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IDENTITY AND COMPOSITE CULTURE : THE BENGAL CASE

Sushil Chaudhury*

The main thrust of the paper is to examine the evolution of a composite culture in Bengal, and to explain its nature and character, especially from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century which is the period when it evolved and flourished in the region. This exercise is significant even today as the legacy from the past is still vibrant in many parts of the country, Bangladesh or West Bengal. For instance, there was a news report in *The Statesman* of January 10, 2006 that at a place in rural Bengal, called Maynagar in Tamruk, about 90 kilometers west of Kolkata, a *pir's dargah* is looked after by a Hindu trustee and a fair organized by the authorities of a Radhagobinda temple include a Muslim as part of centuries-old tradition.¹ Such instances abound in many parts of Bengal even now and there is little doubt that this tradition comes down from several centuries earlier.

While talking about the evolution of a composite culture, it is pertinent to see how it was intertwined with the question of identity of Bengali Muslims. The Islamic revitalizing and purificatory movements in Bengal in the nineteenth century laid bare the roots of cleavage and dualism between Bengali Muslim's cultural position, caught between the opposite pulls of Bengal localism and Islamic extra-territoriality. The said new movements, combined with the changed social and political circumstances of Bengal under the British domination, sharpened the focus, as never before, on the "Islamic" identity of the Bengali believers, with the result that a massive and organized assault on the syncretistic tradition and on the cultural values and norms, necessary to sustain it, followed to which we shall turn later.

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1 *The Statesman*, 11 January 2006 (Calcutta edition).

But a question that crops up is how do we define ‘culture’? How do we distinguish it from ‘religion’? In fact it is very difficult to distinguish the two as they more often than not mingle together making it impossible to separate the one from the other. It is not just a theory but I learnt it from my personal experience. About five decades back I was travelling in the then Santal Parganas (now Jharkand), when I saw a group of Santals, who were Christians, sacrificing cocks at the altar of their popular/tribal god. When I asked them how could they do this when they are Christians, they answered back, “*aamra kestan hote pari, ta bole to nijer dhamma (dharma) bhulte parina*” (we may be Christians but how can we be oblivious of our ‘religion’?). This is rather quite instructive. Here ‘religion’ is nothing but a way of life as much as culture is, and the two mingle at some point – one cannot be separated from the other completely. It is in this perspective that I shall interpret religion and culture in the course of this discourse.

In his recent book, *Identity and Violence*, Amartya Sen defines identity as: ‘When interpersonal relations are seen in singular inter-group terms as amity or dialogue among civilizations or religious ethnicities, paying no attention to other group to which the same persons also belong (involving economic, social, political or other cultural connections), then much of importance in human life is altogether lost and individuals are put into little boxes.’ He holds that the divisions of human sapiens into religious or civilizational groups are artificial. These divisions are chimeras created by ruling elites or traders of death. They mess up our identities and dehumanize us. He means by identity “loyalty to various social, cultural, political, literary or similar groups formed on the basis” of what he calls ‘choice and reason’.

In this respect the question of the identity and culture of the Bengali Muslims, especially in the pre-modern time, becomes more pertinent. Islam spread in Bengal on a massive scale between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. But what was exceptional, however, was that among India’s interior provinces, it was only in Bengal that a majority of the indigenous population was converted to Islam. How and why did this happen needs to be explained from a historical perspective. The conventional theories regarding Islamization in India in general – that Islam was a ‘Religion of the Sword’ which stresses the role of military power in the diffusion of Islam in India; that it was a religion of ‘patronage’ which emphasizes that the conversion was due to the lure of

rewards from the Muslim rulers in various forms; that it was 'religion of social liberation' which postulates that Islam with its liberating message of social equality attracted the low caste and downtrodden Hindus who got converted to Islam en mass – are hardly tenable.

In fact, the rise of Islamic communities in Bengal was not corollary to, or simply a function of the expansion of, the Turkish arms. It was actually brought about by the twin processes of agrarian growth and 'colonization' in the eastern region of Bengal following the riverine movement in the delta. The emergence of Islam as a mass religion in East Bengal occurred in the context of other historical forces, among them the most important being the shift of the epicentre of agrarian civilization from the western delta to the eastern hinterland. In fact, a decisive moment was reached in the late sixteenth century when the river Ganges linked up with the *Padma*, as a consequence of which the Ganges's main discharge flowed directly into the heart of the eastern delta which now became very fertile and thus large forests grew in the lower regions of the eastern delta. . And thus, many of the poor peasants from other parts flocked to these areas which were being afforested and cultivated by a motley crowd of Islamic preachers like *pirs*, *gazis*, *sufis*, etc. - termed 'cultural mediators' in recent parlance. In the process they were ultimately, and almost unwittingly, converted to Islam. But this vast mass had their deep roots in Bengal countryside and was imbued with their traditional culture. As a result, unlike in other places, Bengal absorbed so much local culture and became so profoundly identified with Bengal's long-term process of agrarian expansion that in its formative years the cultivating class never seemed to have regarded Islam as alien.

In fact, one of the important factors that led to religious and cultural syncretism was that the Muslim conquerors had to live with the vanquished Hindus, and the former were actually surrounded by the latter. As a result, a state of perpetual hostility between the two was not possible. Centuries of contact between the two communities were bound to result in a mutual understanding, and a process of give and take. Moreover, many of the new converts to Islam could not break away from their Hindu past, and followed their old ways of life and culture side-by-side with the Islamic tenets most of which were alien to them. Thus the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, living together and having daily intercourses among themselves, evolved a popular religion and culture in

several parts of India, especially in Bengal where the Muslim population was more numerous than in other parts. Hence after the first shock of Muslim conquest was over, the two communities tried to find the ways and means to live side-by-side in harmony as friendly neighbours. This has been aptly put by Tarachand:²

The effort to seek a new life led to the development of a new culture which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslim. It was indeed a Hindu-Muslim culture. Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered, and the Muslim reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life.

Religious Syncretism

Though I said that it is almost impossible to distinguish between religion and culture, yet for the sake of convenience I shall try to analyze syncretism during the period under review in two aspects – first, syncretism in religion and secondly, in culture. It so happened in Bengal that the Islamic tenets were not fully absorbed by the new converts as they were still immersed in their old habits, beliefs, practices and ceremonies. In a way their conversion to Islam was not complete as they continued to practise their old ways of daily life, especially in the villages. Thus we find that in Bengal the fundamental concept of Islam was changed due to the Hindu influence. Here Prophet Muhammad was sometimes characterized as an *avatar* – an incarnation that was endowed with supernatural power. In fact, the Muslim theory of creation then prevalent in Bengal was an adaptation of the Hindu theory. A contemporary Muslim poet wrote, almost echoing the *Sunya Purana*:³

God emerged out of nothing; out of Divine emanation came into being the sun,
the moon, heaven and hell. It was followed by the creation of earth, air, water
and fire. At last Adam was created and sent to earth.

It is out of the mutual religious practices of the Hindus and Muslims, there developed some sort of a new religious sect called '*Kartabhaja Dharma*, in eighteenth century Bengal.⁴ Its founder Aule Chand (died 1769) preached his *Dharma* in Nadia district and had as his disciples both Hindus and Muslims. In

2 Tarachand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad 1936, p. 137.

3 Quoted in Khodkar Mahbulul Karim, *The Provinces of Bihar and Bengal under Shah Jahan*, Dacca 1974, p. 208.

4 Md. Shah Noorur Rahman, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in Mughal Bengal*, Calcutta 2001, p. 49.

this cult there was no distinction between high and low, or Hindus and Muslims. Significantly, no outward sign of adherence to the sect was necessary. A Hindu could retain his sacred thread and a Muslim need not shave on becoming a member of the sect.⁵ However it should be noted that two streams flowed side-by-side. One was the orthodox religion – both Hindu and Muslim; the other was popular religion which was more a way of life than strictly a so-called religion.

The Sufis also contributed to the rise of new popular religious sects and the fostering of amity and unity between the two communities. As Enamul Haq writes:⁶

In the lowly Khanaqahs of the Sufis and the humble *Astanahs* of dervishes, both the Hindus and Muslims used to meet together and exchange their views. Liberal views and fraternizing influence of the Sufis were daily drawing the people of two different religion closer and closer, and ultimately during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the two communities were greatly united together by the inalienable bond of the mutual toleration and fraternity.

The *Bauls* and *Sahajias* are the off-shoots of Sufism in Bengal, and they played an important role in Hindu-Muslim harmony. The *Bauls* and *Sahajias* were a kind of religious sects which combined the principles of Hinduism and Islam. One of the famous *Bauls* in Bengal was Lalon Fakir who used to say that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, and the only religion he believed in was humanism. In one of his songs, he preached that:⁷

Bhakter dware bandha aachen Sain
Hindu ki Jaban bole tar kacche jatir bichar nai.
Ek Chande hoi jagat aalo
Ek bije shob janma holo.

[God is ever present at the door of the devotee and He does not make any distinction of caste or creed, or a Hindu and a Muslim. As the world is lighted by the same moon, so also every living being is born out of the same Divine Spirit.]

The Pir cult in Bengal is another manifestation of the religious syncretism. The Pir worship was a form of joint worship of the Hindus and Muslims. The large settlement of foreign Muslims side-by-side with the Hindus and the newly converts (neo-phytes) enabled Islam to strike its roots deep into society. In this

⁵ Tarachand, *Influence of Islam*, pp. 219-20.

⁶ Enamul Haq, *A history of Sufism in Bengal*, Dacca 1975, p. 288.

⁷ S. M. Lutfar Rahman, *Lalon Shah: Jiban O Gan*, (in Bengali – Lalon Shah: His Life and Songs), Dhaka 1983, p. 113.

process the worship of local deities (gods and goddesses) contributed quite a bit. Garcin de Tassy observed in 1831 that the Pirs (Saints) were the

“substitutes for the Musalmans, in the place of the numerous gods of the Hindus. As amongst the saints venerated by the Musalmans, there were some personages who professed the faith of the *Vedas*, so several of the Musalman saints of India are venerated by the Hindus.⁸

That the Hindus in Medieval Bengal were devoted to the Pirs and regarded them as their own gods is absolutely clear from the such literary works like *Ghazi Vijay* and *Satyapir Vijay* of Faizullah (Muslim poet of 16th Century), *Ray-mangal*, *Shasti-mangal*, *Sitala-mangal* and *Kamala-mangal* (17th Century) of Krishna Das and *Dharma-mangal* of Ruparam. These sources clearly indicate that a large number of Hindus had a great veneration for the Pirs. Their tombs were visited by Hindus and Muslims alike.⁹ Thus a Muslim poet writes:¹⁰

Hindur devata hoila Musalmaner Pir
Dui kule loi puja hoiya jahir.

[The Pirs of the Muslims became the gods of the Hindus. They manifested themselves and were worshipped by both the communities.]

In fact Hindu popular literature and ballads like the various *Mangal Kavyas*, *Purba Banga Gitika*, *Maymansingh Gitika*, etc. had spaces earmarked for the Pirs and the places associated with them. In their compositions, some of the Muslim poets of the period first showed regard for the great personalities of Islam, and then to the Hindu deities. Thus we find poet Faizullah (19th century) wrote in his *Satya Pir Panchali*:¹¹

Selam karib aage Pir Niranjan
Muhammad Mustafa bondo aar Patanjan.
Sher Ali Fatema bondo ekida koriya
Hassan Hossain poida hailo jahar lagiya.

Sati Thakurani bondo aar jata Sati
Daibaki Rohini bondo Sachi Thakurani.
Jar garbhe Gorachand janmilo aapani
Gailo Faizullah kari satya pade mon.

8 Quoted in Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *Hindu-Muslim Relation in Medieval Bengal*, Delhi 1985, p. 67.

9 Ahmad Sharif, *Bangali O Bangla Sahitya*, Dhaka 1983, p. 829.

10 Abdul Qadir and Rezaul Karim, ed., *Kavya Malancha*, Calcutta 1945, p. 30.

11 Quoted in Ahmad Sharif, *Bangali O Bangla Sahitya*, p. 824.

[I shall first of all salute Pir Niranjana and then sing in praise of Muhammad Mustafa and Panjatan. After concentration I worship Sher Ali and Fatima for whom Hassan and Hossain were born. I worship the goddess Sati and other chaste women. I worship Daibaki, Rohini and mother Sachi who gave birth to Gorachand (Sri Chaitanya). Dedicated to truth, I, poet Faizullah, sing this.]

Cultural Syncretism

Though I shall be concentrating on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the syncretism in Bengali culture can actually be traced to a much earlier period, at least from the time of the Sultans. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, state-sponsored mosques built in native style proliferated in deltaic Bengal. It was during this period that the Muslim court lent vigorous support to Bengali language and literature. The Chinese traveller Ma Huan observed in the early fifteenth century that Bengali was “the language in universal use”¹². In fact, the court started patronizing Bengali literary works in a big way in the late fifteenth century. It was under the patronage of Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak (r. 1459-74) that Maladhar Basu wrote *Sri Krishna Vijaya*. Again *Manasa Vijaya* by Bipradas, *Padma-Purana* by Vijay Gupta and *Krishna-mangala* by Jasoraj Khan were composed during the time of Alauddin Husain Shah (r. 1493-1519) and Nasiruddin Nasarat Shah (r. 1519-32). It was during this period that Bijoy Pandit and Kabindra Parameswara translated portions of the *Mahabharata* from Sanskrit.¹³

It is evident from the observation of Sebastian Manrique who visited Bengal in 1629 that Bengal had already evolved a syncretic culture by the time the Mughals had established their authority there. He stated that some of the Muslim kings had been in the habit of sending for water from Ganga Sagar (a holy place where the river Ganges flows into the sea). During the ceremonies connected with their installations, these kings would wash themselves, like the previous Hindu sovereigns of Bengal, in that holy water.¹⁴ Thus the Bengal Sultans, especially of the restored Iliyas Shahi dynasty and its successors, evolved a stable, mainly secular, *modus vivendi* with Bengali society and culture in which the state systematically patronized the culture of the subject

12 Rockhill, “Notes on the Relations”, p.437, quoted in Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, OUP, Delhi 1994, p. 66.

13 Nihar Ranjan Ray, “Medieval Bengali Culture”, *Visa Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No.2, 1945, p. 54; Md. Enamul Haq, *Muslim Bengali Literature*, Karachi 1957, pp. 38-39.

14 Sebastian Manrique, *Travels of ...1629-1643*, Trans. E. Luard and H. Hosten, (Oxford: Hakluyt Society, 1927), Vol. 1, p. 77.

population.¹⁵ They yielded so much in their public architecture to the Bengali conceptions of form and medium that prompted Percy Brown to comment, “the country, originally possessed by the invaders, now possessed them”.¹⁶

Again it should be noted that with the coming in of the Mughals, there were fundamental changes not only in the region’s economic structures and its socio-political system but also in the cultural complexion, both at the court and in the countryside. As for example, Mughal officials in Bengal preferred *ayurvedic* medical therapy to the *yunani* medical system inherited by classical Islamic civilization. Thus we find that subadar Islam Khan, himself an Indian Muslim, asked for an Indian physician when he was in his death-bed.¹⁷ Again, when half of the body of the governor of Bihar was paralyzed because of an illness, Emperor Jahangir sent two Indian physicians for his treatment.¹⁸ Similarly when Mirza Nathan, the erstwhile Mughal general in Bengal, fell ill, his advisers sent for a *kabiraj* who successfully treated him by consulting the appropriate astrological signs and by administering a poisonous brew dissolved in lemon juice and ginger.¹⁹ Such reliance on *ayurvedic* treatment, even at the cost of neglecting the *yunani* system, brings to bold relief how thoroughly Indian values had penetrated into Mughal culture, thus underlining the cultural syncretism in Mughal Bengal by the early seventeenth century.

Further, the legends of pioneering *Pirs*, (who were mainly responsible for clearing the jungles and making the land useful for cultivation), which abound in the Bengali literature of the seventeenth century, underscore the process of cultural syncretism that had become a feature of Mughal Bengal. Krishram Das’s epic poem, *Ray-mangala*, written in 1686, is an illustration in point. The story here concerns the conflict between a tiger god named *Dakshin Ray* (sovereign deity of the Sunderban forests) and a Muslim called Bade Gazi Khan who represented a personified memory of the penetration of these same forests by Muslim pioneers. The encounter between the two, though initially hostile, was ultimately resolved in a compromise – *Dakshin Ray* would continue to exercise absolute authority over the whole of the Sunderbans (Lower Bengal) but people would have to show respect to Bade Gazi Khan by worshipping his

15 Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, pp. 69-70.

16 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture: Muslim Period*, 5th edition, Bombay 1968, p. 38.

17 Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i- Ghaibi*, Trans. M. I. Borah, Vol. 1, Gauhati 1936, p. 256.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 262.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24.

graveyard, marked by a symbol of *Dakhin Ray*'s head.²⁰ Mukundaram's Chandi-mangala can be regarded as a grand epic dramatizing the process of civilization-building in Bengal and particularly the push of agrarian civilization into formerly forested lands. Here Muslim pioneers were unambiguously associated with the clearing of forests. One Zafar Mian was said to be the leader of the Muslim work force numbering twenty two thousand. It was also said that these labourers chanted the name of the pir, quite possibly that of Zafar Mian himself.²¹ Though this poem cannot be taken as an eyewitness historical narrative, but it can be asserted nonetheless that the poet drew his theme from the culture of his own time which means that he was quite familiar with the theme of thousands of Muslims clearing the forests under the leadership of charismatic pirs.

Sheikh Jalauddin Tabrizi's, *Sekhsubhodaya*, like Mukundaram and Krishnaram Das's poems, belongs to *mangal-kavya* genre, a genre that typically glorified a particular deity and promised the deity's followers bounties in return for their devotion. However, the hero of the Sheikh's work was not a traditional Bengali deity but the Sheikh himself.²² But *Sekhsubhodaya* can be seen as revealing the folk process at work. Its story seeks to make sense of the gradual cultural shift from a Bengali Hindu world to a Bengali Muslim world. In part this was achieved by presenting the new in the guise of the familiar. Sheikh Tabrizi established an alien cult within a Hindu conceptual framework. The Sheikh gave the king "grace" which is nothing but *prasad*, the food that a Hindu deity gives to a devotee. His consecration of the mosque followed a ritual consistent with the consecration of a Hindu temple, and his patron deity, "Allah", although not identified with a Hindu deity, was given the generic name, *prasadapurusha* (Great Person).²³ Thus it can be said that in the midst of dramatic socio-economic changes occurring in Mughal Bengal, Islam creatively evolved into an ideology of "world-construction"— an ideology of forest-clearing and agrarian expansion. On the one hand, Islamic institutions proved sufficiently flexible to accommodate the non-Brahmonized religious culture already present

20 Asutosh Bhattacharya, "The Tiger Cult and Its Literature in Lower Bengal", in *Man in India*, Vol. 27, No.1, March 1947, pp. 49-50.

21 Mukundaram, *Kavikankan Chandi*, eds., Srikumar Bandyopadhyay and Biswapati Chaudhuri, Calcutta 1974; Richard M.Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, pp. 213-14.

22 Sukumar Sen, ed. and trans, *Sekhsubhodaya* of Halayuda Misra, Calcutta 1963.

23 Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, pp. 215-18.

in Bengal. On the other, the religious and cultural traditions already present in Mughal Bengal made accommodations with the amalgam of rites, rituals, and beliefs that were associated with the village mosques and shrines then proliferating in their midst. As Richard M. Eaton rightly observes: “In the process, Islamic and Bengali worldviews and cosmologies fused in dynamic and creative ways”.²⁴

There were also several Muslim poets in Mughal Bengal with Vaishnava inclinations, the most notable among them being Daulat Qazi and Alaol in the seventeenth century. Their works are significant indications of the religious and cultural syncretism in Mughal Bengal. In his poem *Sati Mayna* along with the adoration of Allah and Rasul, Daulat Qazi referred to Dwarka of Sri Krishna, stories of the Puranas, Hindu dresses and *kirtan*. It also bears the clear impress of Vaishnava lyrics. Alaol adopted a pure Vaishnava theme for his lyrics. He writes on Radha’s secret meeting with Krishna. Another Sufi Pir and Vaishnava poet, Syed Murtaza, says in his prayer allegorically:²⁵

Par karo par karo more naiya Kanai
 Kanai more par karare! (Dhun).
 Ghatar ghatial Kanai panther chaukidar
 Nayali jauban dimu kheyar pai par.

[Carry me across, carry me across, oh boatman Kanai, oh Kanai do thou ferry me across. Oh Kanai, thou art the custodian of the ferry ghat and the watchman of the path (of life). I offer my fresh youth as the ferry fare]

The poems of Muslim-Vaishnava poets clearly bring out the cultural dimension of the syncretism in Mughal Bengal. The poet Lal Mamud, though born in a Muslim family, was a dedicated devotee of Krishna. He says of himself:²⁶

Janma niya Musalmane banchita hobo Sricharane
 Aami mone bhabina ekbar.
 (Ebar) Lal Mamude hare Krishna naam korecche shar.

[Though born Muslim, I do not ever think that I shall be deprived of the sacred feet of Krishna. Now Lal Mamud has indeed accepted the name of Hare Krishna as his be-all and end-all.]

24 *Ibid.*, p. 267.

25 Quoted in Y. M. Bhattacharya, *Banglar Vaishnavabhavapanna Musalman Kabir padamanjusha*, Calcutta 1984, pp. 317.

26 *Ibid.* p. 250.

In another composition he says:²⁷

Hindu kimba hok Musalman
 Tomar pakshe sobai saman.
 Aapan santan jatir ki bichar!
 Bhakta sokal jatir shrestha Chandal ki Chamar.
 Keha tomari bole Kali, keha bole Banamali
 Keha Khoda Allah boli tomari dake saratsar.

[Whether a Hindu or a Muslim, it is all the same to you. Who bothers about the caste of one's own son? A bhakta (devotee) is the best of all castes whether he is a Chandal (low caste) or a Chamar (cobbler). Some call you Kali, some Banamali (lit. gardener, here Krishna) and others call you Khoda Allah; this is the secret (essence) of all secrets.]

The same sentiment reflecting the religious and cultural syncretism that was achieved in Mughal Bengal is to be found also in the various ballads of the *Purba Banga Gitika* and *Maimansingh Gitika*. In one of the ballads, it has been emphasized that:²⁸

Hendu (Hindu) aar Musalman eki pinder dari
 Keha bole Allah Rosul keha bole Hari.
 Bismilla aar Cchiribistu ekkei goan
 Dofak kori diye parava Ram Rahiman.

[The Hindus and Muslims are ropes of the same bundle; someone says Allah Rasul, someone says Hari; Bismillah and Sri Vishnu are the same; when they are made different, they are called Ram and Rahim]

In fact, in the corpus of medieval Bengali literature celebrating indigenous deities such as *manasa*, *chandi*, *satyapir*, *dharma*, *dakshin ray*, etc., one can see local cosmologies expanding in order to accommodate new superhuman beings introduced by foreign Muslims.²⁹ As we have seen in the *Manasa-mangala*, the conflict between *Dakshin Ray* or the tiger god and Bade Gazi Khan was resolved not by one defeating the other but by the elevation of Bade Gazi Khan to a revered saint and by peaceful co-existence of the two. The two, however, were not fused into a single religious personage but remained mutually distinct. The inclusion of Muslim alongside local divinities is also to

27 *Ibid.*

28 Quoted in Md. Shah Noorur Rahman, *Hindu-Muslim Relations*, p. 81.

29 M. R. Tarafdar, Husain Shahi Bengal, pp. 17-18, 164-66, 233-35; P. K. Maity, *Historical Studies in the Cult of the Goddess Manasa*, Calcutta 1966; Asutosh Bhattacharya, "The Tiger Cult...", pp. 49-56; Also see especially, Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*, Princeton 1983.

be found in the rich tradition of folk ballads of Bengal.³⁰ The invocation (*bandana*) in the ballad, *Nazim Dacoit*, a ballad of Chittagong district dating from the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, includes both indigenous and exogenous religio-cultural ideas. We see here the tenacity of the Bengali emphasis on divine power as manifested in female agency - – Mother Earth, Sita, Radha, etc. And it is significant that this emphasis is extended to include prominent females of Islamic history: special reverence is shown to Amina, the Prophet's mother and Fatima, his daughter. Thus it shows that themes wholly foreign to Bengal had also infiltrated into the religious and cultural universe of rural Bengal.

In some parts of Bengal, especially in the lower regions, this sort of inclusion crept in easily. The fishermen in the Sunderbans performed their *pujas* to the forest goddess *Bana Bibi* before putting their nets into the water as a ritual to protect them from harm. A small thatched bamboo hut was raised for this purpose, and a clay image of *Bana Bibi* seated on a tiger was placed in the hut. Flanking her on her right was an image of *Dakshin Ray*, depicted as a strong and stout man standing with a sword and behind him stood a bearded Muslim *fakir* known as *Ajmal* and behind *Dakshin Ray* lay the severed head and body of a young boy. The trio – a tiger deity, a soldier and a superhuman agent identified with Islam - have remained constant over the centuries, distinct from one another but yet included within a single cosmology.³¹

As a matter of fact we find identification of a similar type in the Bengal literature dating from the sixteenth century. Haji Muhammed,³² a sixteenth century poet, identified "Allah" with "Gosai" (Master), while another poet, Saiyid Murtaza,³³ identified the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, with "Jagat-janani" (mother of the world), and Saiyid Sultan³⁴ identified God of Adam, Abraham

30 As for example, "Nazim Dacoit", a ballad of Chittagong District dating from seventeenth or eighteenth century. See, D. C. Sen, *The Folk Literature of Bengal*, Calcutta 1920.

31 H. L. Sarkar, "Note on the Worship of the Deity Bon Bibi in the Sunderbans", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (1956), pp. 211-12; Asim Roy, *Islamic Syncretistic Traditions*, pp. 46, 53, 222, 239.

32 Haji Muhammed, *Nur Jamal*, in Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Traditions*, pp. 158, 162, 170-72.

33 Sayid Murtaza, *Yoga-Kalandar*, cited in Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Traditions*, pp. 175-77.

34 Saiyid Sultan, *Nabi Banksha*, cited in Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Traditions*, pp. 155, 163, 171.

and Moses with “Prabhu” (Lord) or more frequently with “Niranjan” (without qualities). Similarly, Ali Raja³⁵, the eighteenth century poet, identified Allah with Niranjan, Iswar (God), Jagat Iswar (God of the universe). Even when the forest pioneers were planting the institutional foundations of Islamic rituals, Bengali poets deepened the semantic meaning of these rituals by identifying the lore and even the superhuman agencies of an originally foreign creed with those of the local culture.³⁶ Another instance of cultural syncretism is to be found in the 18th century poet Bharatchandra. In his *Annadamangal*, he wrote:³⁷

Hindu Musalman adi jibjantu jato
Ishwar sabar ek nahi dui mat.
Puraner mat cchara Korane ki aacche
Bhabi dekho aage Hindu-Musalman pashe.

[There are no two opinions about the fact God is the same for the Hindus, Muslims and all human beings and animals alike. What is there in Koran except what is in the Puranas? Oh, all Hindus and Muslims, you all ponder over this!]

The reasons for poets to employ this mode of literary transmission are rather obvious. The rural masses of deltaic Bengal, mostly Muslims, were familiar with the Hindu epics. A sixteenth century poet wrote that “Muslims as well as Hindus in every home” would read the *Mahabharata*. Another poet observed that the Muslims moved to tears on hearing of Rama’s loss of Sita in the *Ramayana*.³⁸ In fact the masses in Bengal were fully conversant with the *Mangal-kavya* literature that extolled the grace, power and exploits of specifically folk deities like *Manasa* and *Chandi*. Hence it is natural that romantic tales from the Islamic tradition drew on this rich indigenous substratum of the popular religious culture. This is reflected in an eighteenth century Bengali version of the popular Iranian story of Joseph and Zulaikha where the imagery employed clearly reminds Radha’s passionate love for Krishna, the central theme of the Bengali Vaishnava devotional movement.³⁹

35 Ali Raja, *Jnana –sagara*, cited in Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Traditions*, pp. 185-86.

36 Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, p. 276.

37 Bharatchandra, *Annada Mangal* in *Bharatchandra Granthabli*, ed. Bajendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajani Kanta Das, 3rd edn. Calcutta 1369 B.S., p. 307.

38 Asim Roy, “The Social Factors in the Making of Bengali Islam”, *South Asia*, 3 (August 1973), p. 29.

39 Qazi Abdul Mannan, *The Emergence and Development of Dobhashi Literature in Bengal up to 1855*, Dacca 1966, p. 99, cited in Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*. pp. 277-78.

