribal who had entered the CHT since August 17, 1947;
- iv. Creation of circumstances favorable for peaceful and political resolution of the CHT problems; and
- v. Unconditional release of all Jumma people who were given punishment, under trial and in custody of armed forces.

By these five points, they demanded almost complete control over all subjects except defense, foreign affairs, currency and heavy industries. They also demanded withdrawal of military camps from CHTs areas. Later, Upendra Lal Chakma, head of the Liaison Committee presented seven-point demands without consulting with NC, which may be considered as complimentary for the five-point demands of PCJSS. As the reaction of these five-points, government of Bangladesh clearly stated that these demands did not fit in with the Unitary Constitutional System of Bangladesh and hence unacceptable. To give out a solution of this unresolved problem, NC

presented a nine-point proposal. Some important points of this proposal were:

- i. Identification of CHT districts as a special area;
- ii. Establishment of directly elected strong local bodies named ‘Zila Parishad’ in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban;
- iii. Division of subjects among national government, District Level and Local level government institutions;
- iv. Re-delimitation of boundaries for the unification of boundaries of districts and Tribal Circles etc. The outcome of this 9- point was remarkable in the solution process of the problem.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between NC and 48 tribal leaders of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban between August 29 and October 18 of 1988. Driving with fear of alienation from the own people in December 1988, PCJSS came out with a modified proposal for ‘regional autonomy’ in place of ‘provincial autonomy’. In February of 1989, the dialogue between NC and PCJSS could not be held because of failure of the PCJSS to consider the nine points. To implement the nine-point program and to make the hill people not PCJSS more aware about their own rights of self determination, three Hill District Local Government Council Bills were passed between February 26 and 28 of 1989. On 25 June 1989, election to the LGCs held peacefully instead of SB’s torturing, killing and terrorist activities in the bordering areas. This election weakened the support of PCJSS in their own people. That’s why when the tenure of LGCs expired no more election was held for the opposition of SB and PCJSS postponed the election to the LGCs for holding talks between the NC and the PCJSS. In 1990, Ershad government was overthrown by mass uprising and peace negotiations were re-initiated after the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991. The then government of Khaleda Zia, after her visit from India formed a Parliamentary Committee (PC) headed by the then Communication Minister Col. (Rtd) Oli Ahmed in July to solve the problem through constitutional means. The regime also formed a parliamentary Sub-Committee (SC) led by Rashed Khan Menon. On November 5, 1992, the PC for the first time met with PCJSS led by Shantu Larma. Both parties reached on an agreement of cease-fire

which was extended routinely every three months rounds from August 1, 1992,(about thirty-five times) until December 1997. In December 1992, at the time second round of talks with PC, the PCJSS revised its charter and modified its demands which consist of five points:

- i. Regional autonomy for the CHT with a regional council recognized by the Constitution;
- ii. Restoration of land rights to the tribal people with a ban on allocation of land to the Bengalis from the plains;
- iii. Withdrawal of the military from the CHT;
- iv. Constitutional recognition of ethnic minorities and guarantee that their rights would not be altered without their consent; and
- iv. Withdrawal of Bengalis settled in the Hills since August 17, 1947.

The PCJSS also demanded that the Constitutional provision to recognize the CHT as a special administrative unit with regional autonomy. The PC did not accept some of the demands, but the negotiations continued in the spirit of compromise. The Oli Ahmed committee met with the SB seven times. However, there were concerns and criticisms about composition of the committee, this Committee made significant progress in political dialogue and confidence building; some kind of mutual respect and understanding was seen to be developing from the process. However, the Khaleda Zia government followed delay-dealing process to hang the issue.

After the ending of Khaleda Zia regime in 1996, the newly-elected Awami League government set up a National Committee (NC) on CHT in October 1996 to solve the long-lasting conflict, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, the then chief whip played role of the convener of the NC. The first meeting between the 12 member committee and the PCJSS led by J. B. Larma was held in December of that year and followed by subsequent meetings through December 1997. After the seven rounds of talks on December 2, 1997, the historic Peace Treaty namely CHT Peace Accord, was signed between the NC and the PCJSS with the presence of the then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,

which ended twenty two years old problem of misunderstanding and mistrust.

### **9.5.2 Salient Features of Peace Accord**

The agreement recognised the distinct ethnicity and special status of the tribes and indigenous peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and established a Regional Council consisting of the local government councils of the three districts of the Hill Tracts. The council was to be composed by men and women from the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Murang and Tanchangya tribes; the delegates would be elected by the district councils of the Hill Tracts. Elected for a five-year term, the council would have authority and responsibility to maintain law and order, social justice and tribal laws, oversee general administration, coordinate disaster relief and management, issue licenses for heavy industries and oversee other development projects. The central government would be required to consult the regional councils over all issues concerning the Hill Tracts.