Similarly the authors of the Bengali Muslim literature (popularly known as *Muslim Bangla Sahitya*) consciously presented Islamic ideas in terms readily familiar to a rural population of nominal Muslims who were quite aware of the Bengali folk and Hindu religio-cultural traditions and ideas. A case in instance, like many others, is the composition by poet Saiyid Sultan who spares no details in endowing Eve with the attributes of a Bengali beauty. Here she (Eve) uses sandal powder, wraps her hair with flowers, wears black eye paste and a pearl necklace is draped around her neck. Adam was struck by the beauty of the red spot (*sindur*) on her forehead.⁴⁰ But in doing so the Bengali Muslim authors were faced with a dilemma. Though they knew that Arabic was the appropriate language for the transmission of Islamic ideas but they could not do so because their audience was not familiar with the language. Reflecting this, Abdul Nabi, a poet of the seventeenth century wrote:⁴¹

I am afraid in my heart lest God should be annoyed with me for having rendered Islamic scriptures in Bengali. But I put aside my fear and firmly resolve to *write for the good of common people*.

A similar concern was voiced by Saiyid Sultan who lamented that nobody has transmitted the Islamic ideas in local vernacular and so nobody has understood any of the discourses of his own religion. So he resolved to disseminate these ideas in Bengali.⁴² But the rural masses do not appear to have been troubled by such tensions or even to have noticed them.

It is also interesting to note that the gender division of labour and female seclusion, long entrenched in Islamic hinterlands, had still not appeared among the Muslims in the countryside as this was contrary to socio-cultural traditions of Bengal. A ballad, *Dewana Madina*, composed by Mansur Baiyeoti around 1700 and set in southern Sylhet, dwells on a Muslim peasant woman's lament for her deceased husband where she stated with tears in her eyes:⁴³

“Oh Allah, what is this that you have written in my forehead? ...In the good month of November, we both used to reap the autumnal paddy in a hurry lest it should be spoilt by flood or hailstorm. My dear husband used to bring home the

40 Saiyid Sultan, *Nabi Banksha*, Vol. 1, p. 115, cited in Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, p. 278.

41 Abdul Nabi, *Vijay-Hamza*, quoted in Muhammed Enamul Huq, *Muslim Bangla Sahitya*, 2nd edn., Dacca 1965, pp. 214-15; emphasis added.

42 Ahmed Sharif, *Saiyid Sultan: Tar Granthabali o tar Jug*, Dhaka 1972, p. 203.

43 D. C. Sen., trans. and ed., *Eastern Bengal Ballads*, Vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 307-08, quoted in Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, pp. 299-300.

paddy and I spread them in the sun. Then we both sat down to husk the rice. ... In December when our fields will be covered with green crops, my duty was to keep watch over them with care. I used to fill his *hooka* with water and prepare the tobacco – with this in hand I lay waiting, looking towards the path, expecting him! ... When my dear husband made the fields soft and muddy with water for transplanting of the new rice-plants, I used to cook rice and await his return home. When he busied himself in the fields for this purpose, I handed the green plants over to him for replanting We reaped the *shali* crops together in great haste and with great care. How happy we were when after the day's work we retired to rest in our home.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of cultural syncretism is to be discerned in the history of the cult of *Satya Pir*. The early literature composed in praise of *Satya Pir* depicts a folk society that freely assimilated a variety of beliefs and practices that were “in the air” in medieval Bengal’s socio-religious and cultural environment. Several compositions devoted to the cult identify *Satya Pir* in various ways. Thus in *Satya Pir*, composed by Sankacharya, *Satya Pir* is said to be the son of one of the daughters of Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah and hence a Muslim while in Krishnahari Das’s composition, which begins with invocations of Allah and the stories of the Prophet, as born of the goddess Chandbibi. But some other texts identify *Satya Pir* with the divinity of *Satya Narain* who represents a form of Brahmanic God, Vishnu.⁴⁴

Generally scholars interpret *Satya Pir* cult in terms of a synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. The famous folklorist D. C. Sen wrote: “When two communities mixed so closely, and was so greatly influenced by one another, the result was that a common god was called into existence, worshipped by the Hindus and Muslims alike.”⁴⁵ That the two communities in Mughal Bengal followed each other’s socio-cultural and religious traditions is apparent also from the observations of the contemporary European travellers. Thus we see Pyrard de Laval wrote in 1607: “Mahometans as well as Gentiles deem the water [of the Ganges] to be blessed and to wash away all offences, just as we regard confession”.⁴⁶ In this context Richard M. Eaton’s observation seems to be quite appropriate.⁴⁷

44 D. C. Sen, *The Folk Literature of Bengal*, reprint, Delhi 1985, pp. 99-102.

45 D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta 1954, p. 677.

46 Pyrard de Laval, *The Voyages of ...*, ed. and Trans. By Albert Gray, reprint, New York, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 336.

47 Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, p. 281.

Instead of visualizing two separate and self-contained social groups, Hindus and Muslims, participating in rites in which each steeped its “natural” communal boundaries, one may see instead a single undifferentiated mass of Bengali villagers who, in their ongoing struggle with life’s usual tribulations, unsystematically picked and chose from an array of reputed instruments – a holy man here, a holy river there – in order to tap super human power.

In fact, what Dusan Zbavitel wrote of the ballads of Mymensingh district, *Maimansingh Gitika*, - that they were “neither products of Hindu or Muslim culture, but of a single Bengali folk culture – may be justly said of the medieval Bengali folk culture and religion.”⁴⁸

That the composite culture and religious harmony between the two communities, especially among the masses in the rural areas, was a salient feature of pre-modern Bengal, and actually reached a high watermark in the eighteenth century is very much evident from literary sources, despite the discordant notes on this aspect from several historians. It was S. C. Hill who first propounded the thesis that in the mid-eighteenth century there was a vertical division in Bengali society on communal lines - between the Hindus and Muslims. He asserted that the majority Hindus, oppressed by the Muslim rulers, were eager to get rid of the Muslim nawab and welcome the British as their saviours.⁴⁹ As if taking the cue from him, Brijen K. Gupta upholds the theory of schism in Bengali society in the mid-eighteenth century.⁵⁰ It is strange that the thesis of a communal divide has held ground for so long despite the fact that most of the high officers and zaminders during Alivardi’s time – and for that matter during Sirajuddaullah’s time too - were Hindus.⁵¹

Had there really been any serious rift in the society in the mid-eighteenth century Bengal and anything contrary to the religious and cultural syncretism that evolved and flourished in medieval Bengal, it would have definitely been reflected in the contemporary vernacular literature. But this sort of evidence is conspicuous by their absence in the sources. On the contrary the fact that

48 Dusan Zbavitel, *Bengali Folk Ballads from Mymensingh and the Problem of their Authenticity*, Calcutta 1963, p. 133, cited in Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, p. 281.

49 S. C. Hill, *Bengal in 1756-1757*, Vol. 1, London, 1905, p. xxiii; *Three Frenchmen in Bengal*, London 1905, p. 120

50 Brijen K. Gupta, *Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company, 1756-57*, Leiden, 1962, p. 41. Some such hints, though rather very subtle, is to be found even in Chris Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge 1987.

51 Sushil Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire – Plassey Revolution of 1757*, New Delhi 2000, pp. 64-65.

emerges from a critical study of the vernacular literature of the period is that Bengali Hindus and Muslims, particularly in the lower stratum of the society, who lived together for centuries in peace and harmony, and who evolved and nourished a composite culture, maintained the same ethos even in the mid-eighteenth century. Actually the process of assimilation and fusion of the two religion and culture, i.e. the religious and cultural syncretism which started much earlier, not only continued but reached the high watermark in the mid-eighteenth century. This is exemplified by numerous evidence to be found in Bengali literature. In Kshemananda's *Manasa-mangala*, written in the latter part of the seventeenth century, a passage tells us that in the steel chamber prepared for Lakshminder, the hero, a Hindu, a copy of the Quran was kept along with charms to avert the wrath of *Manasa*, the goddess of snakes.⁵² Again in a poem called *Behula Sundar*, written about the same period, we find the Brahmins consulting the Quran and advising a Hindu merchant to recite the name of Allah so that he may be blessed with a son. The same poem tells us that the Brahmins consulted the Koran for an auspicious day for the hero's journey abroad. The hero, the son of an orthodox Hindu merchant, obeyed the injunctions 'as if they were laid in the Vedas' and started on his journey praying to Allah for his safety.⁵³

In fact cultural syncretism reached its culmination around the mid-eighteenth century. This is evident from the fact that even Prince Azim-us-Shan, Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's grandson and the *subadar* of Bengal in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century took part in Holi festival in Dhaka. Nawab Sahamat Jung (Nawazish Muhammed Khan), along with Saulat Jung who came from Patna, celebrated Holi for seven days in the garden of the former's palace, Motijheel, in Murshidabad.⁵⁴ Nawab Sirajuddaula too hurried to Murshidabad after the treaty of Alinagar in February 1757 to participate in the Holi festival in his palace.⁵⁵ It is significant that by this time Holi did not remain exclusively a Hindu festival, it became an essential part of the composite culture that evolved in Bengal in the earlier centuries. In the villages predominated by the Shia Muslims, especially in Bengal and Bihar, the *Tazia*

52 D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 288, 793.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 319, 793.

54 Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnamah*, in J. N. Sarkar, trans. and ed., *Bengal Nawabs*, Calcutta 1952, p. 49.

55 Karam Ali, *Muzaffarnamah*, in J. N. Sarkar, trans. and ed., *Bengal Nawabs*, p. 72.

processions were conducted with special splendour, outward show and grief. In the early nineteenth century Buchanan found that of the 1400 *Tazia* processions of Patna and Bihar Sharif area, as many as 600 were conducted by the Hindus.⁵⁶ There is evidence that even as late as the early nineteenth century, Muslim villagers in Bengal joined their fellow Hindus not only in the *Durga Puja* celebrations, but also worshipped Krishna and Sitala (the goddess of small pox). Even in the twentieth century, some Muslims in Rajshahi district (now in Bangladesh) specialized in composing songs on the occasion of the immersion of *Manasa* (goddess of snakes), while other Muslims wrote syncretic hymns in honour of Siva-Parvati (Durga) and elsewhere sang hymns to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.⁵⁷

Indeed it was common in the eighteenth century for Muslims to offer *puja* at Hindu temples and for Hindus to offer *sinni* at Muhammedan shrines.⁵⁸ It was during this period that the worship of the *Satya Pir*, by both Hindus and Muslims, became a common feature and an integral part of Bengali life, especially in the rural areas.⁵⁹ The poet Bharatchandra's poem, *Satyapirer Katha* bears ample testimony to this phenomenon.⁶⁰ It is said in *Shamser Gazir Punthi*, written about the middle of the eighteenth century, that a Hindu goddess appeared twice before the Gazi in his dream, and in obedience to her behest, he worshipped her the next morning, with the help of Brahmins and according to prescribed rites.

It is also to be noted that in social and religious matters, the opinion and testimony of the Muslims were sought by the Hindus. A Bengali document, dated 1732, which marked the victory of the *sahajiya* cult over the orthodox Vaishnava cult, had a few Muhammedan signatories as witnesses.⁶¹ All this only signifies that in day to day life the two communities had lived side by side for centuries in harmony and mutual attachment which led to religious and cultural syncretism in the Mughal period. In an interesting essay, Edward C.

56 Quoted in Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, "Mughal Cultural Heritage" in *History of Bangladesh, 1704-1971*, Vol. III, *Social and Cultural History*.

57 D. C. Sen, *History of Bengal Language and Literature*, pp. 368, 793, 796-98.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 793.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 396-97.

60 Bharat Chandra, "Satyapirer Katha", in *Bharat Chandra Rachanabali*, Calcutta 1963.

61 S. R. Mitra, *Types of Early Bengali Prose*, pp. 135-38; *Sahitya Parishad Patrika*, Calcutta, B.S. 1308, pp. 8-10.

Dimmock, Jr., observed that a reading of the medieval Bengali literature from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century gives little indication of any deep-rooted antagonism between the two communities.⁶² The mutual tolerance for each other's faith which is an aspect of the composite culture that evolved in Bengal is typically reflected in a poem, *Satyapir*, written by Faizullah, where the poet laid down that what Muslims call Allah is Hari (God) to Hindus.⁶³ This is nothing but a manifestation of the cultural syncretism that became a significant feature of Bengali life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Caught between the pulls of “Bengal Localism” and “Islamic Extra-territoriality”

It was in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Bengali Muslims experienced that the socio-territorial identity plays a crucial role in defining and redefining the parameters of a community. They also felt the usefulness of trying to identify a fixed criterion for a definition of the cultural boundaries of such a community: a Bengali Muslim may have seen himself primarily as a ‘Muslim’ the other day, as a ‘Bengali’ yesterday, and a ‘Bengali Muslim’ today, depending on objective conditions but on none of these occasions did his thoughts and his idea of destiny become separated from his territorial identity. His entire personality bears marks of this socio-territorial imprint. The songs he sings, the music he plays, the poems he composes, the literature he produces, his daily life, marriage rituals, dietary habits, are all clearly linked to the territory of his birth⁶⁴. As Amartya Sen asserts: ‘A Bangladeshi Muslim is not only a Muslim but also a Bengali and a Bangladeshi is typically quite proud of the Bengali language, literature, and music.’ As such, attempts to forge closer links to an Arab or Persian dream could scarcely distance him from his roots.

But the language controversy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a hard reality. The pro-Bengali group regarded Bengali both as their mother tongue and as the national language of Bengal. Among the opponents of this group was a small Urdu-speaking *ashraf* (who claimed descent from the Prophet's family) who for a considerable period of time kept arguing that, as Urdu was spoken by majority of Muslims of the Indian sub-continent and

62 Edward C. Dimmock, Jr., “Hinduism and Islam in Medieval Bengal”, in Rachel van M. Baumer, eds., *Aspects of Bengali History and Society*, Honolulu 1975, p. 2.

63 Ahmed Sharif, *Madhyajuger Sahitye Samaj O Sanskrit Rup*, Dhaka 1977, p. 423.

64 Rafiuddin Ahmed, *Understanding the Bengal Muslims*, pp. 3-4.

Bengali was Hinduised by Sanskrit *pundits*, it was in the interest of Muslim solidarity that Bengali Muslims should also speak Urdu and regard it as their mother tongue. This view was obviously rejected by an overwhelming majority of the Bengali Muslims, including some members of Urdu-speaking group. They accepted Bengali as their national language in the limited sense of territorial nationalism by arguing that there was no contradiction between territorial identity and Islam. By the turn of the nineteenth century, pro-Bengali views were being vigorously expressed. In the 1880s and early 1900s, the *Mihir-o-Sudhakar*⁶⁵, gave solemn calls to Bengali Muslims to regard Bengali as their mother tongue and censure those who looked down upon it. In 1903 the journal *Navanur* asked: ‘What else could be the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims, except Bengali?’ It asserted that those who wanted to make Urdu the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims were attempting the impossible.

Bengali Muslim intellectuals also joined the movement in great numbers. In 1905 Ekinuddin Ahmad appealed to Bengali Muslims to cultivate Bengali in order to build up their ‘national’ life. In 1909 the newspaper *Sanjibani* wrote that Bengali was Islamised in Bengal by infusing Arabic and Persian words into it, and this Bengali was the mother tongue of Bengali Muslims. In 1915, Khademul Islam Bangabasi condemned the scornful attitude of a section of Muslims towards Bengali and pointed out that such Muslims only insulted their ‘Mother and Motherland’. Again, in an article in 1916 in the *Al Islam*, Abdul Malek Chaudhury ridiculed those Muslims who slept in thatched houses in the mango groves or bamboo bushes of Sylhet [now in Bangladesh] but dreamt of Baghdad, Bukhara, Kabul, Kandahar, Iran and Turkey. He argued that regardless of whether their forefathers came from West Asian countries, or originated from local Hindus, Bengali alone was their mother tongue.

In fact, pro-Bengali views continued to be repeatedly asserted by many eminent Muslim writers throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Maniruzzaman Islamabadi argued that Urdu was neither acceptable to the Bengali Muslims as their mother tongue, nor was it possible to reject it. Urdu could be cultivated as an additional language. Syed Emdad Ali advised the Muslims to regard Bengali as their mother tongue. He regretted the tendency of some Muslims to treat Urdu as their mother tongue. Abdul Karim Sahitya

65 *Mihir-o-Sudhakar*, Report on the Indian Newspaper and Periodicals, selected issues, 1880s & 1890s.

Visharad (1896-1953) asserted that without due regard to the predominant language of the land, no country could prosper. Another prominent writer, Kaikobad, wrote that the primary need of the Bengali Muslims was to build up Muslim 'national' life through the cultivation of Bengali because Bengali was not only their mother tongue, but also the language of the land of their birth.

As a result of the above literary and intellectual movement, the supporters of Urdu as the language of the Bengali Muslims gradually realized the futility of their efforts. Thus Arabic continued to be regarded as the sacred language of the Koran, alongside Bengali as the mother tongue. But the urge to restore Bengali to its proper status and to use it as an active language outweighed all other literary concerns. A sort of a settlement was eventually reached to retain Arabic and Persian words that had crept into Bengali as spoken by Bengali Muslims. However, in the process of linguistic change, as disputes expressed in the literature, the Muslim sense of community was being reinforced, redefined and extended.

But at the same time, the Bengali Muslim exercised his differences with "others" at different times in different ways, which dictated his choices of symbols. During the Khilafat movement which spread in India as a national movement in the early twentieth century, following the abolition of the Islamic Caliphate by Mustafa Kamal of Turkey, the Bengali/Indian Muslims were in a dilemma. One important group of Bengali Muslims was greatly attached to a collective Muslim identity with a Pan-Islamic bias, rather than to an Indian or Bengali identity. Such a basis for explanation of identity often confused the Bengali Muslims. They hesitated to demonstrate their territorial identity clearly. Muslim Bengali identity was thus caught between the pulls of collective Muslim identity with its extra-territorial characteristics, and the geographical or territorial Bengali identity. However, the advocates of collective Muslim identity maintained that in the 1920s the Indian nation was in the course of formation and thus India was then a nation of different races and communities. But many could not accept unhesitatingly the political formula of a section of Indians that 'We are Indians first, and Hindus and Muslims next'. They argued that there was no contradiction in being a Muslim and a Bengali, that Islam was not incompatible with patriotism. This argument that there is no conflict between one's religious and territorial identities had been forcefully presented by following assertion of a Bengali Muslim intellectual, Syed Badraddoja:

We are Muslims by virtue of the religion we profess, Indians because of geographical unit to which we belong, Bengalis because of the province that had given us our birth. Islam is not inconsistent with nationalism or patriotism. It is not in any way incompatible with the noblest urge for freedom and liberty, or with other genuine aspirations of human life.

The protagonists of Bengali Muslim identity were not prepared to accept the unity of Indian Muslims or the Islamic world in the name of religion, though the cry of 'Islam in danger' was raised. A small group among them supported the abolition of the Caliphate by Mustafa Kamal, and argued that it was under the command of the 'thick-headed' *mullahs* that the modern Muslim dreamt of a Pan-Islamic state. A prominent Bengali poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, expressed his indignation against what he considered to be the extra-territorial loyalty of the hypocritical *mullahs* towards a decadent Caliphate. He wrote in 1922:

Kamal, even though a Muslim, realized that neither Khilafat [Caliphate] nor the country could be saved by keeping beards, by eating beef, or by observing *roza* [fasting]. Otherwise, he would, just like our *liungi*-clad *mullahs*, have been constantly performing *namaz* turning his face towards the Kaba Such religious hypocrisy cannot save them.

Another Bengali intellectual, Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894-1940) argued, as he explicitly did in his address to a young Muslim audience in Faridpur in 1927,⁶⁶ that the Bengali Muslim was a human being first by the right of his birth, then a Bengali by being made of the soil of Bengal, and then a Muslim – a Bengali Muslim last. He asserted that one did not need to be a Muslim first by being blind to the requirements of the time and one's own country. He even went to the extent to suggest that it was unnecessary to go to Mecca to prove oneself a Muslim. One could be a Muslim living in a thatched cottage in a Bengal village in the midst of one's relatives and neighbours.

Some of the above Bengali intellectuals did not stop there. They formed a group called Muslim Sahitya Samaj [Muslim Literary Society] in Dhaka in 1926 and the *Sikha* group (named after its mouthpiece *Sikha*). They launched a movement known as the *buddhir mukti andolan* (movement for the emancipation of the intellect). They argued that the observance of the *parda* system, the prohibition of the practice of realizing interest on capital, and the objection to the culture of fine arts were 'obstacles' to the freedom of thought and activities beneficial to the Muslim society. They believed there was no fixed road to the progress of

66 Wadud, "Abhibhashan" in *Naba Parjay* 2, p. 35.

mankind. The Muslims should, therefore, think afresh rationally. Their view of Bengali identity was thus associated with more radical modernist approaches which dogmatic Muslims were not prepared or educated to swallow. Orthodox Muslims launched a strong offensive against the group through the press and other platforms. The members of the liberal intellectual group were almost ostracized. As a result, by 1935 the leading figures of the group had fallen silent. The *Samaj* became defunct, and the *Sikha* had ceased publication. They were silenced by the emergence of the Muslim League as a powerful factor in Indian politics and the *Praja*-League alliance in 1937.

However in 1947, during the partition days, the Bengali Muslim tended to distinguish himself more from his Bengali Hindu neighbour than any other, and emphasized the Islamic content of his identity. But this definition was somewhat modified during the 1969-71 when language became a powerful political symbol, primarily in response to domination by the Urdu-speaking Pakistani elite. It would however be too much to suggest that on any of these occasions, the Bengali Muslim had either ceased to be a Bengali or had rejected his identification with Islam. Thus it seems, the socio-territorial pull continued to exert a powerful impact on him. This dual pull is often reflected in his continued hesitation to define the cultural boundaries of his identity in specific terms: "Am I a Muslim first or a Bengali" he continues to ask himself.

As a matter of fact, this dichotomy between a Bengali and a Muslim identity has been continuing to persist for a long time from the early modern era. The Muslim masses living in the countryside were so fragmented from their upper class co-religionists (the *ashraf* and the orthodox *ulema*) that the notion a 'community' hardly existed. In fact this did not develop until the late nineteenth century. Till then, there was little organized effort, if any, to articulate a sense of community identity among these disparate groups; nor were any institutional links forged. The real problem was how to integrate the masses of converts with their own inherited ideas, traditions and practices within the framework of a single Muslim community. It was not easy but the religious preachers in medieval Bengal – the *gazis*, *pirs* who are now termed 'cultural mediators'⁶⁷ – adopted a policy of compromise and concession in an effort to propagate the Islamic message. They incorporated some of the local cultural idioms and symbols to popularize Islamic themes among the Muslims of rural Bengal.

⁶⁷ Asim Roy, *Islamic Syncretistic Tradition*, p. xii; chap. 2.

There was hardly any alternative: while not compromising the identity of Islam as a religion, what was considered an unchangeable and standardized system of beliefs and rituals, had to be adjusted to the realities of life in pre-modern deltaic Bengal.

As a matter of fact, early efforts by medieval Bengali writers to transmit Islamic religious ideas and cultural symbols suffered from the immediate problem of finding the appropriate vocabulary and idiom in the local language. Moreover, many did not approve this and resented the use of local cultural symbols, including the language, considered ‘un-Islamic’ in conveying the message of Allah and His Prophet. But there were quite a few who reacted sharply to such aspersions. Saiyid Sultan, a mid-sixteenth century poet, lamented that nobody has transmitted the Islamic ideas in local vernacular and so nobody has understood any of the discourses of his own religion. Hence he resolved to disseminate these ideas in Bengali.⁶⁸ But in doing so, the Bengali Muslim authors were faced with a dilemma. Though they knew that Arabic was the appropriate language for the transmission of Islamic ideas, they could not do so because their audience was not familiar with the language. Reflecting this, Abdul Nabi, a poet of the seventeenth century wrote: ‘I am afraid in my heart lest God should be annoyed with me for having rendered Islamic scriptures in Bengali. But I put aside my fear and firmly resolve to write for the good of the common people’.⁶⁹ Shah Abdul Hakim, another seventeenth century poet, wrote: “Whatever language a people speak in a country, the Lord understands it. He understands all languages, whether it is Hinduani [Hindustani or Urdu?] or the language of Bengal, or any other.” He even went to the extent to assert: “Those who, born in Bengal, are averse to Bengali language cast doubt on their birth. The people who have no liking for the language and the learning of their country, had better leave it and live abroad”.⁷⁰ Thus local environment and local culture continued to have a decisive influence on the life of Bengali Muslims, despite all attempts at conformity. However, these cross-currents in Bengali Muslim society inevitably produced a dichotomy between the “Muslim” and the “Bengali” contents of their identity and culture.

68 Saiyid Sultan, *Shab-I Miraj, Muslim Bangla Sahitya*, (henceforth *MBS*, ed. M. E. Haq), p. 161.

69 Abdul Nabi, *Vijay Hamza*, Quoted in *MBS*, pp. 214-15.

70 Shah Abdul Hakim, *Nur Nama*, quoted in *MBS*, pp. 205-06.

Here one might ask a pertinent question, especially in the present context. Did the emergence of Bangladesh, ostensibly on the basis of linguistic-cultural identity, fundamentally transform the orientation and character of the Bengali Muslims? There is little doubt that it meant, not only theoretically, a greater emphasis on Bengali cultural identity but perhaps it also signified a fundamental break with the earlier trend. The scholars can probably throw more definitive light on this aspect than I can with my limited knowledge about the present scenario.

**REDISCOVERING GAUR : A MEDIEVAL
CAPITAL OF BENGAL***

Sutapa Sinha**

The paper attempts to reconstruct the archaeological re-discovery of the capital city of Sultanate Bengal, popularly known as Gaur during mediaeval time. The account and reason of the decline of this once populous and glorious city, its abandonment and eventual desertion in the 16th century have been dealt with by several scholars and hence kept beyond the purview of this lecture. It is also well known that the rich architectural heritage of the desolate city was systematically stripped off for building material for more than two centuries sparing only the religious edifices.

It was Henry Creighton, an indigo planter stationed at Guamalty Indigo Factory near Malda who pioneered the work of re-discovering the lost city of Gaur in the last quarter of the 18th century. The ruins of the city was then fully covered with dense jungle and in Creighton's own words "shelter a variety of wild creatures, bears, buffaloes, deer, wild hogs, snakes, monkeys, peacocks, and the common domestic fowl, rendered wild for want of an owner. At night the roar of the tiger, the cry of peacock, the howl of the jackals, with the accompaniment of rats, owls, and troublesome insects, soon become familiar to the few inhabitants still in its neighbourhood".¹ In spite of these hindrances, Creighton prepared the first topographical map of the fortified city and its suburbs showing contours of the huge rampart walls as accurately as possible. He also drew a separate sketch of the royal fort or the Citadel of the Sultan. Creighton was an excellent amateur painter. In course of his archaeological enquiry in the

* This was Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed Memorial Trust Fund Lecture 2012 at the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

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1 Henry Creighton, *The Ruins of Gaur: Described and Represented in eighteen views with a topographical map*, London 1817, pp. 4-5.

ruins of Gaur he made sketches of the extant monuments and ruins. He collected detached inscriptions from the deep jungles and preserved them in the courtyard of his factory. His untimely death in 1807 put to an end to the first initiative to rediscover history and archaeology the lost city of Gaur. However, in 1817, the result of his exertions at Gaur was published posthumously in the form of a book² with eighteen drawings and a map compiled from his manuscripts and drawings. Through the eighteen views rendered in brilliant water colour, Creighton made the first attempt to capture the extant monuments and ruins of the lost city. Creighton's seminal work was followed and mentioned by the few European Officials visiting Gaur during the 19th century. They have also left descriptions of the city, its monuments and inscriptions supplemented by drawings, etchings, prints, photographs and also valuable maps and sketches. Notable among them are William Francklin,³ Francis Buchannan,⁴ J.H. Ravenshaw⁵ and J.D. Beglar.⁶

In this context it may be mentioned that it was till the time of J.H. Ravenshaw and J.D. Beglar, i.e. in the sixties and seventies of the 19th century, the ruins of Gaur was still in a "very jungly state and several of the ruins could only be approached with difficulty, owing to the dense canebreaks which were too green to burn, and too thickly covered with long sharp thorns to be forced by the elephants."⁷ When General Alexander Cunningham first visited Gaur in 1840s, forty years prior to his visit as the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1879, he saw a long piece of skeleton of a python measuring nearly 9 inch in diameter amidst the deep jungles. Things radically changed when, in the cold season of 1879, Cunningham as the Director General of ASI made his official visit to Gaur. He states in his report that,

2 *Ibid.*

3 William Francklin, *Journal of a route from Rajemehal to Gaur A.D. 1810-11*, Shillong, 1910.

4 Francis Buchanan Hamilton, *Geographical, Statistical and Historical Descriptions of the District, or Zila of Dinajpur*, Calcutta 1833.

5 J.H. Ravenshaw, *Gaur: its Ruins and Inscriptions*, London 1878.

6 J.D. Beglar, *Report of the Archaeological Survey of Bengal*, Parts I & II. Calcutta, Catholic Orphan Press 1888.

7 Alexander Cunningham, *Report of a Tour in Bengal and Bihar in 1879-80. From Patna to Sunargaon*. Vol. XV, New Delhi 2000 (reprint), p. 48.

... the whole scene was changed, the greater part of the jungle had been cleared away, and all the lowlands above the water-level were covered with crops and of *urad and sarsan* [veches and mustard.] The mounds are still covered with jungle, as they are mostly composed of brick ruins which are not worth cultivating. The cause of all this change is due to the Government having offered lands almost rent-free at the low price of 4 annas a *bigah* for a fixed period. The offer was eagerly taken up by the people, and nearly the whole of the available land is now under cultivation.⁸

This changed scene of the ruins of Gaur is interesting from two different aspects. Firstly, the clearance of dense jungles over the ruins facilitated the exploratory tour of Cunningham which could be considered as the first archaeological exploration of the city of Gaur and its suburbs in a systematic manner. Resultant report provided by him is invaluable to the future researcher. Secondly, at the same time this clearing activity exposed the sub-soil structures to ruination through plough-sharing for cultivation and brick hunting, the latter is practiced even in the present day, resulting in gradual decay of the ‘habitation sites’. It may not be out of context at this point if we mention that it is the policy of the Government or the ruling authority that has always played an important role to determine the fate of the city in its hey days and also in its ruinous state. Because it is already recorded that ‘in the rainy season, boat could easily reach the ruins and of boatloads of stones and bricks were removed to the then rising towns of English Bazar, Murshidabad, Rajmahal and Calcutta’. According to Grant’s report⁹ (Vol. V, p. 285), ‘the *Nizamat Daftar* of Murshidabad received Rs. 8000 annually from the local Zamindars as fees for the privilege of demolishing the ruins and stripping from them their highly prized enameled bricks and basalt stones’. Abid Ali mentions that “we are fortunate to find remains of certain mosques and the tombs of saints which the plunderers did not touch on account of their being sacred”.¹⁰ Few secular edifices survived in the capital city before Government implemented rules to stop this practice of demolition of the ruined edifices in 1899.

In the beginning of the 20th century, a Government official, who was in charge of the work of repairing the ruins of Gaur and Pandua and hailed from Malda

8 *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

9 Walter Kelly Firminger (ed.), *Affairs of the East India Company, (being the Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons 28th July, 1812)*, Vol. II, Delhi (Reprint), 2001, pp. 220-221.

10 Khan Sahib M. Abid Ali Khan, *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*: Edited and revised by H.E. Stapleton (reprint and revised) Calcutta 1986, p. 31.

district thought of publishing a book which would encompass all the desirable information on the subject of the ruins, the history and the principal features of the ruins as they extant'. He was none other than Khan Shahib Abid Ali Khan who tried to make it 'useful to the archaeologist, to distinguished visitors and to the public at large'.¹¹ He presented the first draft of his book in a hastily prepared type-written form to Lord Curzon while he was visiting Gaur and Pandua in 1902 which was later published as *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua* in 1912 in a booklet form. Later in 1930, H.E. Stapleton published it after much revision¹² on the request of the Government as it contains much important information regarding the monuments, inscriptions and local legends of the ruined city.

The Archaeological Survey of India also started to pay attention towards the conservation of the monuments of the ruined city of Gaur and Pandua, which were visited, perhaps twice, by its Director General since 1879. From a study of the Annual Reports of Archaeological Survey of India published since 1902, we find mention of first conservation work at Adina Masjid, Eklakhi Mausoleum and Qutb Shahi Masjid at Pandua in 1902-03.¹³ In the same year conservation works at the important monuments of Gaur (undivided) like Baradwari or Great Golden Mosque, Sona Masjid or Small Golden Mosque (Firozpur), Dakhil Darwaza, Firoz Minar, Tantipara Mosque and Lattan Mosque also were undertaken. In 1905-06, a sum of Rs. 7,165 was expended for conservation work at Sona Masjid of Firozpur.¹⁴ Again in 1916, we find mention of conservation works at Adina Masjid in Pandua as a part of annual conservation programme in Eastern India.¹⁵ In 1924-25, repairing work at Darasbari Mosque and Baisgazi wall has been done along with erection of notice board 'to twelve monuments at Gaur' for protection purpose. It also states that a sum of Rs. 1000 was provided in the budget for the excavation proposal of some underground chambers near the Gumti gate could not be utilized because the land could not be purchased in time.¹⁶ This is the first

11 *Ibid*, preface, p. x.

12 *Ibid*, with an introductory note by Dr. A. Ray and Dr. C. Datta published in 1986 by the Department of Information & Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal.

13 *Archaeological Survey of India. Annual Reptot*, 1902-03, New Delhi (reprint) pp. 52-53 (*hereinafter referred as ASIAR*).

14 *ASIAR*, 1905-06, p. 8.

15 *ASIAR*, 1916-17, Part-I, p. 9.

16 *ASIAR*, 1924-25, p. 37.

mention of a proposal for excavation work at Gaur in the reports of Archaeological Survey of India. Subsequently, in the annual report of 1927-28, we find that 'the clearance of the area between the Chika Mosque and Gumti gateway has disclosed the existence of a floor of painted tiles and a mosque with half-damaged stone pillars. It further stated that this area was examined with a view to determine the nature of the underground stone cells visible at a short distance to the east. As the digging proceeded it was clear that there were at least three cells, most probably intended to be used as graves, almost 4 feet deep with a terraced floor and walls of dressed stone. Their openings being closed by rough-hewn slabs of stone placed breadth wise. As traces of inhumation were discovered in two of the graves, the work was stopped immediately'.¹⁷ Therefore, this small scale digging operation conducted by ASI further supported that General Cunningham was right in identifying Chika as a mausoleum and its adjacent areas as cemetery for the later Ilyas Shahi Sultans and their family.

Aside this small digging, no full scale archaeological excavation or exploration work was undertaken by the ASI in addition to their routine work of conservation and preservation of the monuments of Gaur before the partition of 1947. It is surprising to note that no other proposal for excavation or exploration was mooted at any level to uncover the layout of this capital city in a large scale, or a small scale excavation to reveal the cultural assemblage and cultural sequence of this medieval city. After 1947, as a result of the partition, the entire southern suburb of Gaur was included in the sovereign state of Pakistan. From 1950s onwards, conservation of the monuments in the Indian part of Gaur (in *Indian Archaeology: A Review* series) was continued. But no archaeological exploration and excavation in the city was conducted in the immediate post-independence era under the aegis of ASI.

However, in the post-independence period also, conservation and restoration work of the monuments of Gaur was going on at regular interval and reports of which have been published till recent past and thus protected monuments of the city are being preserved for the posterity. But at the same time the open areas like the palace proper (inside *Bais Gazi walls*) or any other parts of the city with buried structures were exposed to brick hunting and cart-loads of bricks were

¹⁷ *ASIAR*, 1927-28, pp. 42-3.

being smuggled by the villagers for re-use, not only in the adjacent villages but also sometimes in Malda town. No Government agency, neither State nor Central could put a stop to this practice.

It should be mentioned here that some important works have been done in the Bangladesh part of Gaur after independence. Firstly: the full scale excavation conducted by the Department of Archaeology, Bangladesh in 1970s which unearthed the most important learning centre, i.e Darasbari Madrasah adjacent to Darasbari Mosque in the southern suburb of Gaur. The report of this excavation has been published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.¹⁸ The exploratory survey conducted in the Bangladesh part of the city of Gaur i.e. the southern suburb of the city called Firuzpur resulted in a monograph entitled *Gawr-Lakhnawati* and was also published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.¹⁹ The Directorate of Archaeology, Bangladesh conducted a survey of the Choto Sona Masjid and its adjacent area in 2001 and considering their importance undertook a project in 2003-05 in order to conserve and preserve all archaeological edifices and sites in this area. A beautifully designed tiled floor was discovered in front of the Mosque through an excavation under the leadership of Dr. Mohd. Shafiqul Alam, the then Director of Archaeology, Bangladesh.²⁰

Thus, in spite of all these serious endeavors, both private and public, since last quarter of the 18th century, we are hopelessly unaware about the morphology of the city of Gaur. Only the location of the Royal Centre of the city, a very prominent site, heavily protected by massive citadel wall with a deep moat surrounding it could easily be identifiable. Remaining parts of the city were never explored barring the ruins of religious monuments, gateways, a *minar* (victory tower) and a bridge of five arches without situating them within the urban landscape of the city.

18 Muhammad Abdul Qadir, "The Newly Discovered Madrasah Ruins at Gaur and its inscriptions", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities)*, Vol's. xxiv-vi, Dacca, 1979-81, pp. 21-90.

19 A.B.M. Husain (ed.), *Gawr-Lakhnawati: A Survey of Historical Monuments and Sites in Bangladesh*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka 1997.

20 Dr. Mohd. Shafiqul Alam and Abdul Khaleq, "Chakchake Prolepjuka Talir Mejhe: Choto Sona Masjide Samprotik Abishkar" (in Bangali) in *Pratnacharcha -2*, a Journal of Directorate of Archaeology, Bangladesh, No. 2, 2nd Year, March, 2008, pp. 71-74.

II

With the above-mentioned problem in view, the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal undertook a research project on Urbanization of two capital cities of medieval Bengal, i.e Gaur and Pandua in collaboration with Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Calcutta in 1992. In the following pages, an attempt will be made to enumerate, in brief the outcome of the exploratory work which officially continued for five years to reconstruct the lost city. Later in this discourse, I would also like to mention about the report of a full-scale excavation at the Palace compartments of the Fort and two scientific clearance works at the sites of Husain Shah's tomb and Belbari Madrasah of Gaur which were undertaken in the field seasons of 2003-2005 by Archaeological Survey of India.

The methodology adopted for achieving the above-mentioned objective of the research project on urbanization of the medieval city of Gaur undertaken in 1992 was threefold:

1. To built up a comprehensive database of all the published and unpublished records including coins, inscriptions, historical manuscripts, visual materials, maps and other related documents on these cities.
2. To carry out sector-wise archaeological explorations in these cities to situate habitation pattern and to collect evidence of material culture.
3. To collate the available records with the archaeological findings and analyse the same in the historical perspective to locate *inter alia*, the causes of growth and decline of the city.

To locate the habitation zones in this large stretch of walled city, the Project team²¹ had first taken recourse to archaeological reconnaissance of the entire area to identify the typical archaeological assemblage of the period. The random survey conducted throughout the medieval city by the team was able to record the artefact assemblage representative of the period. They can be categorized as follows:

1. Coarse pottery: both intact and in sherds, of grey, black and brown slips of various shapes and sizes - flat dishes, bowls, lamps, spouted vessels, bottle necked miniature vessels and storage jars; (Fig.1)

21 The team comprising Dr. Gautam Sengupta, Pratip Kumar Mitra and Sutapa Sinha representing the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, West Bengal and Professors Aniruddha Ray, Muhamad Qamaruddin and Ratnabali Chatterjee representing the Department of Islamic History & Culture, University of Calcutta.

2. Porcelains: sherds are mostly blue on white, white and blue of various shapes and sizes forming parts of small cup to big bowl, shallow dish, flat bottom dish, stem cup etc. having typical Chinese designs and footed base; (Fig.2 & Fig. 3 – Reconstruction drawing of Procelain sherds)
3. Celadon ware: sherds of olive green colour with self-designs and mostly of footed bowls of different size; (Fig. 4a)
4. Sherds of Glazed ware: with well-lavigated earthen core and design in bichrome – flat dishes and footed bowls; (Fig. 4c)
5. Sherds of buff-coloured vitrified ceramic: bowls and narrow-necked spouted vessels, spouts of different shapes and sizes; (Fig. 4b)
6. Glazed floor tiles: both monochrome and polychrome of different shapes and sizes with a groove inside; (Fig. 5)
7. Glazed bricks: both bichrome and polychrome of different shapes and sizes, colours include blue, white, ochre yellow, green, brown, etc; (Fig. 6a & 6b)
8. Unglazed bricks: both decorated and plain of different shapes and sizes; (Fig. 7a)
9. Glazed half-circular roof tiles with a decorated rim: of different colours as blue, white, yellow and green or combination of all colours; (Fig. 7b)
10. Stone architectural fragments and stone ware;
11. Small glass objects like miniature bottles, small cups and pieces of glass bangles; (Fig. 7c)
12. Cowry shells and conches;
13. Miscellaneous objects e.g. votive terracotta figurines and horses, terracotta sling balls often with black and red slip;
14. Most importantly the ordinary bricks of four square inch with an inch in thickness, that were used extensively for building purpose in Bengal instead of stone.

The exploratory survey was conducted for five years from March 1992 to February 1997 based on the survey map prepared by J.H. Ravenshaw (1878) which seems to be the most accurate one to carry out extensive explorations in the city of Gaur. The map was hypothetically divided into fifteen sectors for systematic sampling survey and each sector was thoroughly explored to find out

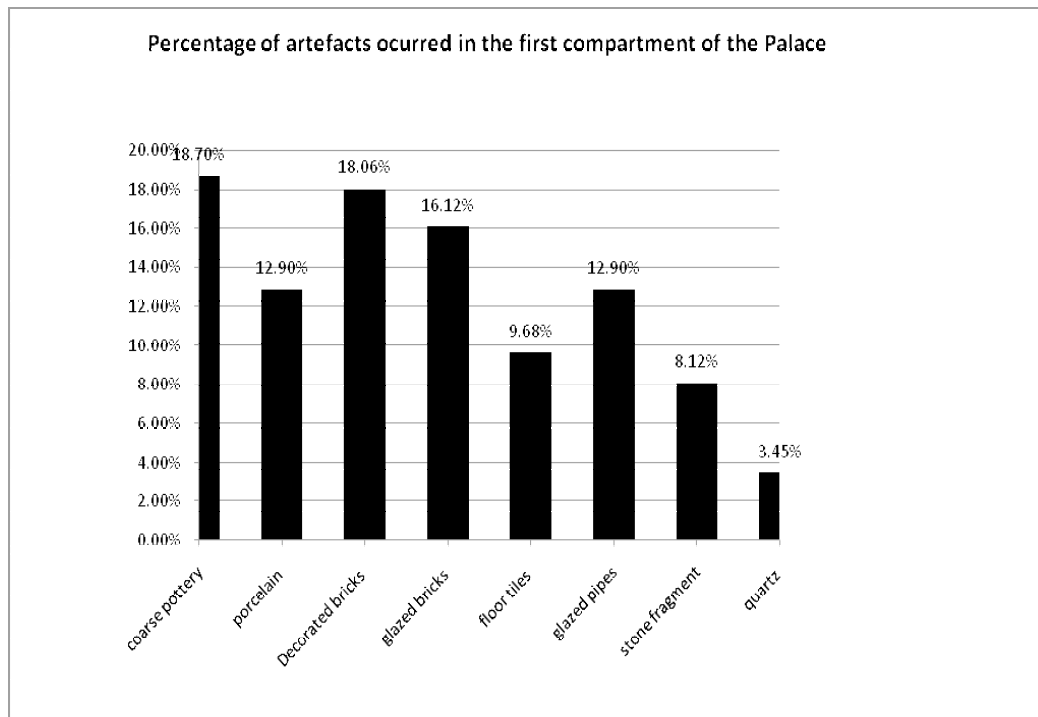
distinct spatial clustering of artefacts, features, structures and environmental remains. Such clusters denoting habitation sites were plotted in the respective sector maps and altogether 113 such sites have been identified by the team. Along with that, all the extant structures – religious and secular, embankments, canals, roadways – either metalled or unmetalled, and other architectural remains related to habitation have also been plotted in the sector maps as much as possible. After reassembling all these fifteen sector maps embodying all these sites and other related features, a schematic representation of the settlement pattern of the city have been formed on the basis of spatial distribution and density of the assemblages in the different parts of the city and their interrelation with extant structures.²² (Fig. 8) The capital city of Gaur may now broadly be divided into four principal zones namely the Royal Centre, the Noble's Quarter, the Urban Core and the Garrison Area. Another auxiliary zone may also be defined from the reassembled map which we have termed as Fringe Area. People from secondary occupation may have lived here. The remaining north and north-eastern extremity of the fortified city is a low-lying tract like a shallow basin. It is now a cultivated land for rice and probably was used for cultivation of emergency crop when the city was besieged and thus may be termed as buffer zone of the city.

The most important functional zone is the Royal Centre, the nucleus of the city situated on the south-western side of the city overlooking the river on its west. The Royal Centre, Sector 5 in the base map is the citadel including the Palace. The imposing citadel occupies the most prominent and advantageous position in the city and is situated on the highest ground on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi. Some 48 habitation sites have been located in the entire citadel area through surface survey and a considerable variation in type, quantity and quality of the artifacts scatter in these sites has been observed and plotted in the map of Sector 5. (Fig. 9)

On the north of the citadel was the main entrance - called *Dakhil* or *Salami Darwaza*. One could visualize a straight approach from this gate to the palace proper through a raised paved road. We have found ruins of two intermediary gateways on this royal road, traditionally known as *Chand Darwaza* and *Nim*

22 See, Sutapa Sinha, "Settlement Pattern through Archaeological Finds", in *Gaur The Medieval City of Bengal c. 1450-1565*, special issue of a Journal of Archaeology *Pratna Samiksha*, New Series, Vol. 3, Kolkata 2012, pp. 127-137.

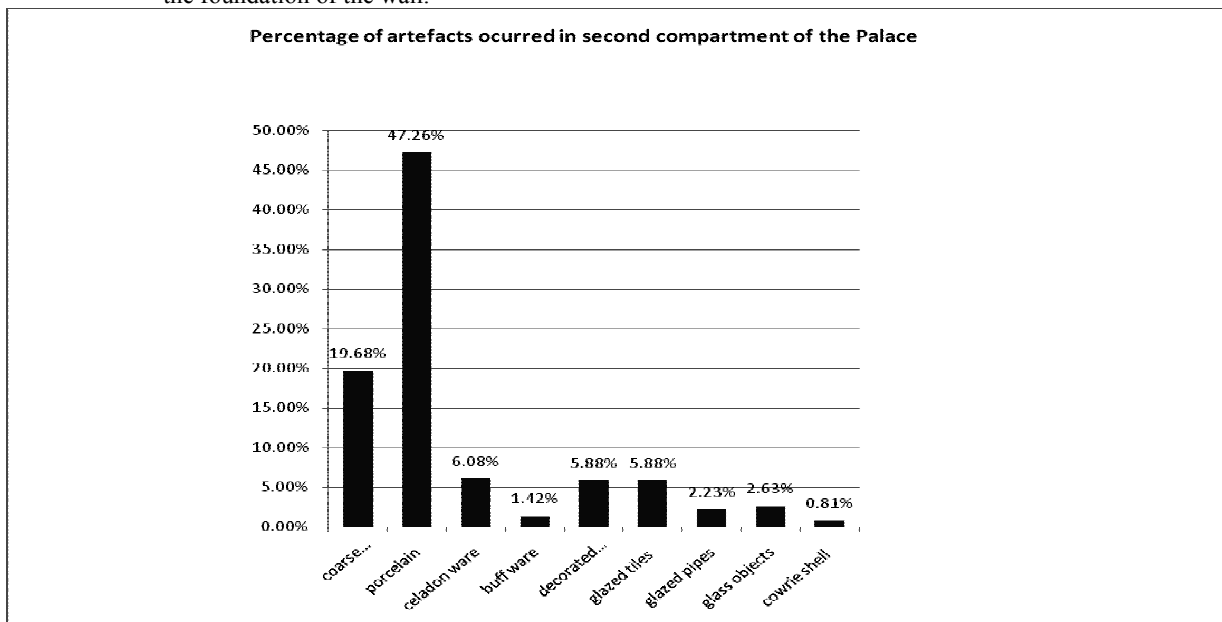
Darwaza, the latter meaning the midway gate and found mentioned in the works of Henry Creighton. During the survey, we have found the ruins of the gate, which is placed exactly at the mid distance on the road connecting *Dakhil Darwaza* and Royal palace. However, the inscription referring to a mid-way gate exquisitely carved is now affixed to the Minaronwali Mosque in the village of Mahadipur, P.S. English Bazar, west of the ruins of the city of Gaur (Fig. 10).



Exploration in this area, however, failed to trace any evidence of nine intermediary gates as mentioned in a contemporary Portuguese account.²³ Instead, some small ruined structures were found along the road, which could probably be the guardrooms.

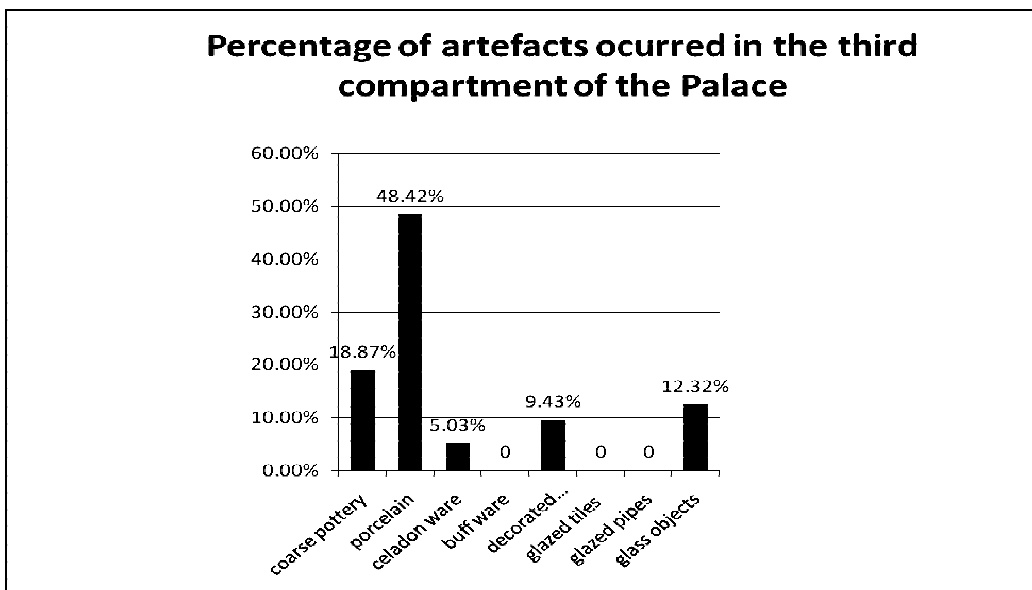
²³ G. Bouchon and L.P. Thomaz (ed.), *Voyage Dans Les Deltas Du Gange et de L'irraouaddy 1521*, Paris 1988 (English version), p. 321.

The Palace proper was a rectangular area and was enclosed on three sides by a high brick wall measuring 42 feet high excepting the western side. The wall is popularly known as *Baisgazi* wall i.e. a wall measuring 22 yards or 66 feet. The enclosed area of the Palace measures approximately 300 meters × 100 meters and is divided into three unequal compartments. The first and the northern compartment of the Palace was the Durbar hall or the Court of the Sultan. The second was presumed to be the living apartment of the Sultan while the third one was traditionally known as the *Haremsara* or the living quarter of the women in the Palace. Each compartment having a tank within it was separated by a dividing wall, remnants of which can only be traced in the underground, somewhere only traces of hollow tunnels are visible after brick robbing from the foundation of the wall.



From the nine sites of the first compartment (so called *Durbar* hall) plenty of architectural fragments of stone as well as decorated bricks (18.06%), glazed bricks (16.12%), floor tiles (9.68%) and glazed pipes (12.90%) have been found along with remains of a white tiled floor. The percentage of potsherds, either of coarse pottery (18.70%) or of Porcelain (12.90%), is very little compared to the other living apartments of the Palace.

Significant finds from the first compartment is unusual occurrence of quartz chunks, shapely cut in association with glazed tiles and bricks. Since quartz powder is an essential ingredient in glazing, their occurrence here indicates the existence of the *Karkhana* for production of glazed tiles and bricks for repair and renovation of the buildings. The western half of the compartment is full of decorated bricks strewn all around, mostly of similar geometric designs of blue



and yellow on white, which led us to believe that it could be the ruins of the Darbur hall. In terms of total number of antiquities, first compartment yields lesser than those of the two other compartments, which were, traditionally, the living area of the Sultan and his family. In 2003, ASI conducted a horizontal excavation on one of the mounds in this compartment identified by the team as the 'royal mound'. On the surface, the team found a typical blue, white and yellow zigzag design bricks and tiles during the course of their explorations indicative of royal occupation. The subsequent excavation by ASI exposed a huge royal structure to be discussed in the following pages.

The Second compartment offered very rich archaeological assemblage. The nature of artefacts found from this area gives credence to the legend that this

compartment was used by the Sultans as their personal residence or *Khas Mahal*. At the northwest corner, a portion of a beautiful bi-chrome tiled floor, of blue and white tiles, still exists but in a much worn-out state.²⁴ (Fig. 11b) Altogether nine sites have been plotted in this compartment from the surface survey yielding highest number of artefacts of all categories comprising the finest quality of porcelain sherds (47.26%), celadon ware (6.08%), sherds of buff-coloured ceramics (1.42%), coarse pottery (19.68%), decorated bricks (5.88%), glazed tiles (5.88%), glazed roof tiles (2.23%), cowrie-shells (0.81%), glass bangles and miniature glass bowls (2.63%) etc.

It is to be mentioned here that the most interesting and remarkable pieces are thin and fine white porcelain sherds with inscriptions in blue in pre-firing stage on them. The script of the inscription is not Chinese but proto-Bengali and the style of calligraphy belongs to 15th- 16th century.²⁵ (Fig. 12) Such example of porcelain sherds have not been reported so far from any other site in Bengal. The team also discovered such tiny pieces of inscribed sherds from Satgaon urf Saptagram in Hooghly district, the mint town and port town in the south-western part of Bengal during the same period when Gaur flourished as a capital. Some scholars have however; found the similarity of the script with the Tibetan Lantsha script.²⁶ A few broken porcelain vases with Chinese inscription, especially potter's mark at the bottom of the pot have also been encountered. Sherds of pre-Ming porcelain with self-design have also been found. Otherwise, ninety percent of the total porcelain sherds found from the surface survey are decorated with typical Chinese blue on white designs but not always of a very fine quality. So many different quality of porcelain with different thickness and fabrics collected within this compartment of the

24 The floor was discovered in May 1992 by Prof. Anirudhha Ray and recorded by the Team. *C.f.*, Aniruddha Ray, 'Archaeological Reconnaissance at the City of Gaur: A preliminary report' in *Pratna Samiksha*, Vol.2 & 3, 1993-94, Calcutta, p. 252

25 For a description of some of these inscribed porcelain sherds, see, B.N. Mukherjee, "Inscribed Porcelain Sherds From Gaur and Saptagram", *Pratna-Samiksha*, Vol's. 2&3, Journal of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Calcutta 1993-94, pp. 271-273.

26 This view is held by Mr. Joe Cribb, Former Keeper, Department of Coins and Medals, the British Museum, London.

Palace indicates a regular inflow of imported Chinese porcelains as luxury item of the royalty.

The third compartment of the palace is traditionally known as the *Zenana Mahal* or *Haremsara*, the living apartment of the women. It was separated from the second compartment by a brick wall, though it can only be traced from the partly existing foundation of the wall beneath the surface. Entire wall has collapsed and a long hollow tunnel can be found as a result of continuous brick hunting even from the foundation. A stone paved tank on its eastern side marks this quarter. Only five sites have been identified from the cluster of artefacts and architectural fragments on the surface which yielded the usual assemblage of porcelain (48.42%), celadon (5.03%), coarse pottery (18.87%) and decorated bricks (9.43%) of deluxe quality whereas glass ware, glass objects occurred in higher number, i.e. 12.32%.

Therefore the evidence of the surface findings neither denies nor supports the theory that this compartment was exclusively inhabited by the womenfolk of the Palace. Though one might raise a point that the occurrence of higher percentage of glass objects including miniature pots, glass bangles and other delicate objects is an indication of feminine occupation yet, this evidence is not strong enough to arrive at any conclusion. Exploration in the third compartment was greatly hampered by cultivation of seasonal crops and mulberry culture and a thick cluster of mango groves. Beyond the third compartment, an area was located that can be termed as service area of the Palace. At the south-western corner of the Citadel wall, we have found a ruin of a small gateway. Fragments of stone pillars and a door jamb belonging to this gateway are still extant. This gateway in all probability is the backdoor of the citadel meant for the easement of the service people of the Palace. The place is traditionally known as *Khirki*, the literal meaning of which is "backdoor of a house". This tract of land also falls within modern day mouza of *Khirki*.