The agreement also provided for the setting up of a central Ministry of Tribal Affairs to be headed by a person of tribal ethnicity to administer the affairs concerning the Hill Tracts. The agreement also laid out plans for the return of land to displaced natives and an elaborate land survey to be held in the Hill Tracts. However, this historical treaty consists of the following four main parts:

- i. Part A, namely “General”, recognizes the Chittagong Hill Tracts as a tribal inhabited region; forming of new rules and regulations according to law and establishment of an implementation committee to supervise the implementation of the Accord;
- ii. Part B, under the heading “Chittagong Hill Tracts Local Government Council/CHT Zila Parishad”, deals with legal amendments of the Acts relating to CHT to strengthen the existing powers of the Zila Parishad and to extend their jurisdiction to include new subjects;
- iii. Part C, titled “CHT regional Council”, includes formation of a regional council in coordination with three LGCs where chairperson and two thirds of the seats are to be reserved for tribal people; and
- iv. Part D, entitled with “Rehabilitation, General amnesty and other subjects”, addresses a wide range of issues, including the rehabilitation of the tribal refugees, granting of amnesty to the

members of PCJSS, establishment of land commission for land settlement etc.

### **9.5.3 Reactions of Peace Accord among the Tribal groups**

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord was signed on 2 December 1997 by the Government of Bangladesh and an indigenous political party, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti. The Accord officially ended a 25 year low-intensity guerrilla war, fought by indigenous peoples (comprising 11 ethnic groups) against the government for “the erosion of their autonomy, the denial of constitutional recognition and their “political, social and economic marginalization.”

However, during the surrender ceremony on 10 February 1998, Shanti Bahini, mostly from the Hill Peoples’ Council (HPC), Hill Students’ Council (HSC) and Hill Women’s Federation (HWF), openly demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the Accord and declared that they would continue the struggle for ‘full autonomy’. They waved black flags in the stadium where the ceremony was being held, chanted slogans and displayed banners denouncing the Peace Accord and the arms surrender. On 26 December 1998, the Jumma activists who had declared they would continue the struggle for ‘full autonomy’ launched a new political party, the United Peoples’ Democratic Front (UPDF). They did so during a two day conference organized jointly by the HPC, HSC and HWF, and attended by a few hundred Jummas. Even before the Peace Accord was signed, The Hill Watch Human Rights Forum denied the agreement and concluded that whilst the key issues; i.e. regional autonomy, withdrawal of the military and the settlers, guaranteed land rights for the Jummas and constitutional recognition of the Jumma people remained unresolved peace could not be restored in the CHT, and that as long as the main demands of the Jumma peoples were unfulfilled, no agreement would be acceptable to them. Not long after the signing of the Accord, first the HPC, HSC and later HWF split in two, one faction supporting the PCJSS and the Peace Accord, the other declaring that the Accord was inadequate and that they would continue the struggle for ‘full autonomy’. The students’ faction supporting the PCJSS now calls itself the Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Students’ Council (GCHTSC). After formation of the UPDF, The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) has received reports from both the JSS and the UPDF, accusing each other of attacks, death threats, kidnappings, killings, harboring unruly elements and drug addicts, and so on. Still

now, both of them are involved conflict with each other to some extents.

#### **9.5.4 Recent Developments in Chittagong Hill Tracts Area**

The present situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts is more developed than in 1997 but the situation still is not quite satisfactory. The ethnic minorities allege that the development does not reach every group equally, and several of them feel deprived. They claim that the government is continuously overlooking their internal situation because the conflict between Bengalis and indigenous peoples is often considered the major difficulty. They are anxious that if this is not resolved immediately, internal conflict between different groups in CHT may emerge. On the other hand, to improve the financial condition of tribal people, Bangladesh government has taken steps to address underlying issues. In this process the government has taken steps through the Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board (CHTDB) and its joint venture with UNICEF. One group working to resolve these issues is the Local Trust-Builders Network, a group of 149 volunteers promoting conflict resolution including teachers, traditional leaders, and members of the police force.

One key issue in CHT area is land ownership. There are provisions to resolve a range of disputes made in the 1997 peace deal. But still it is a matter of dispute between the tribal people and the Bengalis. To resolve the problem, in February 2016, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said,

The inhabitants of the hill tracts are the citizens of our country, our companions in ups and downs. It is our duty to end their misery, if there have any.

She also informed the nation that most of the provisions had been implemented. The scholars think that indigenous peoples also need to re-assess their own harmony as well as their relationship with Bengalis to protect the harmony of the entire country. They also think that indigenous people will also need to solidify their political status in their relations with Bengalis. Surprisingly they do not yet have a unified political platform. However, as Bangladesh continues its journey as an independent nation, it's Bengalee and indigenous peoples must be in harmony. They may have their own perceptions of the issues in CHT and elsewhere, but that must not be allowed to be a

hindrance to establishing cultural resonance, equality and harmony to lay the basis for peace.