To the east of the Palace, two distinct zones have been identified as the burial ground of the Sultans and their families. We have marked them as Cemetery A & B. The former is located on the north east of the Palace where according to 18th century records²⁷ lay the tomb or Mausoleum of Sultan Husain Shah and

27 Robert Orme, *Gawre: Description on its Ruins with four inscriptions taken in the Arabic Copy*, British Library (Oriental and India Office Collections), London, Orme MS ov.

his descendants. The Cemetery B is situated near the *Chika* building and adjoining areas. No mausoleum exist in Cemetery A but a large mound filled with scattered pillars, number of tombstones, beautifully ornamented polychrome bricks indicate the ruins of a Royal cemetery. (Fig.13a) The team has even located the remains of the enclosure wall of the cemetery, now in ruins but was extant during the days of Henry Creighton²⁸, who has left us with a brilliant drawing of the site. The glazed bricks collected from this burial site are brilliant and exclusive in design and colours.

The later Ilyas Shahi rulers and their families probably used Cemetery B for burial. A scientific clearance work conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1920s in the area between the Chika Mosque and Gumti Gateway has disclosed the existence of a floor of painted tiles and a mosque with half-damaged stone pillars. A brief report of it was published in Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India.²⁹ The report further states that this area was examined with a view to determine the nature of the underground stone cells visible at a short distance towards Gumti gateway. As the digging proceeded it was clear that there were at least three cells, almost 4 feet deep with a terraced floor and walls of dressed stone, were most probably intended to be used as graves. Their openings being closed by rough-hewn slabs of stone placed breadth-wise. (Fig. 13b) As traces of inhumation were discovered in two of the graves, the work was stopped immediately. Our finding from this area also includes traces of a tiled floor, structural pillars and fragments of tombstones strewn here and there. Thus it tallies with the earlier findings of Archaeological Survey of India of a burial ground around the Chika building.

The functional purpose of *Chika* monument is not clear to us. The building is strikingly similar in the architectural style to the *Eklakhi* in Pandua, which served as the royal mausoleum of Sultan Jalal al-din Muhammad Shah. The *Chika* building could well be a mausoleum without the tombstone above the

65.25, folio 171; Creighton, *Op. cit.*, p. 3, pl. no. viii, See also, William Francklin, Journal of a route from Rajemehal to Gaur A.D. 1810-11, Shillong, 1910, p. 2; H. Beveridge, "The Khurshid Jahan Numa of Sayyid Ilahi Bakhsh al Husaini Angrezbadi", Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta 1895, No. 3, p. 220.

28 Creighton, *Op. cit.*, pl. viii.

29 *ASIAR*, 1927-28, p. 43.

ground, which is lost and may have entombed the mortal remains of a principal Sultan of the later Ilyas Shahi house.³⁰

Just to the east of Chika, there is another gateway of the citadel popularly named Gumti Gate, standing on the city wall. This small gateway may have been constructed for the private use of the members of the royal family. This domed structure with its magnificent brick ornamentation on the walls and also on the turrets at the four corners is dissimilar in architectural style to the other gateways of the citadel or of the city. On further left of it is situated the eastern main entrance of the Citadel named *Lukochuri Darwaza* which is evidently a building of the Mughal period. It is postulated without much evidence that Sultan Shah Shuja used to reside at Gaur briefly, when he had built this gateway. But there is a strong possibility that this later structure was built on the site of a previous gateway, which originally connected the Citadel with the southern part of the city through a raised road. It would be seen later that the court nobility inhabited the area around the southern part of the citadel and therefore an eastern gateway of the Citadel was absolutely necessary for frequent easement. Within the Citadel, the religious structure is *Qadam Rasul* that enshrines the sacred footprint of Hadrat Muhammad (sm.). Aside *Qadam Rasul* with its porched *liwan*, which could be used as a place of worship, surprisingly, trace of no other mosque has been found within the Palace-Citadel complex.

The next zone under discussion is the Noble's Quarter of the city which falls within sector 3 of the working map where we have located eleven sites altogether. The area is situated in the south east of the Citadel and not very far from it, connected with the main arterial road of the city that directly leads to the *Kotwali Gate*, the southern entrance of the city. It is an area of about four square kilometres around the largest tank of the city locally known as *Choto Sagar Dighi*, the main source of water supply for the locality. There is another landmark, almost hundred meters north of this tank which is the ruin of *Belbari Madrasah*, the principal place of learning within the city. (Fig. 14a & 14b) In

30 Cunningham held similar opinion. He states "I am inclined to assign this tomb (Chika) to Mahamud I himself, the immediate successor of Jalal-ud-din's son. It was probably also the burial place of the different members of Mahmud's family, of his sons Barbak and Fateh, and his Grandson Yusuf." See, Alexander Cunningham, *Report of a Tour in Bengal and Bihar in 1879-80. From Patna to Sunargaon*. ASI Reports, vol. XV, Delhi 1994 (reprint), p. 56.

the southern suburb of Gaur, which is presently in Bangladesh, another *Madrasah* has been located and partly excavated by the Department of Archaeology, Bangladesh,³¹ known as *Darasbari Madrasah*. The *Belbari Madrasah* is at present in utter ruins. The entire structure of the *Madrasah* building has fallen down and formed a huge mound locally known as *Chand Saudagarer Bhita* over which are scattered a number of pillars with typical Islamic carvings.

The intellectual class and the supportive apparatus of the administration probably inhabited the area. Exploration conducted by the Team in this sector revealed ruins of extensive habitation in the area between Chhoto Sagar Dighi and the arterial road of the city and also around the *Madrasah*. A bridge of three arches was found behind the *Madrasah* ruins where a raised road has crossed a canal flowing in east-west direction. This road was running parallel with the main arterial road from the north of the city as a bypass and perhaps was connecting the *Madrasah* with another most important part of the city namely, Urban Core, which will be discussed next. The road ends at the south-eastern corner of the *Choto Sagar Dighi*. The artefacts found from the area such as different type of porcelain shards (32.53%), decorated bricks (22.88%), glazed tiles (8.43%), glazed pipes (8.43%) and other usual assemblage are of exclusive quality and are comparable to those collected from the Royal Centre. A number of structural mounds relieve the topography of the zone, which indicates the remains of residential building.

The quality of the archaeological artefacts found together with the close cluster of ruins of residential structures in proximity of the Royal Centre help to identify the sector as the Noble's Quarter. The quarter was carefully planned for habitation of the elite class and provided with largest source of drinking water in vicinity and other urban amenities such as easy access to the main arterial road of the city, well planned canal made both for carrying of daily waste as well as diffusion of excessive rain water from the large lake on the east, connecting subsidiary roads with other part of the city. The team has also located an enormous structural mound on the west of *Choto Sagar Dighi*, which is almost undisturbed. The mound is full of stone pillars, stone fragments of architectural components and glazed bricks, tiles and glazed roof tiles. The size and nature of the ruin suggest that this could be a ruin of a mosque, probably

31 Qadir, *Op. cit.*

the principal one of the noble's quarter. In the map prepared by Henry Creighton (1801)³² and published in 1817, a mosque is indicated in the place where now the ruin stands and the area was named as Sonarganj. A linear habitation can be noticed on the other side of the *Choto Sagar Dighi* and was probably populated by the service people to cater the community of the noblemen and allied functionaries.

The third important and the largest zone in the city has been termed as Urban Core, comprising of Sectors 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the base map. On the basis of the surface explorations, the area around the Royal Palace stretching from *Bara Sona Masjid* on the north to the city wall on the south and double embankment on the east to the bank of Bhagirathy on the west may roughly be defined as the Urban Core of the medieval city of Gaur. This part of the city is situated around the Royal Centre in a half circular manner and was warded off from the fringe area by a raised causeway. Density of population here was probably the highest as revealed through the traces of clustered settlements, occurrences of large and small tanks, bridges, mosques, canals, high ways and causeways as well as other structures and monuments.

At the northern end of the Urban Core lies the principal mosque of the city known as *Bara Sona Masjid* used for the weekly congregational prayer (Sector 6). The area to the west of it is marked by a structural mound with stone pillars scattered around, traces of sewerage system and a large concentration of the usual archaeological assemblages of medium to inferior quality denoting the area to be extensively populated by all classes of people and probably having a market place within it. The discovery of an inscription³³ from a mound to the west of *Bara Sona Masjid* and its alignment to the ruins suggest that some annexe buildings used for educational purpose lay buried within it. The concentration of the antiquities became sparse in the stretch from the south of *Bara Sona* up to *Firuz Minar*. The approach towards the Royal Center, significantly lacks signs of settlement. From the travelogue of an unnamed Portuguese interpreter accompanying Antonnio de Britto,³⁴ we came to know that this area was cordoned off to prevent easy ingress of the common people to

32. Creighton, *Op. cit.*, see map.

33. Pratip Kumar Mitra, "A Note on a New Inscription of Sultan Nasir Al-Din Nusrat Shah of Bengal", *Pratna-Samiksha*, Vol's 2&3, *Journal of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums*, Calcutta 1993-94, pp. 274-277.

the Royal Area as well as to the Noble's Quarter. Linear habitation pattern is noticeable to the immediate east of the Royal Centre around the *Chamkatti* mosque. Evidence of settlement found around the canal in an east-west orientation. From this point onwards one can see a group of mosques on the either side of the arterial road namely, *Chamkatti*, *Tantipara* and *Lattan*. Traces of settlements around these mosques are easy to define and each of the mosques was built to cater the respective settlement or *mahalla*.

Opposite to the Noble's Quarter, (i.e. Sector 4) on the right hand side of the arterial road stands the grand *Tantipara* Mosque. The size of the mosque and its rich terracotta decoration on the façade and inside, suggests that it used to cater to a large number of people belonging to the elite class. Surprisingly enough, the result of surface exploration in and around the mosque belies the suggestions because the artefacts are of quite inferior quality and their distribution is very sparse and erratic as well. However, we should mention here that a considerable part of this sector is completely unapproachable due to the cultivation of mulberry. On the south and south west of *Tantipara* mosque, several explorations were conducted between *Lattan* and *Gunmant* mosque. This area locally known as *Lalbazar* falls in the Sector 1 of our base map and altogether nineteen sites have been explored. *Gunmant* mosque is another magnificent building comparable to *Bara Sona Masjid* situated on the south western corner of the city. (Fig. 15b) The city wall ran very close to it and the *Masjid* was connected with the southern part of the city by a raised road. Signs of dense population were observed in the entire stretch of high ground revealing typical cultural assemblage of the period. From the distribution of surface findings, the area can further be subdivided into two distinct zones, one to the west of *Lattan* mosque and the other around the *Gunmant* mosque. The surface findings of the former zone consist mostly of sherds of coarse pottery, pieces of porcelain and glassware, glass bangles and cowries of medium quality. This indicates that the area was occupied by common people. The area is full of structural mounds, some of which are cut through to accommodate modern pathways. The sections of the mounds are full of brick bats mixed up with coarse pottery suggesting a congested residential complex. Occasionally, the Team came across with cowry shells and other ordinary artefacts. Porcelain is rare in this part of the settlement. This leads to the assumption that a large population of ordinary class resided here. The *Lattan* mosque nearby served those people for their daily prayers.

In contrast, the latter zone around the *Gunamant* mosque yielded artefacts of higher quality and of intriguing variety. These included, beside the usual assemblage of Porcelain, Celadon, buff colour ceramic and coarse pottery, a large hoard of cowries and conches. A few coin hoards were also reported from this particular area of Gaur in different point of time. The nature of surface findings along with the name of this place '*Lalbazar*' suggests the occupation of this area by the mercantile community of the city. This area was also densely populated as indicated by the size of the *Gunmamt* mosque which was the *Jami* mosque of the southern part of the city built earlier by the builder of it while *Bara Sona* served same purpose in the northern part and built by the Husain Shahi rulers.

The Hindu city *Lakshmanavati* was most probably located in this area as revealed through a number of stone sculptures of both Hindu and Buddhist pantheon, stone pillars with inscription referring to one *Yakshapaladeva* in *Siddha Matrika* script discovered from this area of *Lalbazar* which are now preserved at the Mahadipur High School, west of Gaur. (Fig. 15a)

To the south of Sector 1 lies the last trail of the main drainage canal of the city joining *Chatia Patia*³⁵ with the Bhagirathi River and running across the city from east to west. This canal intersects the arterial road near *Lattan* mosque and a bridge of five arches was constructed over it. Another bridge of seven arches is in the south of *Gunamant* mosque where the canal again crosses the road that used to join the mosque with other parts of the city. (Fig. 16)

The sector east of the main arterial road i.e. Sector 2 could not be explored thoroughly since a considerable portion of it falls within the territory of modern Bangladesh. The zone is marked by raised causeway starting from a single arched bridge named *Nungola* on the main canal on the east and runs along the eastern side of the *Sagar Dighi* through the entire breadth of the city. This causeway cordoned off the Noble's Quarter and urban core from the fringe areas of the city protecting it from inundation. Through the surface exploration carried out in this area the Team has located only five sites which revealed the usual assemblage of coarse pottery, porcelains, celadon and glass-ware though very sparsely distributed. Two bridges, one having a single arch and the other having double arches are situated in this area connecting it with the fringe area

35 H. Blochmann and H.S. Jarrett (tr.), *The Ain-I Akbari* by Abu'l Fazl 'Allami, Vol. 2, Calcutta 1993 (reprint), p. 135.

of the city. The ruin of a mosque locally known as Mashagidda can still be identified with much difficulty. From the indication of the surface finding the area appears to be inhabited by the people of secondary occupation.

There are also two other distinct functional zones in the city as revealed through the explorations carried out by the Team, namely Garrison Area and Fringe Area.

Garrison Area

A narrow strip of the land stretching from the north of *Dakhil Darwaza* to the north entrance of the city, i.e. ruins of Phulwari Gate is separated from the other parts of the city by a raised road probably used for military purpose. Within this narrow tract lies a small fort known as *Phulbari* fort, enclosed by huge mud wall on three sides and river Bhagirathi on the west. Surface exploration conducted in this fort has brought to light a large quantity of iron slag along with other artefacts. The location of the fort is suitable for the army barracks or headquarters having the ordnance factory within it, as the huge quantity of iron slag would suggest. Surface exploration at Phulbari fort area also yielded a good number of coarse pottery and ordinary brickbats and a few good quality porcelain and celadon ware. Behind the Phulbari fort towards east, on the other side of the road that is running from the city wall in north up to the Citadel in the south via Phulbari fort, the Team has located a ruin of a mosque of which there is no reference in any earlier map of Gaur. The stone pillars of the mosque are heavily decorated with exquisite Islamic patterns and dispersed over a structural mound. The mosque might have erected for the troops to offer their daily prayers.

A tract of land between the Garrison area and the main arterial road running parallel to it has a striking topography. The entire area has a shallow basin like formation and full of sandy soil unsuitable for any kind of cultivation as well as human habitation.

To the south of the newly discovered ruins of the mosque and to the east of Phulbari Fort, there is a village called *Hatatpara*, on a higher ground more suitable for agriculture as well as for settlement. The Team has discovered a burial ground with a number of tombstones embedded in the surface. The largest tombstone (cenotaph) is inscribed with Quranic text though three others are without any inscription. The inscribed tombstone was probably erected to

entomb a group of soldiers who died during a war or due to an epidemic, as the unusual large size of the tombstone indicates.

Fringe Area

The area situated between *Piyasbari Dighi* on the north to the canal end near *Choto Sagar Dighi* on the south and the arterial road of the city on the west to the double embankment on the east can be termed as the Fringe area of the city. Within this vast area, the portion of land lying beyond the raised causeway and encircling the Noble's Quarter is not accessible. But the area beyond the canal, which runs through the bridge of three arches up to *Piyasbari Dighi*, is relatively accessible and may have been once populated. From surface exploration conducted in the village Beki, and its surroundings within this zone, the Team has found all the diagnostic artefacts of the Sultanate Gaur though of inferior quality. The area was evidently inhabited by the people of lower income group. This tract is low-lying compared to the other parts of the city and was relatively insecure during the monsoon. Moreover, there was no canal inside to diffuse the water. In the northern end of this area, a huge structural mound overlooking the *Piyasbari Dighi* (above which the present Dak Banglows of the Zilla Parishad stands), has been identified as the remains of some official buildings, which, according to Abu'l Fazl, were the prison of the city.³⁶ The exploration work in this area revealed ruins of structures made up of ordinary bricks without embellishment.

The residual part of the city beyond *Piyasbari Dighi* up to the northern city wall is now a long stretch of agricultural land. The exact use of this area in the Sultanate period is not clear but as suggested earlier, it was probably used for cultivation of crop, not seasonal but regular crop to supply the staple diet of the people. Surface exploration conducted in this area revealed no such trace of habitation. So, it can be labelled as the Buffer Zone of the city.

III

Now, as has been stated earlier, a brief account of the excavations conducted at Gaur by ASI from January 2003 to March 2005 along with a few clearance activities would be furnished. The excavations at Gaur was conducted under the directorship of Dr. Bimal Bandyopadhyay, the then Superintending

36 Blochmann and Jarret, *Ibid.*

Archaeologist of Kokata Circle.³⁷ Three sites have been selected, Site 1 and Site 2 in the first compartment of the Palace while Site 3 falls within the second compartment of the Palace. Two structural phases have been encountered in both Site 1 and Site 3 area named as GAR I and GAR III.

In Site 1, i.e. the area adjacent to the stupendous Baisgazi wall was selected for excavation on a mound approximately measuring 700 m (N-S) x 250 to 300 m sufficiently raised from the adjoining area. Traces of brick walls of a structure of *lakhauri* bricks and reused early bricks and stones have been found in Layer 1. The rammed floor of the rooms with lime coating top, walls and quite a good number of iron nails have been found which possible indicate some sort of wooden superstructure above it. Below this structure in GAR I area has been exposed a huge structural complex of bricks, square in shape within a walled enclosure. (Fig. 17a)

According to the excavator, the entire concept is based on formation of strong criss-cross walls over which series of circular foundation walls are formed covering the area 54 m square. The cross walls sometimes rest on sand cushions and the brick circles are of uniform dimensions. Most of these have a hole (30-40 cm in diameter) on their sides presumably for passing water as no other purpose could be established. The mortar used is essentially sticky mud. The existence of symmetrical holes is not only limited to the circular foundation like construction; but on the enclosure walls also such connecting holes have been noticed pointing to the passage of water through them strongly. On the top, there are some columns at regular interval which have circular holes possibly for erecting or fixing wooden poles for superstructure and from some of them charred wooden logs have also been found to confirm the hypothesis. On the whole the utilitarian aspect of this huge complex is enigmatic. But the engineering feat is indeed splendid. (Fig. 17b) Bricks are laid in sticky mud

37 Bimal Bandyopadhyay, 'Recent Excavation at the area adjacent to Baisgazi Wall at Gaur and Scientific Clearance at some adjoining areas, District: Maldah, West Bengal', *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vols. 9&10, 2004-2005, Dhaka 2006, pp. 15-33; *Indian Archaeology 2002-03- A Review*, "Excavation at Palace Area, Gaur, District Maldah", New Delhi, 2009, pp.324-331; *Indian Archaeology 2003-04- A Review*, "Excavation at Baisgazi Wall Known as Palace Area of Ancient Gaur, District Maldah", New Delhi 2011, pp. 329-34.

mortar and nothing else and no regular bonding method has been followed. No lakhauri bricks have been used in this structure strongly indicates its construction before the Mughal occupation at the site. Moreover, mention may be made that no beam was used in this structure.

In Site 3 area, a part of a semi-circular bastion like stone structure has been exposed with 14 courses of dressed stone slabs set in mud mortar. Our surface survey at this area conducted at least 10 years back also noticed this bastion but without the detail of the construction method. (Fig. 18a) According to the excavator it could be the portion of Baisgazi Wall on the western side of the mound. He also added the fact that due to brick robbing the exposed top of the wall is extremely damaged and possibly the wall was repaired and mended in Mughal period since the facing of it made of *lakhauri* brick.

Site 2 area is located on the western peripheral zone of the mound from where the land is sloping towards the river which is presently a dried up bed used for cultivation. The top of an arched structure was already visible here and to find out the link between this and an already exposed remains on west of it, ASI team tapped this area and interesting findings have been located. The most interesting feature noticed in this part is the discovery of strong iron chains, the inner part of which are embedded in the walls. Besides this, some hook like devices have also been noticed. All these evidence give clear indication to the anchoring of boats and it may be assumed that the river Ganga used to flow pretty close to it. A series of strong walls and the arched guard room like structure would suggest that it was part of the western enclosure wall of the Palace. (Fig.18b)

Apart from these excavations, two scientific clearance works have also been conducted, one at the site of tombs of Husain Shah and the other is a bit away from the citadel complex further south-east at the mound of Chand Saudagarer Bhita. Location of the Husain Shah's tomb was enigmatic and earlier scholars were of different opinion regarding its location outside the palace on north-eastern side. The clearance work undertaken at the site on the north east corner outside the Baisgazi wall covered with jungle unveiled an enclosure wall laid in brick covering an area of 27.70 m x 14.80 m. From the remains of the structure it may be ascertained that there were four minarets at the corners of the

building, bases with a diameter of 2.20 m. The remains of the minarates still contain 2-3 layers of blue enamelled wedge shaped brick. The inner floor of lime concrete, a fragmentary stone column at the entrance and a number of other architectural member in stone are among the other finds.

Trial clearance at the mound known as Chand Saudagorer Bhita was undertaken with an objective to expose the wall noticed there and to trace the material evidence of pre-sultanate era. A trial trench of 10m x 10m at the western corner of the mound yielded successive floors of lime *surkhi* and brick soling, a brick wall, its foundation and lime concrete floor along with a exquisitely ornamental stone pillar with motifs of a rekha temple, human figures and foliage. It may also be mentioned that the entire mound is strewn over with stone pillars. These evidences led the excavator to conclude that the site inhumed a pre-Islamic architecture.³⁸

We are, however, still inclined to believe this mound represents the site of the Belbari madrasah because finding of pre-Islamic building material from a huge structural mound cannot be the only criteria to determine its age unless further excavation reveals its ground plan and other components to affirm the nature of the structure. There are so many examples in Bengal as well as in India where pre-Islamic architectural elements were widely re-used in an Islamic monument.

Acknowledgements

The antiquities illustrated in Figures 2-7 and 12 belong to the collection of the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal barring 2g and 4a and these are published through the *courtesy* of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, West Bengal. The artefact illustrated in Fig. 2g (2h is the reverse of the same) belongs to the collection of Gaur Social Welfare Mission and published through *courtesy* of the Mission. Two stone pillars and antiquities illustrated respectively in Fig. 15 and Fig. 1 belong to the collection of Mahadipur High School, Mahadipur, Malda and published through *courtesy* of the school.

38 Bandyopadhyay, *Op. cit.*, 2006, p. 29.

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Drawing and Map Credit: Figure 3: Shri Kaushik Halder, Ex- Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal; Maps in Figures 8 & 9: Shri Debanjan Mitra, Deccan College, Pune.

Editing of illustrations: Shri. Raktim Baran Chakraborty, Kolkata.

Illustrations

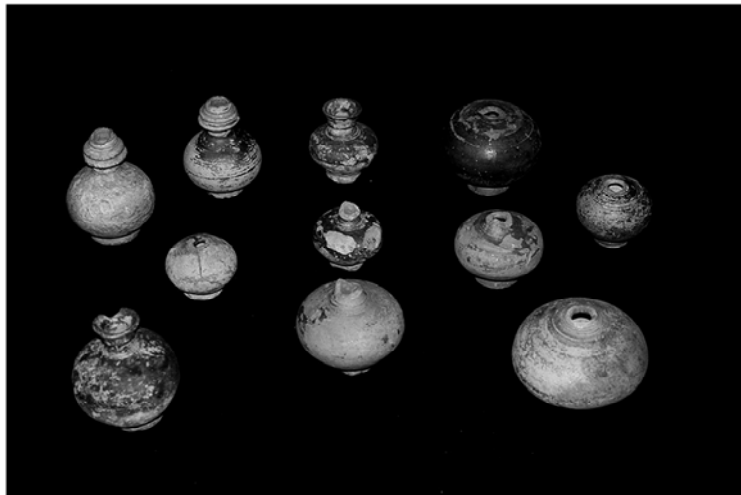


Fig. 1: Coarse pottery: bottle necked miniature vessels.

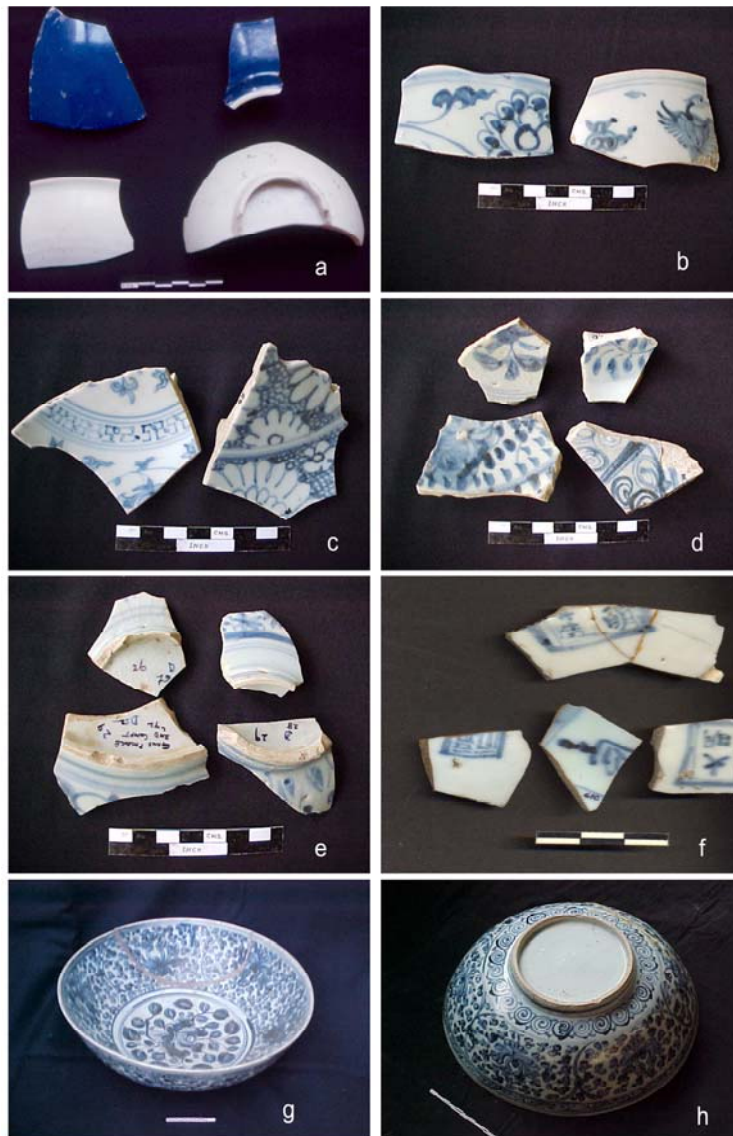


Fig. 2: Porcelains: sherds are mostly blue on white, white and blue of various shapes and sizes.

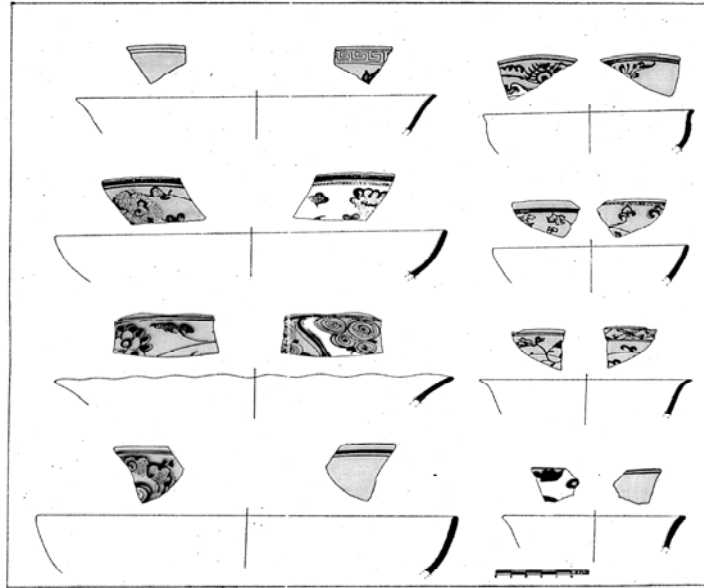


Fig. 3: Reconstruction drawing of porcelain sherds.

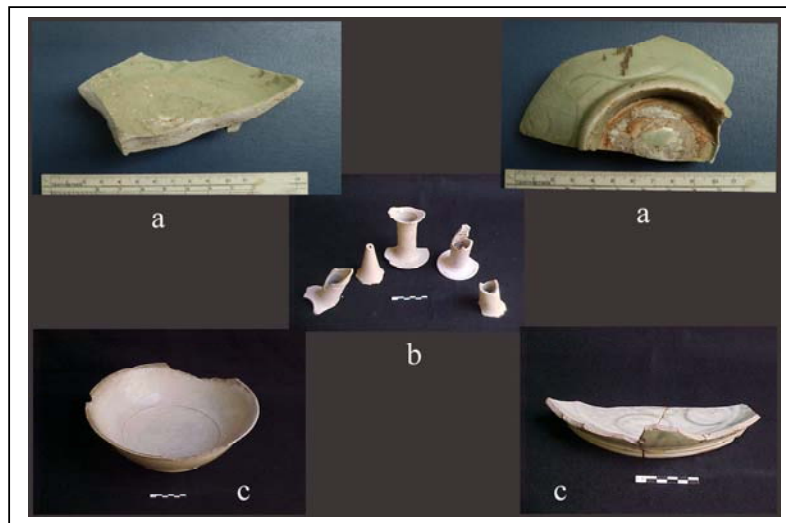


Fig. 4: a) Celadon ware: sherd of a footed bowl olive green in colour with self-designs; b) spouts of buff-coloured ceramic; c) Glazed ware: a bowl and a broken shallow basin.

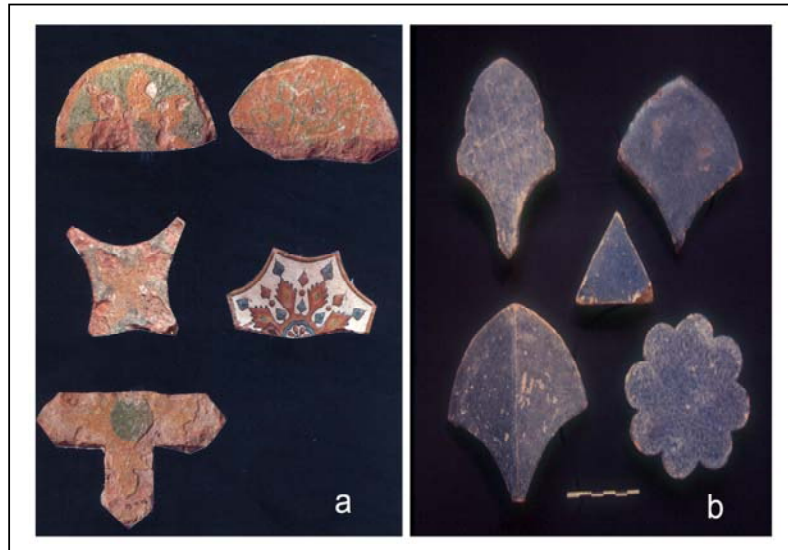


Fig. 5: Glazed floor tiles: a) polychrome of different shapes and sizes; b) monochrome of different shapes and sizes.



Fig. 6a: Glazed bricks: bi-chrome.



Fig. 6b: Glazed bricks: polychrome of different shapes and sizes.

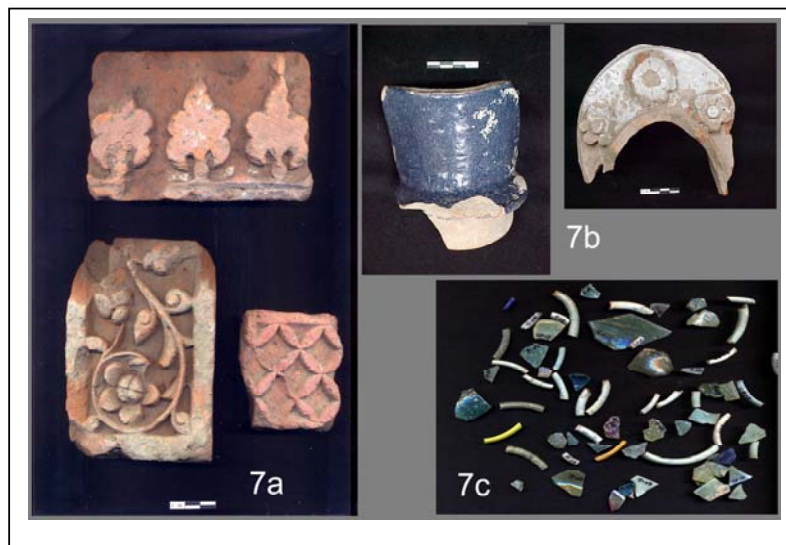


Fig. 7: a) Unglazed bricks: decorated; b) Glazed half-circular roof tiles, sometimes with a decorated rim; c) Small glass objects like miniature bottles, small cups and pieces of glass bangles.

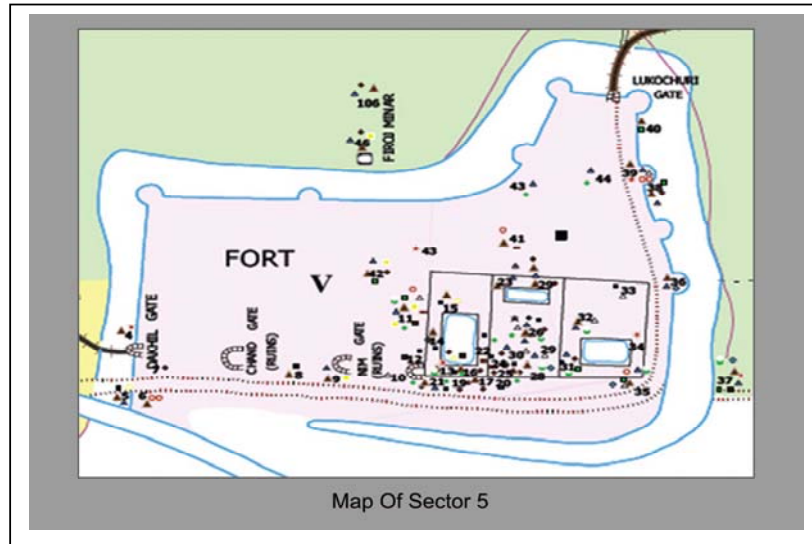


Fig. 9: Digital map of Sector 5 showing cluster of sites.



Fig. 10: Henry Creighton's painting of Chand Gate (now disappeared) and photograph of its inscription now affixed to Minaronwali Mosque in Mahadipur, P.S. English Bazar.

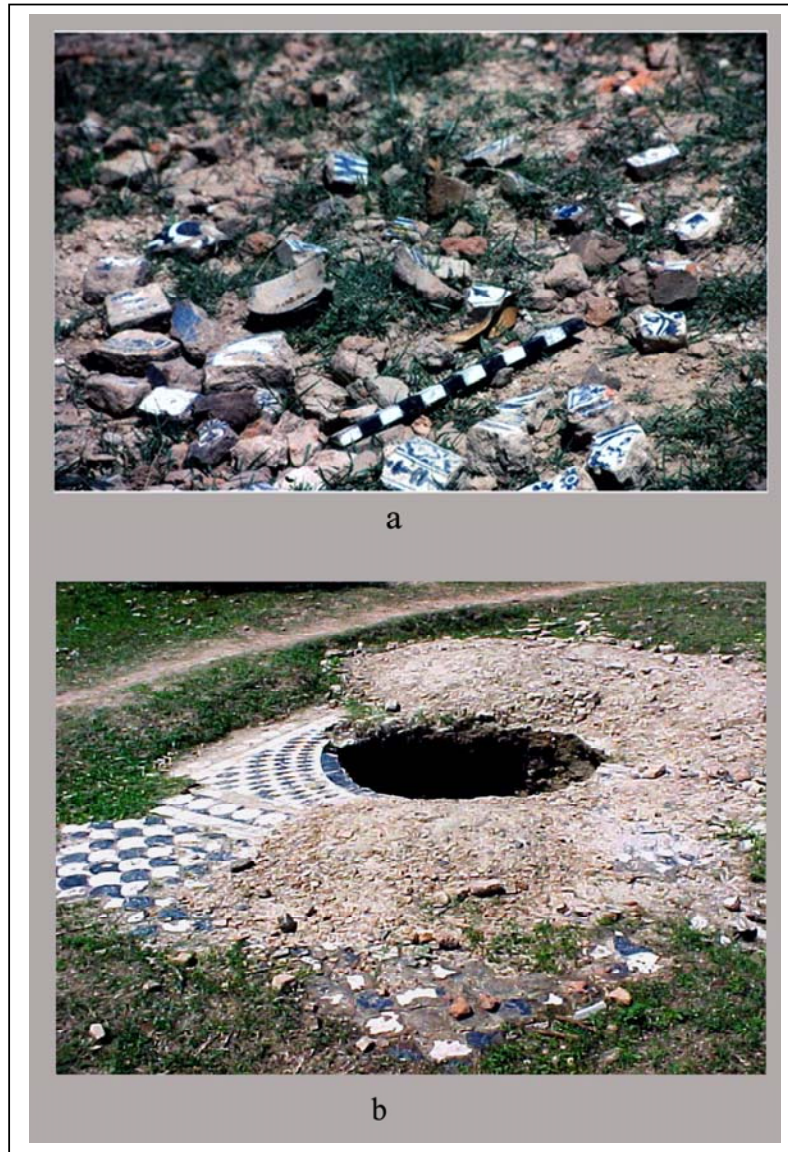


Fig. 11: a) A site in the first compartment of the Palace with glazed bricks and tiles scattered over; b) Bi-chrome tiled floor at the second compartment of the Palace, now much worn-out.



Fig. 12: Blue on white porcelain sherds with inscriptions in proto-Bengali script.



Fig. 13: a) Site of Cemetery A with cenotaph and pillar base strewn over; b) Area around Chika building designated as Cemetery B.

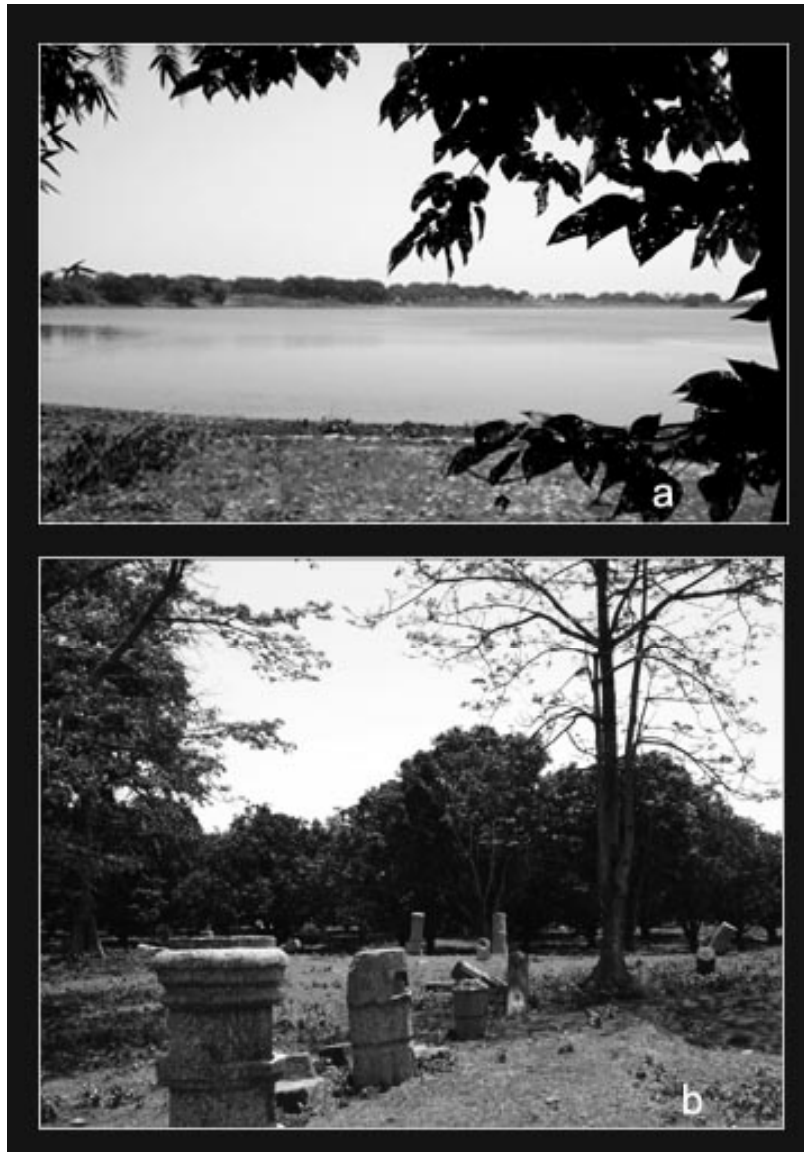


Fig. 14: a) Choto Sagar Dighi in Noble's quarter; b) mound of Belbari madrasah with large numbers of stone pillars strewn over it.

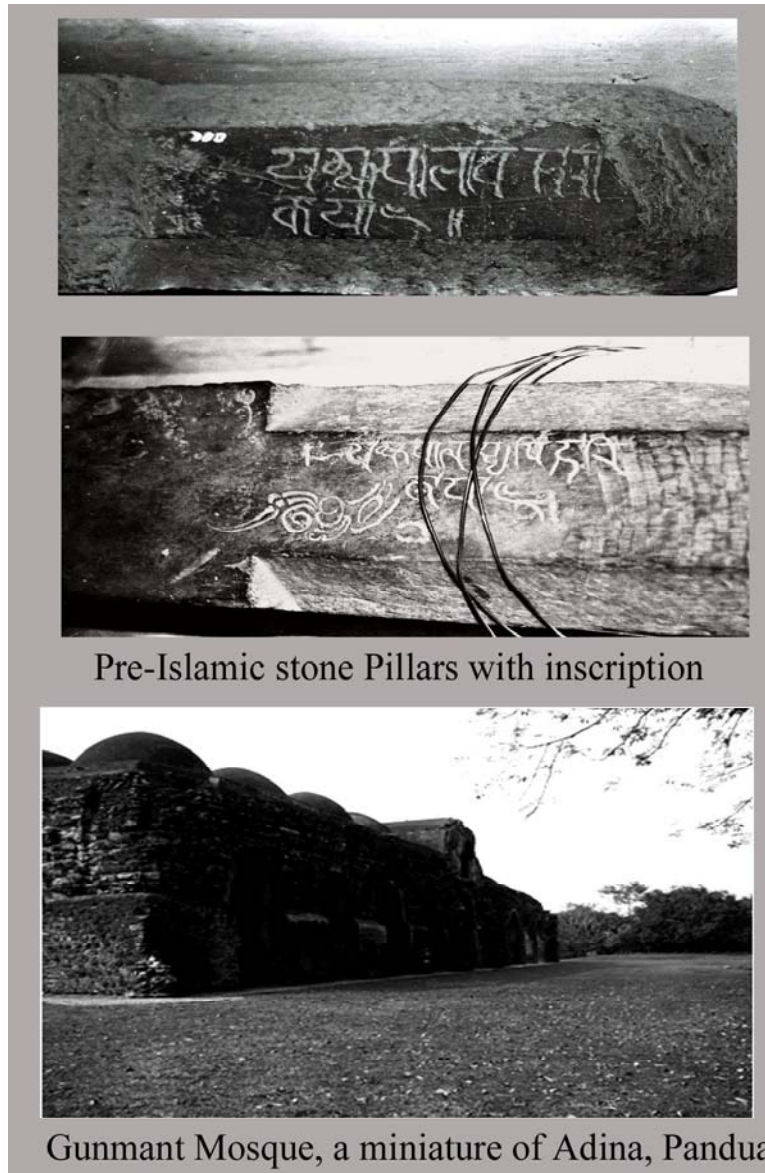


Fig. 15: a) Pre-Islamic stone pillars with inscription referring *Yakshapaladeva* preserved in Mahadipur High School; b) Gunmant mosque, the Jami mosque in the south of the City following plan of Adina in Pandua.

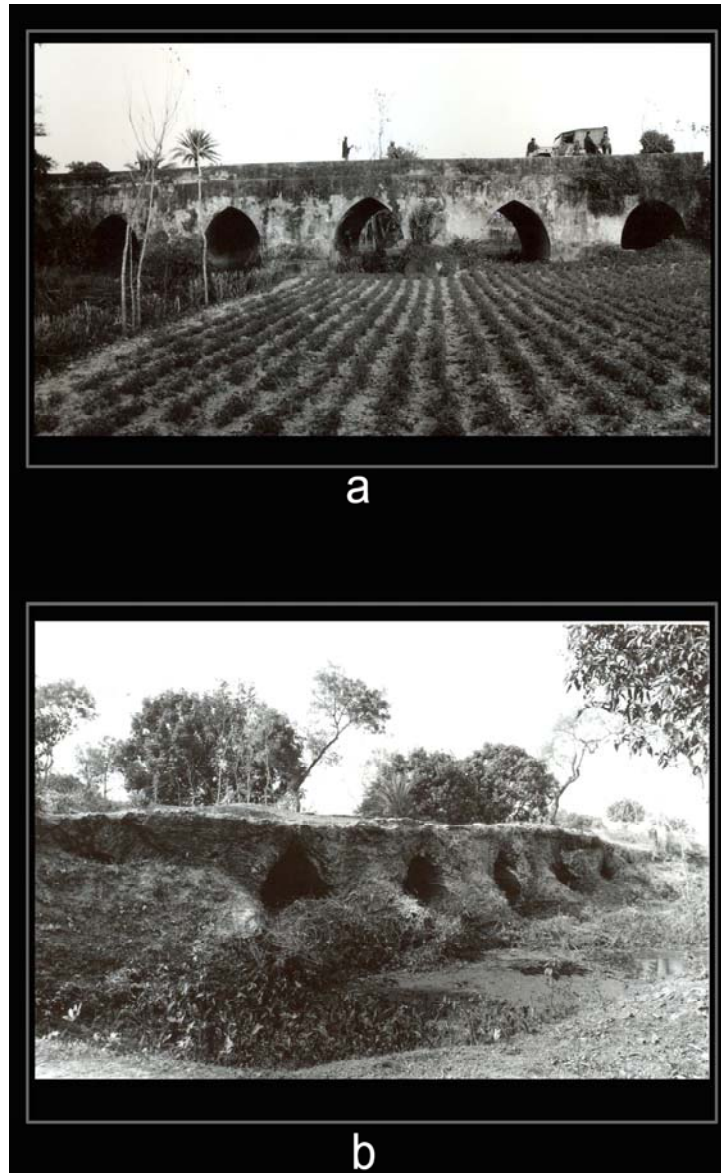


Fig. 16: a) Bridge of five arches on the Shibganj Road; b) Bridge of seven arches near Gunmant Mosque.

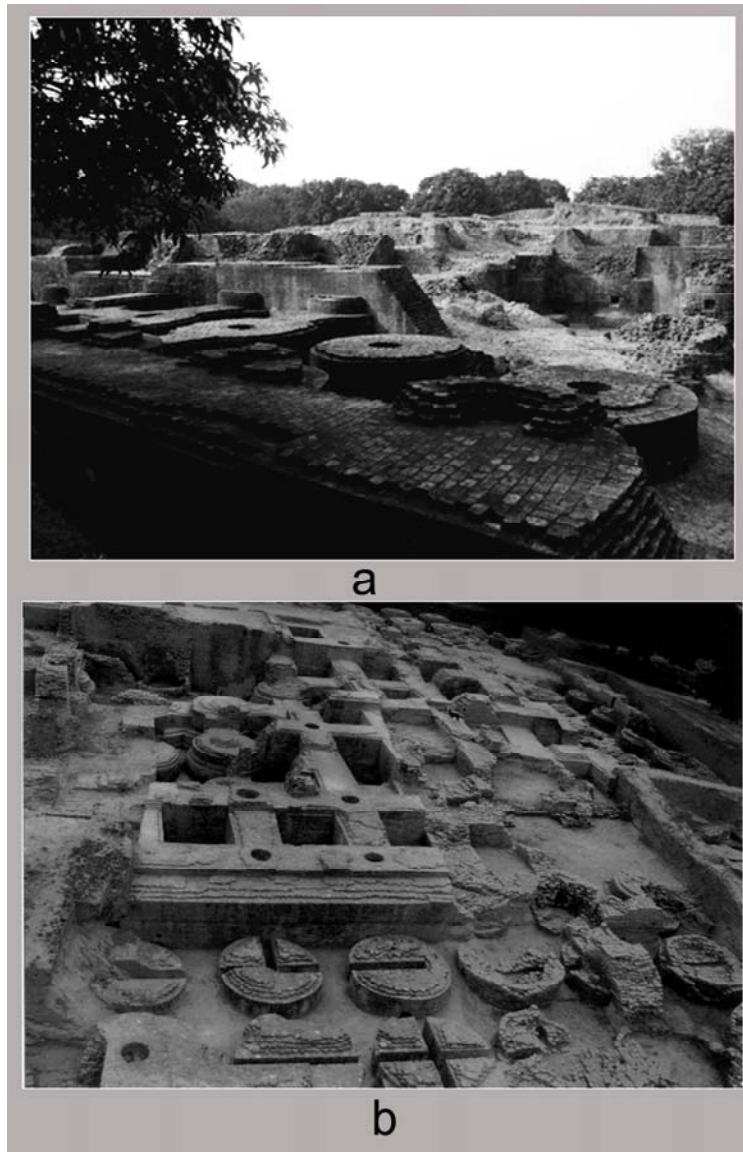


Fig. 17: Excavation in Gaur by ASI: a) Structure within a walled enclosure; b) The full view of the enigmatic underground brick structure exposed through excavation.



Fig. 18: Excavation in Gaur by ASI: a) A part of a semi-circular bastion like structure; b) Arched guard room with embedded iron chain.

TAGORE'S POETRY IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION : A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), generally regarded as the most important poet in Bengali, is also the most translated Bengali poet. It is well-known that Tagore himself is one of the significant translators of his poems, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 for his first volume of translated poetry *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912). Apart from Tagore there are many other translators whose translations have been published in book forms. My searches show that more than sixty volumes of translated poetry by individual translators have appeared in print by the end of 2011. The objective of the present article is to discuss the phenomena related to these translations such as the publishing agents, places of publications, the trends of translations over time and most importantly the distinctive features or the quality of these translations as far as possible.

Rabindranath Tagore's poems began to appear in English translation in the first decade of the twentieth century. Tagore's self-translated Nobel winning *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*, which contains prose translations of a collection of 103 poems translated from his nine different Bengali works, was first published in 1912. Before 1912 the only published work that included some translations of Tagore's poems is *Echoes from East and West*.¹ That Tagore himself played a significant role in translating his poems is well-known. For more than a decade he almost single-handedly translated his poems. Translations by other translators began to appear in print from 1922. The colonial phase of the 20th century (till 1947) produced at least twelve translated works from his Bengali poems, out of which six were by Tagore himself. Between 1948 and 2011 more

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1 In 1909 Roby Dutta translated eight poems from Tagore and included them along with other materials in his work *Echoes from East and West*. Roby Dutta, *Echoes from East and West* (Cambridge: Galway and Porter, 1909). This book is extremely rare. It has been listed in Meera Chhottopadhyā's *Rabindra Racanār Imreji-Anubād Suci* [History of Tagore Translation], Vol. 1 (Kolkata: Sreeguru Prakashan, 1993).

than fifty-five translated volumes by individual translators appeared in print. Of course, there are some articles, reviews, books etc. that list and describe and/or criticize translations of Tagore's poems. The main objective of this article is to provide an overall idea about the stock of translations by individual translators till the present time and identify the phenomena related to these translations.

If translation of any poet is difficult, translating Tagore is more so. "The beauty that Tagore creates by a deft combination of words and rhymes is something... that cannot be remedied in any English translation however skilful it may be", says one of his translators.² Another translator has pointed out that Tagore has already "suffered greatly, in comparison with any other great literary figure from bad translation."³ Over the ages, however, Tagore has been translated and continues to be translated. While most translators have admitted the essential inadequacy of their translations, some claim that they have been able to incorporate all the nuances of the original poems. Andre Lefevere, a translation theorist, notes that translation is 'the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting' and translation is potentially the most influential because it is able 'to project the image of an author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their origin or culture.'⁴ Obviously, translation is a kind of rewriting, but some sort of relationship should be established between the original and the translation. Most translation theorists and practitioners feel that a translated poem should read like a poem and a good poem should not be a bad one in translation.⁵ In the present paper this view of translation scholars has been taken into consideration.

2 Abu Rushd, *Selected Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* (Dhaka: Rabindra Charcha Kendra, Dhaka), Introduction.

3 Pratima Bowes, *Some Songs and Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1984), p. xxiii.

4 Andrey Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 39.

5 For example Eugene Nida says that 'a lyric poem translated as prose is not an adequate equivalent of the original.' Eugene Nida, "Principles In Correspondence" in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed., Lawrence Venuti, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.126; According to Katharina Reiss the literary text should express the artistic and aesthetic quality of the original. Katherina Reiss, "Type, Kind and Individuality of Text: Decision Making in Translation" in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed., Lawrence Venuti, p.163; Donal Davie says that in translating a rhymed verse rhyme is the first thing to go, and meter the second. Quoted in Charles Tomlinson, ed., *The Oxford Book of Verse in English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.xii.

Between 1912 and 1921 Rabindranath Tagore brought out six volumes of translated poetry from his Bengali originals. These are: *Song Offerings: Gitanjali* (1912); *The Gardener* (1913); *The Crescent Moon* (1913); *Fruit Gathering* (1916); *Lovers Gift and Crossings* (1918) and *The Fugitive* (1921). The success of his first work *Song Offerings: Gitanjali* (1912) was overwhelming.⁶ Within a year *Gitanjali* had gone through thirteen impressions. A year after the publication of *Gitanjali*, the poet was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, the first Asian to be thus honoured:

...the small collection of poems. . . creates such a surprisingly rich and genuinely poetic impressions that there is nothing odd and absurd in the proposal to reward it with such a distinction as it is a question here. . . . It is certain, however, that no poet in Europe since the death of Goethe in 1882 can rival Tagore in noble humanity, in unaffected greatness, in classical tranquility.⁷

The overwhelming success of *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912) prompted Tagore to translate many more of his poems. But Tagore's translations of his other works came under much adverse comment and Tagore gradually lost his readership in the West. Mahasweta Sengupta in her PhD thesis titled *Colonial Poetics: Rabindranath Tagore in Two Worlds* (1990) has tried to explain why Tagore's readership in the west decreased so rapidly. One of the reasons, she mentions, is the colonial poetics:

The interesting point in Rabindranath's case—his own translation of poems written by himself in Bengali—is that the self that he was presenting to the other was in a large sense a creation of that other. The mystic or spiritual Indian was a familiar sphere in which the colonizer could accommodate a native; this self, which Rabindranath presented in his English versions was a constituted subject which conform to the boundaries of the discourse that legitimized the native within certain permitted areas. . . . The problem becomes apparent when Rabindranath started translating varied kinds of poems that were not of a specially devotional or spiritual kind.⁸

6 The book contains translations of a selection of 103 poems translated from nine different works. In October 1912, India Society published 700 copies. The next year Macmillan and Co., published the book for a general audience. Some valuable discussions about the book can be found in the following locations: Buddhadeva Bose, *An Acre of Green Grass* (Kolkata: Papyrus, 1948; Reprinted 1997), pp.13-25.; Meera Chottopadhyaya, *Rabindra Racanār Imreji-Anubād Sucī* [History of Tagore Translation], Vol. 1 (Sreeguru Prakashan, 1993) pp. 27-59; Fakrul Alam, "Translating Rabindranath Tagore's Poems" in *Translation Theory and Practice* (Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Ltd., 2004), pp. 42-45.

7 Quoted in Krishna Kripalani, *Tagore: A Life* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1986), pp. 132-133.

8 Mahasweta Sengupta, "Colonial Poetics: Rabindranath Tagore in Two Worlds", Ph.D dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1990, p. 117.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote a very short preface explaining the nature of the poems in *The Gardener* (1913).⁹ He admitted that the translations made from his original Bengali poems are not always literal – ‘the original being sometimes abridged and sometimes paraphrased’.¹⁰ About the quality of translation in *The Gardener* Sujit Mukherjee says:

... compared to the lavish texture of the originals, their English versions in *The Gardener* lack in depth and substance... Guided solely by the criterion of clarity, he has reconstructed the originals with the mere prop of meaning. Everything that is complex or intense in the original has been skipped over and large portions have been sacrificed for the sake of simple rendering. What remains is a bare framework of sentences, without any of the interaction between words that is the stuff of poetry.¹¹

Tagore’s third book of translated poetry from his Bengali originals is *The Crescent Moon* (1913).¹² This book contains translation of forty poems, most of which were selected from the original *Śiśu* (1903), which Tagore wrote for children. In translating these poems Tagore hardly took any care to retain the essential literary qualities of the originals. Mahasweta Sengupta comments that these translations ‘lack the concrete sensuousness of the originals, and seem to be rather wordy. . . sentimental and ponderous.’¹³

Tagore brought out *Fruit Gathering* (1916)¹⁴ being conscious of the failure of *The Crescent Moon* (1913). In this book he tries to bring variety by choosing poems from *The Balakā* (1916) volume. The original *Balakā* poems are remarkably free in form and intellectually abstract in content. It is exceptionally difficult to retain these aspects of the original in translation. Of course Tagore did not include the more complex poems of the originals. But obviously, the presence of *The Balakā* poems in the collection makes Tagore different from his earlier works in English. As Sujit Mukherjee remarks: ‘The presence of these poems in *Fruit Gathering* brings Tagore’s career as poet in English out of

9 Rabindranath Tagore, *The Gardener* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913). This book contains translation of eighty-five poems, the originals of which were selected from fifteen different works written and published over a span of nearly thirty years.

10 Rabindranath Tagore, *The Gardener*, *Ibid*, Preface.

11 Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on Indian Literature in English Translation* (Kolkata: Orient Longman, 1992), p. 1.

12 Rabindranath Tagore, *The Crescent Moon* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913).

13 Mahasweta Sengupta, “Colonial Poetics: Rabindranath Tagore in Two Worlds”, p. 124.

14 Rabindranath Tagore, *Fruit Gathering* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1916). This book contains translation of eighty-six poems selected from different works.

the familiar territory surrounding the English *Gitanjali*, but not far enough out to dispel permanently the initial impression of langour and misty effulgence'.¹⁵

Tagore included translation of 138 poems in *The Lover's Gift and Crossing* (1918)¹⁶ This book also suffers from bad translations. Some translations in the book are badly abridged and paraphrased. For example, the opening poem of the book 'Shah-Jehan', the original of which has six sections and 151 lines, have become six prose stanzas, altogether 17 lines. Some translations in the volume were done so freely that the original poems are difficult to identify in some cases.

*The Fugitive*¹⁷ was the last anthology of poems translated by the poet. The translations of poems in this volume are also highly deficient and none communicates the resonance and wealth of the originals. The poems of *Sonār Tarī* and *Balākā* are so ruthlessly abridged that they appear as riddles. The poem 'Urbaṣī' from *Balākā* labours to capture the original but the last two stanzas are left untranslated. However, some *Palātākā* poems in the volume are rendered comparatively well.¹⁸

After the publication of *The Fugitive*, Tagore did not publish any more new volumes of translations. He turned away from translating his poems. It was as if he could realize the defects of his translations and repented having attempted them at all.¹⁹ In 1915 Tagore wrote to William Rothenstein: "My translations are frankly prose—my aim is to make them simple with just a suggestion of rhythm to give them a touch of the lyric, avoiding all archaisms and poetical conventions"²⁰ Elsewhere, Tagore compares this process of simplification in a more elaborate manner:

Nobody in this country would accept that these are translations—everyone says that they are much better in their original form. I can not just disapprove of their opinion as entirely false. In fact, one can not just translate one's own works. Because my right regarding my own works is not of an adventitious kind...I try to represent in English the essential meaning of the poem. That creates a gulf of difference. You would not even be able to identify a poem unless I tell you which it

15 Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays*, p. 109.

16 Rabindranath Tagore, *Lovers Gift and Crossing* (New York: Macmillan, 1918).

17 Rabindranath Tagore, *The Fugitive* (New York: Macmillan, 1921).

18 Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays*, p. 112.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

20 Quoted in Mary M. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 195.

is. Many of the poems have actually become much shorter in this process. When a poem is expressed in Bengali, it appears with all the majesty of the language; she can not but display her patrimonial wealth in public. But all these ornaments become a burden when carried in a trip to a distant land. Whatever it is, jewellery and beautiful dresses are not meant for pilgrimages. That is why I am engaged in the act of divesting my poems of their adornments—she has not given up the signs of her marriage like vermillion mark or the iron bangle, she has not turned into a European lady, but shorn of her ornaments, she is wearing completely new attire.²¹

It is not surprising or accidental that Tagore, while translating his own poems, was well aware of the true nature of his translations. The audience in his mind were westerners. Victoria Ocampo cites an example as proof of this:

Leaning over the pages spread out before him, I could see, undecipherable, like the traces of bird's feet on the sand, the delicate, mysterious patterns of the Bengali characters. Tagore took up the page and started translating, literally, he told me. What he read, unhesitating sometimes, seemed to me tremendously enlightening. It was as if by a miracle, or chance I had entered into direct contact, at last, with the poetic material (or raw material) of the written thing without having on the pair of gloves translations always are....I asked Tagore to put the English version into writing later. On the next day he gave it to me, written in his beautiful handwriting. I read the poem in his presence and could not conceal my disappointment. 'But such and such things you read to me yesterday and not here' I reproached him. 'Why did you suppress them? They were the centre, the heart of the poem' He replied that he thought that would not interest Westerners.²²

Translations by others began to appear in book form by 1922. Between 1922 and 1929 three significant works were published. These were Bhabani Bhattacharya's *The Golden Boat*, published from London by Allen and Unwin in 1922; translations by Edward J Thomson that appeared in *The Augustan Book of Poems* published from London by Ernest Benn in 1925 and Nagendranath Gupta's *Sheaves* published from Allahabad by Indian Press in 1925.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's *The Golden Boat*²³ includes translations of a selection of thirty- two poems from various works of the poet. Most of these poems in the original are lyrics and have a story-like quality. Each of these poems also has a distinctive form that is rhymed and metrically arranged. In translating these poems, however, Bhattacharya emphasised only the story elements of the

21 Quoted in Mahasweta Sengupta, *Colonial Poetics: Rabindranth Tagore in Two Worlds*, p. 135.

22 Victoria Ocampo, "Tagore on the Banks of the River Plate" in *Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary Volume* (New Delhi: Sahitya Academi, 1961), pp. 43-44.

23 The first Indian edition of the book came out in 1956 from Jaico Publishing House; First Jaico impression came out in 1999 and second in 2000.

poems. Perhaps he imitated Tagore's style of prose translation. He avoided translating those lines or words that were repetitive and did not sound good in prose narrative. Bhattacharya also took liberty to change the titles of some poems. One such example is the title 'Guru Govinda,' the source title of which is 'śeṣ śikṣā' (Literally 'The Last Lesson'). Obviously, Bhattacharya took such liberty to translate the poems because he wanted to make the translations easily accessible to the target audience (here the western audience). The book did not have any reprints or editions for a long time though it has been made available today by India's Jaica Publishing House.

Edward J Thomson's *Augustan Book of Poems* (1925) contains translations of 21 poems selected from various works of Tagore. Thomson²⁴ was a pioneering translator who thought of translating Tagore's lyric in verse and made an effort at reproducing an equivalent verse pattern in English. He criticized Tagore's prose translations of his beautiful lyrics and claimed his success of recreating equivalent verses in English. In the Preface of his *Augustan Book of Poems* (1925) he states that his 'translations are in the meter of the original or as close a meter as I could find'.²⁵ Thomson's claim has been criticized by William Radice who says:

The expressive form of Tagore's verse is that of the Padma, the Ganges, mighty in her calm. The expressive form of Thomson's translation is of an English country garden, which produces an odd discord between form and content. It is a case of the dangers of trying to reproduce a verse form in another language, rather than finding an equivalent form.²⁶

Nagendranath Gupta's *Sheaves*, containing translations of eighty poems, was first published in 1929 by Indian Press, Allahabad, and later in 1951 by Philosophical Library, New York. In the introduction to the volume, Gupta says that his translations are in free verse and admits the difficulty of maintaining rhyme and meter in translation. He comments that it is most frustrating to translate a lyric poem. A beautiful lyric, he says, 'is a sparkling little jewel of

24 Thomson was a Wesleyan missionary working in Bengal from 1910 to 1923 and became Principal of the college at Bankura. He knew Tagore personally and wrote two books on him: *Rabindranath Tagore: His Life and Work*, for the Heritage of India series (London: OUP, 1926, revised 1948) and *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist* (London: OUP, 1926, revised 1948). He was a poet himself and spent his later years teaching Bengali at Oxford to ICS recruits.

25 Edward Thomson, *The Augustan Book of Poetry* (London: Earnest Benn, 1925), Preface.

26 William Radice, "Tagore's Poetry in English Translation", *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, May-Oct., 1976. pp. 12-13.

which every facet is carefully cut by the poet jeweler and its setting is the language in which it is composed. A duplication or imitation of such a gem may prove to be mere paste.²⁷ Thus Nagendranath acknowledges the inadequacy that lies in his own renderings. However, his translations were appreciated rather extravagantly in one of the reviews:

‘Mr. Nagendranath Gupta has earned the best thanks of the lovers of Rabindranath in India and abroad for his excellent translations of the great poet’s songs and lyrics... His vocabulary is vast and as a translator he has the sense of the inevitable word... Taking the poet’s own matchless renderings as a standard, Mr. Gupta’s achievement does not fall far short of it and there are occasions when the translation rises to the beauty and dignity of the original, as we find in his *Urvasi* ... Here we have an example of that magic art of translation which faithfully gives us the sense, the spirit, the poetry, and the music of the original with a few apt, direct and absolute words.’²⁸

The nineteen thirties and forties saw a gap in Tagore translation. New translations were hardly produced during the period. The only significant works were the two compiled anthologies from Tagore’s own translations. One is the *Collected Poems and Plays* compiled and published in 1936 by Macmillan and Co., London and the other is *Poems* published in 1942 by Visva-Bharati Kolkata.

The fifties, however, produced a significant number of translations from Tagore. Between 1955 and 1957 at least four books were published by three translators. These were Sheila Chatterjee’s *Syamali* published in 1955 by Visva-Bharati, Kolkata; Aurobindo Bose’s *A Flight of Swans* and *The Herald of Spring* published from London by John Muray respectively in 1955 and 1957, and Kumaresh Ray’s *Glimpse of Tagore’s Poems in English Verse* published in 1956 by Economic Press, Kolkata.

Sheila Chatterjee’s *Syamali* is a complete translated version of Tagore’s Bengali work *Syāmalī* (1936). Her translations have been appreciated in a review by William Radice who comments that Sheila Chatterjee had shown remarkable success in her attempt to translate the *Syamali* poems. Radice compares the Bengali original poem ‘Āmi’ with Chatterjee’s translation ‘I’ and comments:

Her translation has strength and elegance. There is a contrast of sound quality in lines such as ‘In a sky devoid of blue, / wrapped in the mathematics of impersonal existence’ that has much to do with the way the Bengali works. In the line ‘From distance to distance in the far away eternal myriad worlds’, the pairing of sounds—

27 Nagendranath Gupta, *Sheaves* (Allahbad: Indian Press 1922), Introduction.

28 *The Modern Review*, 5 May 1930.

distance, far/away, eternal/myriad— has something in common with the Bengali 'dūrānte ananta asaṃkhyā loke lokantare.'... It is not great translation, but it is serviceable. On the whole I would recommend this book as the best piece of extended Tagore verse translation I have come across.²⁹

Kumaresh Ray's *Glimpses of Tagore's Poems in English Verse* published translations of twenty-three poems. He attempted to translate Tagore competently. In the introductory note Ray stated: 'My attempt is to translate the selected poems considering the forms, themes and tone of the originals... there have been pioneers no doubt but their number is few and their work, casual and stray... my attempt is to make a more regular and consolidated presentation.' Ray's work, however, has not been able to create a significant readership because the book has not been in print for a long time.

One of the prolific translators of Tagore's poems in the fifties, sixties and seventies is Aurobindo Bose. Apart from the two books mentioned above, Bose published three other volumes. These are *Wings of Death* published from London by John Murray in 1960; *Later Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* published from New Delhi by Peter Owen Ltd. in 1974 and *Lipikā* published from London by Peter Owen Ltd in 1977. Bose translated Tagore mainly for his 'love for Gurudeb' and to present his greatness to western readers through translations.³⁰

In *A Flight of Swans* Bose translated all the poems from the original *Balāka* (1916). In the Preface he says: 'I have attempted to translate the poems literally though they may sound at places a little strange to English ears'. In *Herald of Spring* he translated 34 poems out of 101 poems of *Mahuā* (1929). In the Preface he says: 'I have translated roughly half of the *Mahuā* poems and the other half is beyond my capacity.' His *Wings of Death* contains translations of 71 poems selected from four different poetical works— *Prāntik* (1938) *Rogśayyāy* (1940), *Ārogya* (1941) and *Śeṣ Lekhā* (1941). Again, *Later Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* contains fifty-five poems selected from seven different poetical works— *Pariśeṣ* (1931), *Nabajātak* (1939), *Patrapuṭ* (1936), *Shyāmālī* (1936), *Bicitrā* (1932), *Sānāi* (1940), and *Pūrabī* (1925). Lastly in *Lipikā* Bose translated all the prose poems of the Bengali work *Lipikā* (1922).

Bose's translations were reviewed by William Radice who contested Bose's claim that he is literal in his approach to translation. Radice quoted from 'The Young

29 William Radice, "Tagore's Poetry in English Translation", p. 16.

30 Aurobindo Bose, *A Flight of Swans* (London: John Murray, 1955), Preface.

Bride' (Naba Badhu), one of the translated poems from *Mahuā*, and shows that 'Bose left nine important words untranslated', the phrase 'in robes of crimson' is not in the original, the word 'tender' is a downright mistranslation of the wonderful Bengali word *mlan* (thin, pale, emaciated, wraith-like).³¹ Radice commented that as Bose did not try to capture the technical aspects of the original such as rhyme and form he should have retained the richness of content adequately.³²

A more productive period of Tagore's poems in English translation is the sixties. The remarkable publication during this time is the volume, *One Hundred and One* (1966) edited by Humayun Kabir, handsomely published by Asia Publishing House, London.³³ Eighteen translators contributed to the making of this anthology. Amalendu Bose and the editor Humayun Kabir top the list as translators of eight poems each while Buddhadev Bose translated two poems and Lila Ray only one. In reviewing this book Sujit Mukherjee commented:

One Hundred and One is not an anthology of translations as translations, but a collection of assignments given to several people who shared a common devotion to Rabindranath. ... Any attempt at concentrating on the quality of these translations is diverted by the ills that customary Tagore translation is heir to... a

31 William Radice, "Tagore's Poetry in English Translation", p. 15.

32 A sample translation from Bose is given here as illustration:

Source Text

'chabi' (from Balākā)
 tumi ki kebal chabi, śudhu paṭe likhā?
 ai-ye sudūr nīhārikā
 yārā kare āche bhīṛ
 akāśer nīṛ
 ai yārā dinrātri
 ālo-hāte caliāche ādhārer yātri
 graha tārā rabi,
 tumi ki tāder mata satya nao?
 hāi chabi, tumi śudhu chabi?

Translated Text

Art thou a picture, only a picture?
 Art thou not as real as the distant stars?
 Which cluster in the heavens, traveling through the darkness
 With lights in their hand
 Art thou not as true as these?
 Alas, only a picture, nothing more.

33 *One Hundred and One* remains out of print for a long time. In 2005 this same book was reprinted by UBSPD under the title *Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*.

large number of these translations do not sound like contemporary work at all, they seem to echo our Victorian past.³⁴

In the sixties other works of poetry translation from Tagore include *Poems from Puravi* (1960) by Kshitis Roy; *The Later Poems of Tagore* (1961) and *Tagore for You* (1966) by Sisirkumar Ghose; *Anthology of One Hundred Songs of Rabindranath Tagore in Staff Notation*, Vol 1 and 2 (1961, 1967); *A Bunch of Poems* (1962) by Monika Verma and *Boundless Sky* (1964). *Poems from Puravi* (1960) by Kshitis Roy is a slim volume that was published for private circulation. This book contains translations of seven poems— six from Tagore's *Purabi* (1925) and one from *Ses Lekhā* (1941). Monika Verma's *A Bunch of Poems* (1962) is also a slim volume containing translations of only five poems from *Shyāmali* (1936). The book was published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata. In the introductory note Monika Verma claims that each of her translated poems 'must stand on its own merit, as a poem, not as just a translation.'³⁵ *Boundless Sky* (1964) is an anthology handsomely published by Visva-Bharati. This book includes translations of forty-six poems along with other translated items. The translations chosen are from Tagore's own English versions, excepting a few that were collected from the published translations in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* between 1925 and 1937. Sisirkumar Ghose's *The Later Poems of Tagore* (1961) and *Tagore for You* (1966) are not exclusively works of translation. In *The Later Poems of Tagore* Ghose translated some poems partly or completely while discussing the greatness of Tagore. His *Tagore for You* is more or less of the same nature. The book includes translations of a total of twenty-seven poems along with some essays, parables and letters. *Anthology of One Hundred Songs of Rabindranath Tagore in Staff Notation*, volume one, was published in 1961 and volume two in 1967. Each of the volumes includes 50 songs. Transliterations of the songs were by K.P Biswas and Trina Pandit transcribed them into staff notation. Most of the translations were by Kshitis Roy and a few were by Tagore.

The year 1969 saw the appearance of two volumes of translated poems from Tagore. One was Sisir Chattopadhyay's *Patraput* published from Kolkata by Pathikrit Prakashani and the other was Rabindra Nath Choudhury's *Fifteen Longer Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* published by Shri Rabindranath Choudhury from Orissa. *Patraput* includes Sisir Chattopadhyay's translation of

34 Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays*, pp. 60-63.

35 Monika Verma, *A Bunch of Poems* (Writers Workshop, 1962), Introduction.

all the fifteen poems from the Bengali *Patrapuṭ* (1936). Chattopadhyay said nothing about his translations or his approach to translation beyond declaring that he had ‘attempted to translate these poems as Tagore did not have the time to translate them.’ With Rabindra Nath Choudhury’s *Fifteen Longer Poems*, an interesting variation in title is noticeable. The same book was published by Orient Paperback in 1975 with the title *Love Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*. In the Introduction of his work, Choudhury comments: ‘the westerners would not have neglected Tagore if they had come in contact with authentic translations’. About his nature of his translations he says: ‘I have not attempted versification in English translation of the poems, which was beyond my capacity.’

In the early seventies two books containing translations of Tagore’s *Śeṣ Lekhā* poems appeared in print. One was P. Lal and Shymasree Devi’s *Last Poems*, published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata, and the other was Pritish Nandy’s *The Last Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*, published from Kolkata by Dialogue Publications. William Radice reviewed both these works and commented that translations of neither of the works are adequately competent.³⁶

The eighties were remarkable for producing many translations of Tagore’s poems. The most prolific translator during this period was Brother James Talarovic.³⁷ Talarovic learnt Bengali and was attracted to Tagore’s poems. Between 1983 and 1986 he brought out five volumes of translations, all of which were published from Dhaka. These volumes are: *Gitanjali*, *Noibedya*, *Gitimālya*; *Gitali* and *Sonar Taree* respectively, published in 1983, 1984, 1984, 1985 and 1986.³⁸ Most of these works had no reprints or editions till 2000.

The poems of the original *Gītāñjai* (1910); *Gītimālya* (1910); *Naibedya* (1901); *Gītāli* (1916) and *Sonār Tarī* (1894) are exquisitely rhymed and metrically arranged and many of these poems had been set to music. In his English rendering Brother James did not try to capture the musical aspects of the verses or the meter or rhyme. But he tried to provide a form of the poem by arranging

36 William Radice, “Tagore’s Poetry in English Translation”, pp. 24-25.

37 Brother James was born on 4 May 1915, in Cleveland, Ohio. He studied science at the University of Notre Dame and taught Chemistry in Indianapolis, Indiana. He arrived in East Bengal, India, in January 1941 and worked as superintendent of schools in Toomilia (Dhaka District) and later became Headmaster of St. Gregory’s High School in Dhaka. Source: Brother James, *Gitanjali* (Indiana: Sorin Book, 2002), p. 5.

38 All these works were the translation of the complete works under the same Bengali titles.

the line structures. Obviously, Brother James avoided capturing the technical crafts and nuances of the original. His main target was to present the content of the original as far as possible in simple English. Most of his works did not have reprints or editions till 2008.

More than half a dozen new books were published in the eighties. These include Sudhamayee Mukherjee's *Some Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* (1981); Aruna Chakravarty's *Songs of Tagore* (early eighties); Pratima Bowes' *Some Songs and Poems from Rabindranath Tagore* (1984); Sisir Kumar Ghose's *Forty Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*; William Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985); Shafi Ahmed's *Tagore's Eleven* (1985); Arun K Sill's *Gitanjali* (eighties); Kawser Ali Shaik's *Verses from Rabindranath Tagore* (1989). Sudhamayee Mukherjee, the wife of Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, translated only five poems and privately published them under the title *Some Songs of Rabindranath Tagore*. Kawser Ali Shaik's *Verses from Rabindranath Tagore* that included translations of a few songs was also published for private circulation. Aruna Chakravarty's *Songs of Tagore* was published (undated, but probably in the eighties) from Bombay by an organization called Vaitalik. This book includes translations of 100 songs. The Bengali text is transliterated into Devangri, and the book, according to the introduction, was not for sale but for distribution to the educational institutions and Rabindra Sangeet Societies on request. Arun K Sil's *Gitanjali* was also published undated and also without the name of any publisher. Sil, a physician by profession, translated all the poems of Tagore's Bengali *Gitanjali* (1910). The book includes a prefatory note by Asit K Banerjee who appreciates Sil's endeavour for not to follow 'the usual practice of Tagore subjectivism, but to enliven him with the original aroma.'³⁹ The most successful work in the decade, however, is William Radice's *Selected Poems*.⁴⁰ Radice⁴¹ took a challenge to translate Tagore's poems more

39 Arun K. Sil, *Gitanjali* (Kolkata: eighties), Preface.

40 William Radice, *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1985). In its first edition this book includes translations of 48 poems selected from various poetical works of Tagore. First reprint with revision came out in 1987; Second reprint with revision came out in 1993; Reprint with new preface and an additional appendix was in 1994; First Indian edition was brought out in 1995. After that several reprints were made.

41 Radice is a British poet, writer and translator. He learnt Bengali and became a teacher of Bengali in School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His research interest is in Bengali language and literature.

competently and adequately than any of the earlier attempts. Published by Penguin the book has got wider focus and readership.

The last decade of the twentieth century has also been significant for producing new and fresh translations from Tagore's poetical oeuvre. Significant works during this period include Ketaki Kushari Dyson's⁴² *I Won't Let You Go*, first published from London in 1991 by Bloodaxe Books; Abu Rushd's *Selected Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* published from Dhaka by Rabindra Charcha Kendra in 1992; John Thorpe's *Let My Head Bow Down* published from Dhaka by SIM International in 1993; Mohit Chakrabarti's two books *Songs Eternal: A Hundred Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* and *Convalescence And Selected Songs* published respectively in 1992 and 1996 by Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi; Joe Winter's *The Gitanjali of Rabindranath Tagore* published in 1998 by Writers Workshop, Kolkata; Muhammad Anisur Rahaman's *Songs of Tagore* published in 1999 by Pathak Samabesh, Dhaka; and Radice's *Particles, Jottings, Sparks: The Collected Brief Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* first published in 2000 by Harper Collings, New Delhi. This closing decade of the twentieth century is also remarkable for compilation of all the English translations by Tagore himself and published under the title *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*.⁴³

Tagore's poems continue to be translated with a lot more enthusiasm beyond 2000. More than a dozen volumes can be found by 2011. These are: Wendy Barker and Saranindranath Tagore's *Rabindranath Tagore: Final Poems* (2001), a selection of 38 poems from Tagore's original *Arogya* (1941), *Rogsayyāy* (1940), *Janmadine* (1941) and *Sesh Lekhā* (1941); Devi Mitra's *500 Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* (2003) published by Writer's Workshop, Kolkata; *Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* and *The Flute: Selected Poems of*

42 Ketaki Kushari Dyson was born in Kolkata in 1940 and studied English literature at Kolkata and Oxford. She received a doctorate in English from Oxford. Though she has lived in Britain for more than half of her life, she has never given up her writing in her first language i.e. in Bengali and her links with the literary life of her native Bengal. *I Won't Let You Go* has been reprinted almost every year since its first publication. *I Won't Let You Go* was reprinted 9 times till 2000 since its first publication. Source: *I Won't Let You Go* (Reprinted 2000).

43 This book was brought out by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Of the four volumes three were published in 1996 and volume eight came out in 2008. *Volume one* include translations of poems along with a good introduction and annotation of the translations by Sisir Kumar Das.

Rabindranath Tagore translated by Jadu Saha, published in 2003 by Shipra Publications, New Delhi; Sailesh Parekh's *Rabindranath Tagore: Prantik* (2003) published by Writer's Workshop, Kolkata; *Selected Poems: Rabindranath Tagore* (2004) published by Tagore Translation series undertaken by Oxford University Press in collaboration with Visva-Bharati; *Of Love, Nature and Devotion: Selected Songs of Rabindranth Tagore* (2008) by Kalpana Bardhan and *Rabindranath Tagore and The Singer and His Song* (2009) by Reba Som. In 2011 translations of 56 poems appeared in *The Essential Tagore*,⁴⁴ a mega volume edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty and published jointly by Harvard University Press and Bisva-Bharati. The book has received a global focus immediately after its publication and translations have been appreciated by many scholars.⁴⁵

By way of conclusion, I have the following observations in the area of Tagore's poems in English translation: Although Tagore is the most translated Bengali poet so far, not more than one fourth of his total stock of poems has been translated into English till now. Most translations, however, are poor in quality. Some poems or volumes have been translated by various hands. For example, all the poems of *Gitanjali* (1910) have been translated by at least three translators (Brother James, Joe Winter and Arun K Sil); As far as the readership is concerned Tagore's self-translated work *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* is the most widely read and most published translations so far. Most translations have been published from London, Kolkata and Dhaka. In the colonial phase publication originated and was almost always confined to London. In the post Colonial phase majority of the works were published from Kolkata. Tagore's Visva-Bharati and Sahitya Academi of Delhi played a significant role in publishing these translations. Some libraries are good repositories of translations. These are: National Library, Kolkata; Visva-Bharati Library, Santiniketan; Sahitya Akademi Library, New Delhi; The Library of School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the British Library (Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, India Office Library and Records and the Department of Printed Books). Since Tagore's own translations are no more under copyright, these are being published by different publishers, sometimes with different titles. One such

44 This is the largest and most comprehensive single volume of Tagore's works available in English. The book includes translations of ten genres: poetry, songs, autobiographical works, letters, travel writings, prose, novels, short stories, humorous pieces and plays.

45 One of the reviews published from Bangladesh: *The Daily Star*, August 11, 2012.

example is *Here I Send My Poems* published by Ankur Prakashani, Dhaka. This book is Tagore's self-translated work *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*, but with such a new title. The Same work with different title can also be found with some other translated volumes. For example, Rabindra Nath Choudhury's *Fifteen Longer Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* (1969) is his *Love Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* (1975) published by a different publisher. Similarly, *One Hundred and One Poems* (1967) became *Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* with a new edition (2005) published by UBSPD, Kolkata. Today, as far as the editions, reprints and the reviews are concerned the following books of translated poems from Tagore's oeuvre have more readership than the others: William Radice's two volumes— *Selected Poems* (1985) and *Particles, Jottings, Sparks: The Collected Brief Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* (2000), Wendy Barker and Saranindranath Tagore's *Rabindranath Tagore: Final Poems* (2001), Ketaki Kushari Dyson's *I Won't Let You Go* (1991) and *Selected Songs of Rabindranath Tagore* (2008) by Kalpanan Bardhan. Finally, I think that there is enough lacuna in the area of translating Tagore's poems in English. True image and greatness of a poet are badly distorted through bad translations, and Tagore is no exception to that. In order to present Tagore well to the English speaking audiences there is no alternative to good translations.

FORTY YEARS OF BANGLADESH PARLIAMENT : TRENDS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES*

Jalal Firoj**

This article makes a stock-taking of performances of the parliaments constituted in Bangladesh during 1973-2013. For the convenience of analysis, this article has been divided into a number of sections. The first section presents a brief background of Bangladesh parliaments. The second section gives a summary of the parliamentary elections held to date along with the internal composition of the parliaments. The third section identifies the major trends developed through the functioning of the parliaments during the period covered under the study. The fourth section discusses the achievements of the Bangladesh parliaments. The fifth section deals with the challenges that the parliament is confronting with until today and will be facing in the days to come. In the final section some concluding remarks have been made about prospects of parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Over the last one hundred and fifty years Bangladesh has been familiar with the parliamentary style of governance. The Bangladesh Parliament 'owes its origin to the British Parliament. Its precursor, the Legislative Council of Bengal (hereafter Council), was established in 1861.'¹ During the British rule the Council evolved as a constitutional body though it lacked true representative features.² However, the representative character of the Council was

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1 Nizam Ahmed, *The Parliament of Bangladesh*, Ashgate, Burlington, England 2002, p. 25.

2 The Mutiny in 1957 compelled the British colonial power to rethink their administrative arrangement in India. They felt it necessary to allow the native people in a legislative process. Sir Bartle Frere, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council commented: 'The addition of the native element has, I think, become necessary owing to our diminished opportunities of learning through indirect channels what natives think of our measures and how the native community will be affected by them. It is a great evil of the

incorporated into in the wake of a serious of reform acts such as 1909, 1919 and 1935 India Acts. After the partition of India, Pakistan introduced the parliamentary form of government. The years (1947-1958) represent the years of parliamentary experiments.³ The martial law of General Ayub and the provisions of the 1962 Constitution of Pakistan contributed nothing to the growth of legislature; it was only made an appendage of the executive branch. But the Bengalis during their anti-Ayub movement and struggle for independence demonstrated their commitment to and faith in democracy and upheld the supremacy of the parliament.

Immediately after independence Bangladesh established a form of government which ensured sovereignty of the parliament. The years from 1972 to 1975 were a period of parliamentary democracy. But to achieve the goals of the ‘second revolution’ in 1975 the AL government passed the fourth amendment to the Constitution. This amendment converted the parliamentary form of government to the presidential system. The governments of General Zia and General Ershad did not allow the parliaments elected during their rules, to function as a worthy and democratic institution. ‘Successive parliaments were made impotent by all-powerful chief executives. Parliamentary committees performed in perfunctory manner. Parliaments resembled social clubs rather than forums where national issues of importance had to be raised, discussed and settled’.⁴ This system continued till the re-introduction of parliamentary system through the twelfth amendment to the Constitution in 1991. The establishment of the parliamentary form of government was, in fact, the reflection of strong commitment and sacrifices of the people of Bangladesh for this system.

2. Composition of the Parliaments

During the period from 1973 to 2008 nine parliaments—from the first to the ninth⁵—were elected. The first parliamentary election of independent

present system that the Government can rarely learn how its measures will be received or how they are likely to affect even its European subjects till criticism takes the form of settled and often bitter opposition’ (Quoted in M. Rashiduzzaman, *Pakistan: A Study of Government and Politics*, Ideal Library, Dhaka 1967, pp. 1-2). The Indian Council Act of 1861 enabled the Indian members for the time to be associated with the legislative bodies.

3 Najma Chowdhury, *The Legislative Process in Bangladesh: Politics and Functioning of the East Bengal Legislature 1947-58*, Dhaka University, Dhaka 1980, p.12.

4 Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and Syed Anwar Husain, “Process of Democratization in Bangladesh”, *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1996, p. 322.

5 The elections of the sixth parliament were held on 15 February 1996. All opposition parties boycotted the elections. The result was announced and BNP was declared winner.

Bangladesh was held on 7 March 1973. The voter turnout was 54.9 per cent in this election. The ruling party AL secured overwhelming majority by winning 293 seats out of 300 seats. The remaining 7 seats were won by the Independent and other parties' candidates. The second, the third and the fourth parliamentary elections were held under rules of military dictators. The second parliament was elected under the rule of General Zia and it took place on 18 February 1979. In this election the government party BNP bagged 207 seats and the main opposition AL secured 39 seats. The third parliamentary elections were held on 7 May 1986 when the military dictatorship led by General Ershad was in the helm of power. In this election, out of 300 seats the ruling JP won 153 seats and the opposition AL secured 76 seats. The fourth parliamentary election was boycotted by all opposition parties. This election took place on 3 March 1988. As presumed, the ruling JP bagged most of the seats. Out of 300 seats JP won 250 seats and the COP (Combined Opposition Parties—a handpicked group of parties led by JSD leader A. S. M. Rab) was shown elected in 19 seats.

The fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth parliaments were elected under different caretaker governments. The fifth parliamentary elections were held on 27 February 1991. 75 political parties contested in this election. The number of eligible voters for this election was 62,181,743. Nearly 55 per cent of the voters exercised their voting rights in 1991. Out of 300 seats BNP bagged 140 and AL 88 seats. Though BNP came out as a single majority party but the percentage of votes secured by the two parties was almost equal. BNP got 30.8 per cent while AL received 30.1 per cent votes. Among the other parties JP bagged 35 and JI 18 seats. With the support of JI the majority party BNP formed the government. Out of 30 reserved seats for women BNP won 27 and JI 3 seats.

The seventh parliamentary election was held on 12 June 1996. 81 political parties participated in the elections in which AL emerged as the largest party securing 146 seats. BNP, the largest opposition party, bagged 116 seats. In this election AL won 37.4 per cent and BNP secured 33.6 per cent of votes. Among the other parties JP won 32, JI 3, JSD (Rab) 1 and IOJ 1 seats. With the support of JP and JSD (Rab) AL formed the government. Out of 30 reserved seats AL

But the parliament sustained only for 12 days (from March 19 to 30, 1996) with four working days. As this parliament survived for the shortest period no detailed investigation and analysis have been made on it.

secured 27 and the remaining 3 seats were won by JP.⁶ The eighth parliamentary election was held on 1 October 2001. 54 political parties participated in the elections. In this election, BNP-led 4-party alliance won 220 seats. Among alliance partners BNP bagged 193, JI 17, JP (M) 4 and IOJ 3 seats. AL, the largest opposition party bagged 62 seats and JP (E) won 14 seats. In this election, BNP won 40.97 per cent and AL secured 40.13 per cent of votes. The 4-party alliance formed the government. The ninth parliamentary election was held on 29 December 2008. The *Mohajote* (a Grand Alliance), led by AL bagged 262 seats while the 4-party alliance led by BNP won 32 seats. The *Mohajote* formed the government on 6 January 2009.

Table 1: Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh from 1973 to 2008.

Parliament	Date of Election	Voters (million)	Turnout	AL	BNP	JP	JI
First	7 March 1973	35.21	54.90	293	n/a	n/a	banned
Second	18 Feb. 1979	38.36	51.30	39	207	n/a	6
Third	7 May 1986	47.31	61.10	76	dnp	153	10
Fourth	3 March 1988	49.86	52.50	dnp	dnp	250	dnp
Fifth	27 Feb. 1991	62.18	55.40	88	140	35	18
Sixth	15 Feb. 1996	56.12	21.00	dnp	250	dnp	dnp
Seventh	12 June 1996	56.72	75.60	146	116	32	3
Eighth	1 Oct. 2001	75.00	74.90	62	193	14	17
Ninth	29 Dec. 2008	81.13	80.00	230	30	27	2

Source: (Firoj 2003) and EC, Dhaka

3. Trends

Over the years some changes have been evident in the background of the MPs, in their behaviour and attitudes and overall functioning of the parliament. The major changes are discussed below.

3.1 Shift in occupational Background of MPs: Domination of Businessmen

The occupation of political leaders is often considered as a sole or major indicator of both political attitudes and democratic inspirations.⁷ The social and occupational background of the leaders played important role in shaping the political course of Bangladesh and performances of various political institutions. From a study conducted on the MPs of the first parliament Jahan

6 Jalal Firoj, *Women in Bangladesh Parliament*, A H Development Publishing House, Dhaka 2007, pp. 7-8.

7 Shamsul I Khan and Others, *Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic Transition in Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2008, p. 135.

found that majority of the MPs of that parliament belonged to urban middle class professionals such as law, business, teaching, and medicine. Lawyers were the largest group—30 per cent of the MPs in 1970 and 27 per cent in 1973.⁸ But a major change can be noticed in occupational background of the members of the parliaments elected since 1991. Most of the members of the second, the third and the fourth parliaments were retired military and civilian officials who selected business as their new profession. The following table reveals that businessmen are the dominant occupational groups in all post-1991 parliaments. 59.4 per cent members of the fifth, 47.8 per cent of the seventh, 52.1 per cent of the eighth and 53.5 per cent of the ninth parliaments are businessmen. Historically, the professionals and the intellectuals played an important role in the politics of Bangladesh.⁹ But the domination of businessmen has marginalized the traditional social and professional groups and created imbalances which contributed to the decline of the performances of the parliaments.

One scholar observed,

Over the years the number of business people joining the ‘exclusive parliament club’ has increased. They have now outdistanced those who had traditionally controlled politics—full-time politicians and professionals...The rise to political prominence of business people risks affecting the process of parliamentary consolidation in two ways: first, by making election contests costly, thereby driving out from the election race those who are politically committed but economically disadvantaged; and second, by discouraging the members to be proactive. Because of the heavy demands of their profession, many businessmen-turned-parliamentarians are unlikely to be able to pay much attention to what happens inside the chamber or in committees.¹⁰

Though the occupational background has no direct relationship with the honesty and image of the lawmakers, it is also noticeable that public impression has changed about their representatives. Many of the MPs got elected with controversial and doubtful images. After ninth parliamentary elections it was reported that 43% of the MPs belonged to the *Mohajote*, 59% of the 4-party alliance MPs had criminal cases against them. Out of 293 MPs, at least 18 had murder charges under Section 302 of the CrPC pending against them. At least

8 Rounaq Jahan, “Members of Parliament in Bangladesh”, in Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2005, p. 184.

9 Shamsul I Khan and Others, *Op., cit.* p. 135.

10 Nizam Ahmed, *Aiding the Parliament of Bangladesh: Experience and Prospect*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2012, p. 64.

two MPs are accused of committing war crimes and several are loan defaulters.¹¹

Table 2: Occupational Background of the MPs, the first and the post-1991 parliaments.

Parliament	Occupation					
	Businessmen	Lawyers	Professionals	Landlords	Politics	Others
First	23.7	26.5	30.7 ¹²	2.8	12.7	3.9
Fifth	59.4	18.8	15.5	3.9	2.0	0.4
Seventh	47.8	14.8	8.5	6.9	3.1	18.9
Eighth	52.1	8.7	8.4	8.4	2.1	20.3
Ninth	53.5	13.1	6.4	7.5	6.1	13.4

Source: (Jahan 2005), (Ahmed 2012).

3.2 Preference to Party-interest

Party system is an integral part of the parliamentary form of government. Barring a few members who may not be attached to any party, most members of Parliament have a dual capacity: they represent a constituency and a party.¹³ As the parliament is the representative body of the total population of the country, it is expected that members of the parliament will put emphasis on their responsibilities to the nation. They will concentrate more on their constituency-related issues and on making laws for the nation. But in Bangladesh, lawmakers are seen to invest their time, energy, merit and even conscience in serving their party ignoring responsibilities to the constituency and to the nation. Many important legal, historical and political factors and considerations are contributing to shaping behaviour of the members. The Article 70 of the Constitution provides all power to a party to control a member. Even this provision prohibits a member to exercise his/her conscience to ignoring decision of the party. Historically, members of Bangladesh parliaments are completely dependent on their party chiefs for nominations, career, position and selection. Here, party loyalty means absolute allegiance to the party chief. Under this circumstance and political culture lawmakers rarely dare to speak their minds if it contradicts with their party's formal stand. The trends of results of the immediate past two parliamentary elections have also marginalized lawmakers' position in their respective parties. In the eighth and ninth

11 Badiul Alam Majumder, "Who Got Elected to the Ninth Parliament?", *Forum* (A Monthly Publication of *The Daily Star*, Dhaka), Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2009, Dhaka

12 Professionals include Farmer (14.8), Service (0.7), Teacher (9.9), Doctor (5.3). See, Jahan 2005.

13 M. N. Kaul and S. L. Shakhder, *Practice and Procedure of Parliament*, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi 1997, p. 310.

parliamentary elections the BNP-led 4-party alliance and the AL-led *Mohajote* secured more than two-third majority of the seats respectively. This kind of majority places top party leaders in an omnipotence position. They do not need to hear or consult the backbenchers in formulating party policies regarding functioning of the parliament. On the other hand, devastating defeats of the major parties in the two elections—for AL in the eighth and for BNP in the ninth parliamentary elections—forced them to take an extreme negative position about the parliaments. The overwhelming majority encourages the ruling party to use the parliament as an extra apparatus to consolidate their position. On the other hand, because of their extreme marginalized position the opposition party tries to prove the parliament a ‘failure’ as part of their anti-government movement. As a result, from all sides parliament becomes the victim of narrow and negative party politics.

3.3 Opposition’s Walkouts and Boycotts

Walkouts and boycotts are two legal tools usually used by parliamentarians to register their protest and dissent. The word ‘walkout’ means ‘coming out’. In the parliamentary usage ‘walkout’ means walking out of the House of the parliament by the parliamentarians. The parliamentarians stage walkout for a short period. Walkout is a form of protest. Protest may be made against any decision/ruling of the Chair, any action/decision of the government or any member of the House. Usually the non-ruling party members use this tool of protest. ‘Boycott’ means ‘refusal to buy or to deal in goods from a certain country or company.’¹⁴ The *Dictionary of Political Science* has described boycott as a tool of political and economic struggle. It writes: ‘Boycott: A means of political and economic struggle consisting of the total or partial curtailment of relations with a state e.g., the imposition of an embargo on the export and import of goods, discrimination by the means of duties and tariffs.’¹⁵ The word ‘boycott’ originates from the name of a British land agent Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott (1832-1897).¹⁶ In the parliamentary terminology

14 P. H. Collin, *Dictionary of Government and Politics*, Universal Book Stall, New Delhi 1990, p. 23.

15 T. R. Nanda, *Dictionary of Political Science*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi 1993, p. 63.

16 Captain Boycott came to Ireland to work as a land agent for Lord Erne (John Crichton, 3rd Earl Erne), the local landowner in the Lough Mask area of County Mayo. In 1880, as part of its campaign for the ‘Three Fs’ (fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale) to protect tenants from exploitation, the Irish Land League under Michael Davitt withdrew the local labour required to save the harvest on Lord Erne’s estate. When Boycott tried to undermine the campaign, the League launched a campaign of isolation against him in the

'boycott' means abstaining from the parliament. Abstaining or boycotting parliament is also a tool of protest. Usually the opposition members in the House use this tool in a protest against the decision/ruling of the Speaker or any action/decision of the government or treasury bench members. To the opposition, staging walkouts and boycotting parliamentary sittings are privileges. Both walkout and boycott affect the normal functioning of the parliament. The difference between the two tools is duration. Walkout is staged for a short time. On the other hand, boycott lasts for a longer period of time. Sometimes walkouts turn into boycotts. The occasional walkouts and boycotts are legitimate and handy as a means of protests and dissents. But daily practices of these are a serious deviation from the parliamentary norm. Frequent walkouts and boycotts bring the parliament to a naught.

The history of the Bangladesh parliament is the history of walkouts and boycotts. This is especially relevant for the fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth parliaments. Walkouts and boycotts have not only spoiled the maximum working days of these four parliaments but also posed a threat to the very lively existence of them. Walkouts and boycotts are dominant features of the Bangladesh parliaments.

Table 3: Working Days Boycotted by the Opposition

Parliament	Total Working Days	Boycotted by the Opposition	Percentage
First	134	1	0.74
Second	206	67	32.52
Third	75	29	38.66
Fourth	168	3	1.78
Fifth	395	135	34.17
Sixth	4	-	-
Seventh	383	163	42.55
Eighth	373	223	59.78
Ninth (till end of 15th session, 29 Nov. 2012)	337	283	83.97
Total	2075	904	43.56

Source: Compiled by the Researcher.

local community. Neighbors would not talk to him. Shops would not serve him. Local labourers refused to tend his house and the postman refused to deliver his mail. The campaign against Boycott became a cause célèbre in the British press, with newspapers sending correspondents to the West of Ireland to highlight what they viewed as the victimization of a servant of a peer of the realm by Irish nationalists.... Boycott left Ireland on December 1, 1880. He died in 1897, aged 65. His name, however, became immortalized by the creation of the verb to boycott, meaning fundamentally 'to ostracize'. Visit: <http://www.answers.com/topic/charles-boycott>.

In the four parliaments the opposition parties widely applied walkouts and boycotts to register their protest and dissent. According to an estimate, the opposition parties, since the inception of the fifth parliament on 5 April 1991 to 1 March 1994¹⁷ staged either singly or jointly 57 times walkouts.¹⁸ Another estimate has figured out that the opposition in the fifth parliament staged 76 walkouts in the first thirteenth sessions, averaging nearly six walkouts per session.¹⁹ In the seventh parliament the opposition²⁰ parties staged 61 walkouts.²¹ In the eighth parliament staged 61 walkouts. In the same parliament the opposition abstained from attending the sessions for the first 8 months 28 October 2001 to 23 June 2002 and then again from 26 June 2003 to 14 June 2004 and finally for five continuous sessions from 31 January 2005 to 14 November 2005.²² The opposition boycotted 9 out of 19 sessions of the eighth parliament. In the ninth parliament the opposition attended only 54 sittings of the 337 working days till the end of the 15th session (29 November 2012). After 77-day boycott they joined on 18 March 2011 to save their membership. Then they boycotted three sessions, from the 13th to the 15th, continuously. The above table reveals that the opposition boycotted 34.18 per cent working days of the fifth, 42.56 per cent of the seventh, 59.78 per cent of the eighth and 83.97 per cent working days of the ninth (till the 15th session) parliament.

The above data and table reveal how walkouts and boycotts have dominated the functioning of the parliaments.²³ After analyzing the causes of walkouts some trends and features could be identified. (1) Most of the walkouts have been staged against the Speakers' decisions/rulings and denial of opposition's

17 On 1 March 1994 the AL-led opposition parties staged walkout to protest a comment of Information Minister Nazmul Huda. This walkout turned into a longtime boycott.

18 Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

19 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

20 Not only had the opposition members the treasury bench members also been seen to stage walkout. On 12 November 1998 in an unprecedented move most of the ruling party members left the House apparently to retort to their opposition colleagues who earlier staged a walkout protesting a minister's statement on the private members' day. See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 13 November, 1998.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: A Study of the Democratic Regimes*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2012, p. 86.

23 For details of walkout and boycotts see Jalal Firoj, "Walkouts and Boycotts from the Fifth and the Seventh Parliaments of Bangladesh: Trends, Causes and Impacts", *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 135, July-September 2012, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka.

demands. (2) The opposition parties resorted to walkouts and boycotts to register their pre-planned protests to materialize political agenda. The floor of the House and parliamentary tools like boycott and walkout were used for political purposes. (3) Some walkouts could be attributed to misunderstanding or insufficient acquaintance with parliamentary practices and rules of procedures. (4) A number of walkouts were staged for very trivial causes. Even an alleged harassment of a leader in the airport inspired MPs to stage walkout in the House.²⁴

3.4 Government's Comfort without Opposition

In a parliamentary system opposition is considered as one wheel of a two-wheeled cart. The main responsibility of the opposition is to oppose the government and 'minimize secrecy'²⁵ in government. Ideally, the opposition is entrusted with the task of criticizing the government for ensuring government's pro-people performances. But in Bangladesh, this ideal situation is not visible. Here, the opposition members prefer to abstain from the chamber and the committees. Over the years, especially since 1991, a trend has developed which encourages the government to run the parliament without any effective contribution from the opposition. The government, whether it is of BNP or of AL, feels more comfortable in the House without the opposition. The civil society organizations are seen to create pressures on the government to end opposition's absenteeism but the government rarely takes meaningful initiatives. It indicates that the government does not want to destabilize their so called comfortable zone by bringing opposition in the effective roles. This kind of attitude is not only depriving the parliament from the legitimate services of the opposition but also tarnishing the image of the legislature and raising questions about its effectiveness.

3.5 Un-parliamentary Language

Un-parliamentary utterances and behaviour of the MPs in the House are not unusual though these practices are unwanted and unexpected in parliamentary tradition. The image of Bangladesh parliament suffered very much due to un-parliamentary utterances and indecent occurrences and behaviour by MPs in the

²⁴ See Jalal Firoj, *Ibid.*

²⁵ Griffith and Ryle, *Parliament: Functions Practice and Procedure*, Sweet and Maxwell, London 1989, p. 338.

floor of the House. Some incidents were most unpleasant, derogatory and reflections of bad taste. For MPs' indecent conduct and their overall degenerated behavior the parliament has been compared with a 'monkey-house'. 'From a talking shop it (parliament) has degenerated into a bedlam where lies, unsavoury allusions, indecent insinuations, below-the-belt personal attacks and objectionable obscenities are the rule of the day. Comparing our parliament to a monkey-house is very insulting.'²⁶

Almost in all parliaments a good number of front bench and back-bencher law makers exchanged unpleasant and derogatory comments among themselves. In the first session of the fifth parliament Shipping Minister M. K. Anwar described the activities of some opposition MPs as '*goondami*' (hooliganism). Thanks to his remarks the parliament had to be edsuspend its business for 4 hours.²⁷ The opposition staged a walkout and finally the minister withdrew his word and regretted.

On 4 August 1991, during the second session of the fifth parliament, a serious pandemonium halted the function of the House. The situation arose when AL MP Sultanul Kabir Chowdhury waved his shoes pointing to the treasury bench members. Seeing his shoes the angry treasury bench members rushed to the front benches of the opposition side. The then Information Minister Nazmul Huda also made a derogatory comment on 6 July 1992. Referring to an unrest situation in the House, he said, 'This House is a House of jungles'. The minister's comment aggrieved the opposition members. They protested against him and demanded withdrawal of his derogatory remark. Finally he withdrew it and said, 'I feel sorry and I withdraw the word 'jungles'.²⁸ On 7 July 1992 the same minister said in the House, 'In this House I have never had any chance of a peaceful environment. In this House sandals were shown, files were thrown and all these I have learnt here'.²⁹ The opposition showed serious reaction against the minister and they blamed him for planting 'evil motive'. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad commented: there 'might be evil political motive' behind Huda's behaviour in the House.³⁰

26 Amir Khasru and Tarik Hasan, "Parliament or Monkey-house", *Holiday*, 2 July 1991.

27 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 12 May 1991.

28 *The Morning Sun*, Dhaka, 7 July 1992.

29 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 8 August 1992.

30 *The Morning Sun*, Dhaka, 8 July 1992.

The Information Minister Nazmul Huda made an infamous comment on the floor of the House on 1 March 1994 insulting the religious sentiment of the opposition members. This comment largely influenced and determined the fate of the fifth parliament. The minister's comment created serious reaction among the opposition members. They shouted, threw files, and, as a result, a complete disorder engulfed the House. The consequences of the Minister's comment were very far-reaching. The Minister's comment pushed the opposition to opt for a long time boycott. Before this incident the opposition made a number of walkouts and boycotts but all these walkouts and boycotts lasted for short periods. The situation emerged out of the Minister's comment, and non-realization of the demand for a non-partisan caretaker government incited the opposition to boycott the parliament for almost half of its working days.

The first session of the seventh parliament was marked by a number of indecent and un-parliamentary occurrences. On 14 July 1996, a JSD MP and a partner of the newly formed AL government A. S. M. Rab showed his thumb pointing to opposition members. His 'indecent posture' angered opposition MPs.

An awful situation arose in the floor of the House on 25 August 1996. The Speaker allowed AL MP Abul Kalam Azad to deliver his speech after BNP MP Murshed Khan. Taking his microphone Azad, without mentioning any name, said, 'I have to speak after a person who is known as a 'number two'³¹ business man, who has licked the boots of Zia and Ershad. Now he is licking the boots of Khaleda Zia. Once upon a time he used to roaming wearing Mujib Coat.'³² BNP MPs protested the un-parliamentary sentences of the AL member and urged the Speaker to expunge the indecent words. The seventh parliament witnessed a serious rowdyism on 15 April 1998 in the floor of the House. Failing to get the floor the opposition BNP members went to the Speaker's rostrum. They threw files, papers and abuses at the Speaker. The opposition MPs damaged a TV camera and ransacked the reporting desk of the parliament. It was an unprecedented incident. A national daily reported: 'An opposition MP was about to throw his shoes at the Speaker. Instantly, all the BNP MPs under the leadership of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Badrudozza Chowdhury began to throw some books, files and papers at the Speaker and the officers of the Parliament Secretariat. The Speaker ordered the Sergeant-at Arms to be alert

31 Meaning financially corrupted.

32 *Ajker Kagoj*, Dhaka, 26 August 1996.

to ward off any untoward situation. The anarchic situation continued for about 10 minutes.³³

Another incident occurred in the seventh parliament. While delivering her concluding speech in its fifteenth session on 9 November 1999 the Leader of the House (LoH) Sheikh Hasina made some derogatory comments on the Leader of the Opposition (LoO) Khaleda Zia. This was termed as a 'sad day' in the history of the parliament.³⁴ Castigating the politics of *hartal* of the opposition the Prime Minister said, 'The enforcing of *hartals* ... is causing loss to the students. As the leader of the opposition herself has not studied, she will not allow the nation to learn. Will she not facilitate others to sit for exams as she has failed in the examination? Where has she taken the prestige of politics?—Raising these questions to the LoO, the LoH said, 'Despite having her own house in the Dhaka City she passed night in the hotel. She was found in a closed door room of Purbani Hotel. Does a housewife of a respectable family pass night in the hotel? Why did she stay there? In what condition was she there?—Ershad knows better than her.'³⁵ The opposition BNP condemned the Prime Minister's speech very strongly. In its decision taken in an emergency meeting the party said, 'Only a perturbed person can make this kind of comment. After making this indecent, uncivil and senseless statement she has no moral right to stay in the position of the Prime Minister.'³⁶

On many occasions un-parliamentary behavior and comments contributed to derail the normal functioning of the eighth and ninth parliaments. These were responsible to bring major shifts in the priorities of the House and its members. The parliaments had to concentrate more on keeping the contending parties to the right track than discussing, taking decisions and enacting laws on the issues related to the welfare of the common people and the advancement of the country. It has been found that the MPs and leaders have not only hurled bad words on their counterparts they have also defamed the late national leaders. In one occasion an AL MP in the House called the founder of BNP and former president of the country Ziaur Rahman a 'traitor'.³⁷ In reply a BNP MP compared the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with

33 *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, 16 April 1998.

34 See Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 256.

35 *Sangbad*, Dhaka, 10 November 1999.

36 *Sangbad*, Dhaka, 12 November 1999.

37 *Inquilab*, Dhaka, 5 March 1997.

the ‘Pharaohs’³⁸ of Egypt.³⁹ This kind of unscrupulous exchange of words and behaviour belittled the very standard and image of the House.

3.6 Priority Shifting: From Law Making to Administrative Jobs

An important function of parliament—although not the only function—is to make laws.⁴⁰ It is expected that MPs will concentrate more on law and policy making issues than any other activities. But in Bangladesh and also in many other developing countries, MPs are eager to be involved in executive functions. In the name of ‘constituency development’ or ‘serving the voters’ policy they create pressures on local administration. The MPs are given yearly ‘development fund’ to serve their constituencies. They are made chairmen/member of all development/administrative/law and order related bodies. In fact, they become top/center point of all activities of their localities. This kind of all-grabbing power and position of the MPs making an extreme negative impact especially on local government machineries and functionaries. In most of the areas MPs are directly at loggerheads with the elected Chairmen of the Upazilas. On the other hand, MPs’ over-enthusiasm for development and executive activities are making adverse impacts on their legislative functions. For this reason, many are of the opinion that there should be separation of the legislative and executive functions. The MPs should be left only to legislature, where executive should be given responsibility for developments.⁴¹ Referring to the development fund given to the Indian MPs one observed that it becomes a ‘breeding den for corruption.’⁴² In Bangladesh, many local government experts and the civil society organizations are opposed to MPs’ involvement with local development issues. Even they opine that there would be no local development under the local government until the MPs stop meddling in its (local government) affairs.⁴³ Over the last twenty years lawmakers of Bangladesh parliaments have developed an aggressive tendency

38 To mean Bangabandhu was most powerful and tyrant as rulers of ancient Egypt.

39 See *Inquilab*, Dhaka, 5 March 1997.

40 Quoted in Jalal Firoj, *Parliament Kibhabe Kaj Kore* (How Does Parliament Work), New Age Publications, Dhaka 2003, p. 83.

41 Arun Suri, <http://www.flonnet.com/fl2122/stories/200411050005802400.htm>. Accessed on 15 June 2009. Quoted also in Jalal Firoj, *Parliamentary Shabdakosh*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka 2010, p. 153.

42 *Ibid.*

43 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 11 March 2013.

of getting involved with local level government activities that certainly influence their legislative functions negatively.

3.7 Speakers' Partisan Loyalty

The Speaker is an integral part of the parliament. Speakership is not only a position but also an institution. The Speaker is one of the great offices of the state. He is the chief officer of the parliament.⁴⁴ According to Morris-Jones, the Speaker is the 'Member of Parliament No. 1'.⁴⁵ He is the most powerful person in the House. Inside the House his word is law. He derives his powers and authority from two major sources: firstly, the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure and secondly, personality and experience of the Speaker and customs and traditions developed from parliamentary practices. The Speaker performs various duties. He presides over the sittings of the House, calls members to speak, imposes discipline, enforces observance of the rules and, if needed, punishes members. He takes care of the privileges of the members. One of the important functions of the Speaker is to give rulings and decisions. Philip Laundry wrote: The Speaker sits as a judge and he is exercising his judgment all the time...Every ruling he delivers is in the nature of a judgment, and like court judgments, they are preserved as precedents for the guidance of future Speakers.⁴⁶

In parliamentary democracy the Speaker holds highly esteemed position. The Constitution and the *Rules of Procedure* of Bangladesh Parliament have vested much functions, powers and authority in the Speaker.

To accomplish all his duties and responsibilities the quality which is the most essential for the Speaker is 'strict impartiality'.⁴⁷ Eighteen different individuals served nine parliaments as Speakers and Deputy Speakers during the period from 1973 to 2012. Of them, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and Abdul Hamid served for the longest periods as Speakers/Deputy Speakers of different parliaments. But all of them were blamed for their partisan role. The Speakers of Bangladesh parliaments 'have never been out of their party

44 Shantanu Majumder and Zahid ul Arefin Choudhury, "Working of the Parliament of Bangladesh", *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 2001, p. 161.

45 Quoted in Shamsul Huda Harun, *Parliamentary Behaviour in a Multi-National State 1947-56: Bangladesh Experience*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka 1984, p. 14.

46 Quoted in Ranjit Basu, *Speaker's Rulings and Decisions*, Biswa Jnan, Kolkata, p. 2.

47 HMSO, *Aspects of Britain: Parliament*, Second Edition, London 1994, p. 36.

control'.⁴⁸ Speakers, Deputy Speakers and other presiding officers had eventful times and created much controversy and criticism by their rulings, decisions and activities in the Houses.

Table 4: Speakers and Deputy Speakers: 1973-2012

Sl.	Name	Position	Parliament	Duration
1	Mohammadullah	Speaker	First	07/04/73—27/01/74 (9 months 20 days)
2	Mohammad Baitullah	Deputy Speaker	First	07/04/73—05/11/75 (2 yrs 6 months 28 days)
3	Abdul Malek Ukil	Speaker	First	28/01-74—05/11/75 (1 yr 9 months 8 days)
4	Mirza Golam Hafij	Speaker	Second	02/04/79—23/03/82 (2 yrs 11 months 21 days)
5	Sultan Ahmed Choudhury	Deputy Speaker		02/04/79—23/03/82 (2 yrs 11 months 21 days)
6	Shamsul Huda Choudhury	Speaker	Third	10/07/86—24/04/88 (2 yrs 9 months 14 days)
7	M. Korban Ali	Deputy Speaker	Third	10/07/86—24/04/88 (2 yrs 9 months 14 days)
8	Shamsul Huda Choudhury	Speaker	Fourth	25/04/88—05/04/91 (2 yrs 11 months 10 days)
9	Riajuddin Ahmed	Deputy Speaker	Fourth	25/04/88—05/04/91 (2 yrs 11 months 10 days)
10	Abdur Rahman Biswash	Speaker	Fifth	05/04/91—11/10/91(190 days)
11	Sheikh Razzak Ali	Deputy Speaker	Fifth	05/04/91—11/10/91 (190 days)
12	Sheikh Razzak Ali	Speaker	Fifth	12/10/91—18/03/96 (4 yrs 6 months)
13	Humayun Khan Panni	Deputy Speaker	Fifth	12/10/91—18/03/96 (4 yrs 6 months)
14	Sheikh Razzak Ali	Speaker	Sixth	19/03-96—13/07-96 (116 days)
15	L. K. Siddiqui	Deputy Speaker	Sixth	19/03/96—13/07/96 (116 days)
16	Humayun Rashid Chowdhury	Speaker	Seventh	14/07/96—10/07/01 (4 yrs 11 months 26 days)
17	Abdul Hamid	Deputy Speaker	Seventh	14/07/96—10/07/01 (4 yrs 11 months 26 days)
18	Abdul Hamid	Speaker	Seventh	12/07/01—27/10/01 (107 days)
19	Ali Ashraf	Deputy Speaker	Seventh	12/07/01—27/10/01 (107 days)
20	Jamir Uddin Sarker	Speaker	Eighth	28/10/2001— 25/01/2009 (7 yrs 2 months 27 days)
21	Akter Hamid Sarker	Deputy Speaker	Eighth	28/10/2001— 25/01/2009 (7 yrs 2 months 27 days)
22	Abdul Hamid	Speaker	Ninth (15 th session)	25/1/09—29/11/12 (3 yrs 10 months 25 days)
23	Shawkat Ali	Deputy Speaker	Ninth (15 th session)	25/1/09—29/11/12 (3 yrs 10 months 25 days)

Source: Compiled by the Researcher.

48 Shantanu Majumder and Zahid ul Arefin Choudhury, *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

In all parliaments, many rulings were given by the Speakers on various issues including Bengali/English version of constitutional amendment, expunge of statements of the members, no-confidence motion, statement of the PM and the Leader of the Opposition (LoO), adjustment motions on newspaper reports, resignation of 147 MPs, relation between the legislature and the judiciary etc. Some of the rulings created serious controversies in the political arena. Of them, the most controversial was the ruling related to the resignation of 147 opposition MPs. The opposition AL termed this ruling a 'blueprint' and 'a weapon for fulfilling the wishes of the ruling party and its chief'.⁴⁹ JP blamed that 'the Speaker has given this decision not as a Speaker but as a man of the ruling party'.⁵⁰ But the Speaker's ruling allowing the motion of no-confidence against the Cabinet was highly appreciated. It was a well-thought and well-studied decision. This ruling paved, for the first time in the parliamentary history of the country, the way for bringing a no-confidence against a government. The Speaker's ruling on the vacancy of seats of two BNP MPs—Hasibur Rahman Shopon and Dr Alauddin—was criticised much. It was considered as one the most partisan and one-sided decisions. On the other hand, the Speaker of the seventh parliament gave a bold ruling on constitutional recognition of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 18 February 1997. In his ruling the Speaker said in strong terms that 'giving aspersions to the Father of the Nation is directly or indirectly tantamount to dishonoring the Constitution'.⁵¹ For this courageous ruling the Speaker was greatly appreciated.

The Speakers took a number of initiatives to reduce the gaps and establish a congenial relationship between the treasury and the opposition benches. Sheikh Razzak Ali's efforts contributed to arrange a series of meetings between the two sides during the turbulent period from 1994 to 1995. 'Mr. Razzak's credential as one of the most successful Speakers in the history of our parliament has been accepted even by the opposition bench'.⁵² Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury played a catalyst role in the signing of the historic four-point accord by the ruling and the opposition parties in January 1998. Once Deputy Leader

49 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 24 February 1995

50 *Ibid.*

51 See Institute of Parliamentary Studies, *Rulings of the Speaker*, The Parliament of Bangladesh, Dhaka 1999.

52 Kishwar Kamal, 'BTV's parliamentary proceeding', *Holiday*, Dhaka, 23 August 1996

of the Opposition Badruddoza Chowdhury gave ‘hundred percent marks’ to the Speaker for his ‘good performance’⁵³ in the House.

Despite their hard works and positive contributions Speakers were accused of partisan roles. ‘Unlike in India, and other more developed countries, the Speakers in Bangladesh have played a blatantly partisan role. In both Parliaments (the fifth and the seventh), under the BNP and the Awami League, the Speaker functioned under the influence of the respective political governments.’⁵⁴ It was also alleged that ‘Speakers of the house have been less than neutral in the discharge of their mandate and have tended to deny enough time to the opposition to have their say in the parliament.’⁵⁵ The Speakers were ‘less than neutral’ not only in allowing ‘enough time to the opposition’ but also in providing decisions, rulings in the floor, appointing members in the committees and in case of sanctioning facilities and privileges to the members. Why did they lose neutrality in discharging their responsibilities? Why were the Speakers submissive to their respective party control? In an interview with representatives of some newspapers on 20 December 1999 Humayun Rashid Chowdhury identified some causes of the partisan roles. He pointed out two areas: The simple rule to remove Speaker from his post and the issue of Speaker’s re-election. He said that the Speaker can be removed with a simple majority in the House. For this reason, in Bangladesh, the Speaker has to work keeping in good terms with the ruling party.⁵⁶ To consolidate the power and authority of the Speaker, there should be a rule requiring two-thirds majority for removal of the Speaker. He said, in the UK when the Speaker seeks re-election no party nominates any candidate against him. This tradition helps the Speaker to keep a distance from party activities. For ensuring Speaker’s neutrality these

53 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 11 June 1997.

54 Moudud Ahmed, *South Asia Crisis of Development: The Case of Bangladesh*, Third Impression, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2005, p. 294.

55 Rehman Sobhan, “Bangladesh’s Confrontational Political System: Search for Solution”, *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 25 August 2000.

56 Narrating his helplessness Humayun Rashid Chowdhury said, in his entire life nobody dared to abuse him. But while presiding over the House he was called ‘son of a beach’. He had nothing to do. At best he could expel him from the House for the rest of the day. He would attend the sitting of the House very next day. Suppose, if a member before adjourning the House regularly abuses him, he would not even be able to expel him. In this situation, as a Speaker he was completely helpless. See *Banglabazar Partika*, Dhaka, 21 December 1999.

norms should be established in Bangladesh.⁵⁷ Apart from weak procedural or legal footings, the Speaker's authority is also curved by repetitive challenges posed by the opposition members. In Bangladesh there is an instinctive trend in the opposition to challenge or negate the Speaker's decisions/rulings. On rare occasions the opposition members are found to accept the Speakers' decisions gracefully. This kind of situation compels the Speaker to depend on the government party. One scholar has rightly observed: The 'role of the Speaker has also been undermined by the unwillingness of the opposition to observe the rules of parliamentary procedure and their tendency to constantly challenge, often in non-parliamentary terms, the authority of the Speaker'.⁵⁸ In developed democracies the Speaker is elected on the basis of consensus. The authority of the Speaker is seldom challenged. In those countries speakership has been institutionalized after a long process of evolution. During this long journey of evolution individual Speakers have contributed immensely to the parliamentary process with their personality, integrity, courage, political honesty and commitment. The Speakers of Bangladesh Parliaments are short of enough courage, commitment and integrity and this is one of the major causes of their questionable neutrality and weak authority.

4. Achievements

It is true that many negative trends jeopardized the development process of the parliamentary system in the country. But the progresses achieved yet during the last decades are not negligible.

4.1 Consensus on the Parliamentary Form of Government

During the period from 1975 to 1990 the 'form of government' remained one of the contentious issues among the political parties. After 1975, AL pragmatically, changed its position and started advocating for the parliamentary form of government. All the leftist and progressive parties also stood for the parliamentary system. On the other hand, BNP and JP were in favor of the presidential form of government. Both sides took opposite and rigid stands. Even this issue prevented AL and its allies from reaching an understanding with BNP-led alliance several times during the anti-Ershad movement. At one point,

57 *Banglabazar Partika*, Dhaka, 21 December 1999. See also Jalal Firoj, 2003, *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

58 Rehman Sobhan, *Op. cit.*

it seemed impossible to find a solution to the question of the 'form of government issue'. When the Joint Declaration of the Three Alliances was being drafted in November 1990 the matter came to the fore. The political parties resolved the issue for the time being on the decision that the interim caretaker government would hand over power to the 'sovereign parliament' elected through free and fair elections, and the 'government will remain accountable to that parliament'. Both sides felt happy with this solution. The 8-party and the 5-party alliances viewed it as a 'victory' since it was recognized that after the election the 'sovereign parliament' would be established and the 'government will remain accountable to that parliament'. On the other hand, BNP and its allies thought that the 'sovereign parliament' did not mean parliamentary form of government; according to them, 'sovereign parliament' could also be established under a presidential form of government. During the campaign of the fifth parliamentary election AL strongly pledged for the parliamentary form of government and BNP in its manifesto re-asserted their position in favour of the presidential system. After the election, BNP came into power while the opposition parties led by AL continued to put pressure on the government to change the form of government as per the commitment made in the Joint Declaration of the Three Alliances. But the BNP leadership, by raising some arguments, opposed the idea for reversion of the form of government from the presidential to the parliamentary one.

Despite various arguments and counter-arguments, political pressure gradually increased on the BNP-led government to change the form of government. As pressure mounted the rank and file of the ruling party also got divided. In a meeting held on 18 May BNP's Parliamentary Party expressed three different opinions. Some were pledging for parliamentary government, some were favoring the presidential form of government and a third group advocated for a mix between the presidential and the parliamentary forms.⁵⁹ Then in a meeting of the BNP Central Executive Committee attended by 300 members from all over the country, out of 27 speakers 21 expressed their opinions in favor of the parliamentary system.⁶⁰ Finally, the ruling party BNP decided to switch over to the parliamentary form of government. On 2 July Prime Minister Khaleda Zia moved the Twelfth Amendment Bill 1991 in the House. On 6 August 1991 the

59 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 19 May 1991.

60 Muhammad A. Hakim, *Bangladesh Politics: The Shahabuddin Interregnum.*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 1993, p. 75.

bill was passed. It was put to division vote twice. The result was that there were 306 votes in favour and none was cast against the bill on the first voting, while there were 307 votes in favour and none against in the second voting.⁶¹ The whole environment of the House was festive. Reaching a consensus to change the form of government was a rare occasion. The members were happy; in a joyous mood they were embracing each other. Changing the form of government was a turning point in the political history of the country. The political leaders were hailed for this achievement. After the turbulent period of 1971 and 1990 it was a period when the leadership of the country proved their maturity and worked unitedly.

Enactment of the twelfth amendment erased rivalry and hatred from amongst the contending party leaders at least for the time being. They were seen to come forward to praising each other. Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina thanked Leader of the House Khaleda Zia and Select Committee of the House for their 'hard work' for moving to parliamentary democracy.⁶² Unity of the politicians and turning to the parliamentary system were viewed as a positive deterrent to the rise of 'politics of bayonet'. This optimism spread across the country that 'Ballot, not bayonet, will be the source of changing power'.⁶³ The ruling party, by abandoning its avowed position on the form of government, demonstrated an accommodative attitude.⁶⁴ On the other hand, opposition parties by accepting the leadership of the ruling party in switching over to the parliamentary form projected a matured political behaviour. A unanimous adoption of the twelfth amendment bill reflected a sentiment of compromise, persuasion and maneuvering among political parties. It proved that any serious problem confronted by the nation could be overcome if the government and the opposition parties were sincere, and if they cooperated with each other.⁶⁵

61 Of 330 seats in the parliament 11 seats were vacant. 4 JP members were in prison. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker did not participate in voting. 6 members were absent. Col. (Rtd.) Shawkat Ali of AL was absent on the first reading, but participated in the second. See Muhammad A. Hakim, *Op. cit.*, pp. 79, 85.

62 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 7 August 1991.

63 Leaders of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina emphasized that through the period of transition to parliamentary democracy the politics of bayonet would come to an end and the nation would experience the change of power through only ballot. See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 7 August 1991.

64 Muhammad A. Hakim, *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

65 *Ibid.*

4.2 End of Military Authoritarianism

The people of Bangladesh fought hard against the military domination throughout the Pakistani period. The main objective of the liberation struggle of 1971 was to end military authoritarianism and to establish a democratic system in the country. But after three and a half years of independence the much-cherished democratic aspirations of the country were shattered, and with the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the military began to attain its prominence in the country. During the two subsequent martial law regimes of General Zia (1975-1980) and General Ershad (1982-1990) military domination was established in all spheres of life, be it cultural, social, economic and political. The two military rulers established their reign by showing complete disregard to human rights, constitutional rule and public consent.

To establish their hegemony, various interest groups –among them- the army got involved in controlling the political events, institutions and ideologies. Many of them became reckless. Political institutions including the parliament and the political parties were used only to consolidate power of the ruling coterie. The military rulers not only dominated the politics but also reversed the state principles. Secularism was replaced by ‘full trust in Almighty Allah’. Islam was declared the state religion. Socialism was replaced by ‘social justice’ and Bengali nationalism by Bangladeshi nationalism. But from the beginning of their reign the military rulers had to confront with various resistance movements organized by different sections of people including the students, the labourers and the political forces. While explaining withdrawal of the military from politics, Maniruzzaman commented, ‘...an army in power can be removed only when the people are more militant than the armed forces in resisting the military rule.’⁶⁶ The political movement got momentum against the military rule in late 1980s and finally, the Ershad regime was overthrown by the mass uprising culminated in December 1990.

The success of the mass movement enhanced the anti-autocracy sentiment and to end military-authoritarianism permanently the parliamentary form of democracy was re-introduced in 1991. After the re-introduction of

66 Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Military Withdrawal from Politics: A Case Study*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 1988, p. 215.

parliamentary democracy power was peacefully transferred from a party government to another via non-party caretaker governments—first in 1991, second in 1996, third in 2001 and then in 2006. The failure of the President Iajuddin Ahmed's caretaker government⁶⁷ and stringent attitudes of the political parties resulted in the coming to power of the army backed caretaker government of Fakhruddin Ahmed for two years (2006-2008).⁶⁸ Though the constitutionality of the Fakhruddin-led caretaker government was dubious and involvement of the military with the government created much controversy, yet the government handed power to an elected government peacefully. Despite controversial roles of some army officers during the Fakhruddin-led government, the records of conspiracy, coups and killings, abrogation of the Constitution and practices of occupying state power by forceful means in Bangladesh were reduced significantly. After 1990 a national consensus was built around the point that politics, power and state affairs would be dealt not by the military coterie but by the politicians with the consent of the people. During the period from 1991 to 2006 contending political parties fought one another and many times extreme volatile situations had also been created but constitutional continuity was never disrupted. There developed a convergence among the political elites 'in favor of democracy and against involvement of any extra-constitutional forces in politics'.⁶⁹ Public opinion was also created to the point that '...any military or extra-constitutional intervention must be resisted and a law introduced to punish not only those who seek to intervene but also those who would support the illegal regime.'⁷⁰ While in 1970s and 1980s military interventions, coups and militarization were so frequent and in prominence, in 1990s the military came under political leadership and maintained professional integrity and ethics. 'This does not mean total

67 The President Iajuddin Ahmed took hold of the caretaker government as the Chief Adviser on 29 October 2006. Addressing the nation on the night of 11 January 2007 the President declared a state of emergency in the country stating, 'a grave emergency exists in which the security or economic life of Bangladesh is threatened by internal disturbances' (See A. T. Rahman, *Bangladesh Election 2008 and Beyond*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2008, p. xiv).

68 The Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government was entrusted with the charge of state affairs on 11 January 2007.

69 Bhuiyan Md. Monoar Kabir, *Politics of Military Rule and the Dilemmas of Democratization in Bangladesh*, Parama, Dhaka 1999, p. 252

70 Moudud Ahmed 1995, *Op. cit.*, pp. 370-371

disengagement of the military from civilian affairs'.⁷¹ But the functioning of the parliaments and development of a mechanism of peaceful transfer of power contributed to keep the military aloof from politics thereby reducing the possibility of military intervention in the democratic process. The Constitution has also included a provision through the fifteenth amendment that any attempt of imposing un-constitutional rule will be deemed as sedition.⁷² But the experiences of political chaos that prevailed before the takeover of power by the military-backed caretaker government of 2007 and the confrontation re-surfaced after enactment of the fifteenth amendment haunt many people and they believe that un-compromising attitudes of the political leaders to overcoming crisis may bring the extra-constitutional forces again into politics.

However, it can be argued that the probability of intervention by the military in politics seems to have lost its momentum thanks to Bangladesh armed forces increasing participation in international peacekeeping missions.

4.3 Acceptance of Electoral Results

None of the elections held under military regimes of President Zia and President Ershad was acceptable to the opposition political parties and people. As a result, both the regimes were confronting legitimacy crises. The intensity of the legitimacy problem became more vivid and reached its climax during the Ershad regime.⁷³

During the period from 1991 to 2008 four parliamentary elections were held under four non-partisan caretaker governments. The first caretaker government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was established under an arrangement formulated by the Joint Declaration of the Three Alliances. The fifth parliamentary election held on 27 February 1991 was arranged by this caretaker government.⁷⁴ Unlike the previous ones this election received wider acceptance. By all standards, the 1991 election was fairest and best organized since

71 Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and Syed Anwar Husain, "Process of Democratization in Bangladesh", *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Journals Oxford Limited 1996, p. 331.

72 See the Article 7A. (Bangladesh Constitution 2011, October).

73 Rashida Khanam, *The Nature of Legitimacy and The Crisis of Bangladesh Politics 1972-1990*, A H Development Publishing House, Dhaka 2008, p. 260.

74 Details information of these elections has been given in the second section of this article.

independence.⁷⁵ All election observer groups including the Commonwealth, British Parliamentary Delegation, SAARC Group and Japanese Delegation were unanimous that polls were held peacefully and voters exercised their rights in a free and fair manner.⁷⁶ But AL President Sheikh Hasina expressed her dissatisfaction with the result and claimed that, 'it appears in a wider view that the election was fair, but in actual practice it was tactfully rigged.'⁷⁷ However, all other political parties admitted and praised the election as free and fair. This election is also considered as 'a grand success in establishing people's confidence in the sanctity of the electoral process'.⁷⁸ The constitutionally established caretaker government led by Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman made all arrangements for holding seventh parliamentary elections on 12 June 1996. Apart from thousands of local observer a total of 200 foreign observers from 35 countries came to observe the Bangladesh polls. Though some observers felt that everything was not going smoothly, the general feeling of the observers was that the election was credible, free and fair. The Japanese Delegation said, 'We have an impression that this election was conducted fairly, peacefully and in orderly manner on the whole'.⁷⁹ The immediate past ruling party BNP which conceded defeat alleged that there were widespread rigging and manipulation in the poll. But ultimately all political parties including BNP accepted the results and welcomed the AL. AL returned to state power after twenty one years. The eighth parliamentary election was arranged by the caretaker government headed by Justice Latifur Rahman. The elections were held on 1 October 2001. The 4-party alliance led by BNP won 216 seats with AL a distant second position winning only 62 seats. JP won 14 seats. The results stunned many. AL rejected the results. AL president Sheikh Hasina insisted that though apparently the election was free and fair but a deep-rooted conspiracy worked underneath. She blamed the President of the country, the caretaker government, the CEC, the military and the media for working to ensure AL's defeat.⁸⁰ However, finally AL and other parties accepted the results

75 Muhammad Yeahia Akter, *Electoral Corruption in Bangladesh*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England 2001, p. 189.

76 Fakhruddin Ahmed, *The Caretakers: A First Hand Account of the Interim Government of Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 1998, p. 91.

77 Quoted in Muhammad Yeahia Akter, *Op. cit.*, p. 190.

78 Muhammad A. Hakim, *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

79 Quoted in Fakhruddin Ahmed, *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

80 See Waresul Karim, *Election Under a Caretaker Government*, Second Impression, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2007, pp. 42-45.

and power was transferred to the 4-party alliance. The ninth parliamentary election was held on 29 December 2008 under the Fakhruddin-led caretaker government. The *Mohajote* (a Grand Alliance) led by AL secured 262 seats and the 4-party alliance led by BNP bagged 32 seats. The 4-party alliance rejected the results and termed the election a 'grand forgery of votes'.⁸¹ However, in the end, the result was accepted and the *Mahajote* came into power.

A number of positive trends developed during the decades under study regarding the holding of elections, transfer of power and legitimacy and acceptance of the governments. The quality of the elections held under the three non-party caretaker governments was far better than that of the elections held under party governments. As the non-party governments were technically impartial, they had sufficient opportunities to treat all parties equally.⁸² The defeated parties (AL in 1991, BNP in 1996 and AL again in 2001 and BNP again in 2008) raised some questions about the fairness of the elections but finally accepted the results allowing the peaceful transfer of power. In all cases⁸³ incumbent parties/alliance lost power and the opposition parties/alliance gained majority seats and came to power. This trend proves that the impartial situation for fair electoral competition was ensured for the parties by the caretaker governments. As the elections were fairer and widely accepted, the position of the newly elected governments was far better and solid compared with the previous ones under civilian-military governments. Bangladesh came out successfully from the curse of illegal and illegitimate governments.⁸⁴

4.4 Longer Survival of Parliaments

All of the pre-1991 parliaments were dissolved before completing their tenures. On the other hand, all post-1991 parliaments, except the sixth, sustained till completion of their terms (the ninth parliament is about to complete its term). Survival is the indication of their strength. The following Table shows that out of 1037 laws passed by the parliaments since 1973, 737 (71.07%) were enacted by the post-1991 parliaments. While the first four parliaments had 583 working

81 http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/31/content_10583466.htm

82 Muhammad Yeahia Akter, *Op. cit.*, p. 209.

83 In 1991 the immediate past ruling party JP lost miserably and BNP came to power, in 1996 BNP was defeated by AL, in 2001 AL was defeated by the 4-party alliance and in 2008 4-party alliance was defeated by the *Mohajote*.

84 See also Jalal Firoj, *Democracy in Bangladesh: Conflicting Issues and Conflict Resolution*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka 2012, p. 262.

days with 35 sessions, the post-1991 parliaments had 1492 working days with 84 sessions. Not only in quantity, the parliaments constituted under parliamentary system fared better also in quality. Most of the laws enacted by these parliaments were scrutinized in the committee level.

Table 5: Sessions, Working Days and Laws Enacted by the Parliaments 1973-2012

Parliament	Sessions	Working Days	Laws Enacted
First	8	134	154
Second	16	206	65
Third	4	75	38
Fourth	7	168	142
Fifth	22	395	173
Sixth	1	4	1
Seventh	23	383	189
Eighth	23	373	185
Ninth (till 29 Nov. 2012)	15	337	190
Total	119	2075	1137

Source: Compiled by the Researcher.

4.5 Establishment of Parliamentary Offices

The legislature performs its activities with a number of functionaries. Among them the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the House (LoH), the Deputy Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition (LoO), the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Chief Whip, the Chief of the Opposition, the Whips and the Chairmen of the Committees are very important. The success of a parliament mostly depends on the ability and efficiency of these parliamentary offices. Among the offices the role of the Speaker, the LoH and the LoO are critically important. As the role of the Speakers of the Bangladesh parliaments has been discussed in the previous section of this article a brief analysis on the importance and development of the other parliamentary offices including the LoH and the LoO has been made below.

The success and failure of the parliament largely depend on the capability, sincerity and performances of the LoH and the LoO. The LoH shapes the course and content of legislation. It is said the LoH is 'perhaps the most influential figure in the entire legislative processes.'⁸⁵ In all difficulties the LoH advises the House. 'For that purpose he is usually present either in the House or in the

85 M. N. Kaul and S. L. Shakhder, *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

room, and has right to address the House whenever he likes.’⁸⁶ According to a former British Prime Minister Gladstone: ...the Leader of the House ‘suggests, and in a great degree fixes, the course of all principal matters of business, supervises and keeps in harmony the actions of his colleagues, takes the initiative in matters of ceremonial procedure, and advises the House in every difficulty as it arises.’⁸⁷ The LoH is not just the leader of the treasury bench. ‘He is the guardian of the legitimate rights of the Opposition as well as those of the Government’.⁸⁸ To identify the qualities of a LoH, Herbert Morrison said, ‘The Leader of the House...should possess an intuitive instinct about what is going on in the minds of members of both sides, and in case of any trouble brewing, he should be able to assess the nature and extent of the commotion. When there is a strong parliamentary pressure on any matter, especially when it comes from both sides, he must be ready to bend to it.’⁸⁹ Herbert Morrison has also mentioned that a LoH should be conscious of five responsibilities: To the Government, to the Government’s own supporters on the back benches, to the Opposition, to the House as a whole, and to the individual minister in charge. He should, within reasons, be accessible to both sides of the House.⁹⁰

The history of the office of the LoO is not very old. The official recognition of the LoO is a twentieth century phenomenon.⁹¹ In the British House of Commons LoO was first recognized in the year 1905. ‘One of the biggest parliamentary achievements of the present century (twentieth) is that the role of the Opposition has been formally recognized and is given a due place in the parliamentary system. The Leader of the Opposition is thus an important person.’⁹² The LoO is considered as a shadow prime minister. ‘In performing his duties and obligations, the Leader of the Opposition has to take into account not only what he is today but what he hopes to be tomorrow.’⁹³ His main job is to oppose the government. But his responsibility is again to present the alternative to the government’s policies. The LoO must criticize the incumbent

86 *Ibid.*

87 Norman Wilding and Philip Laundy, *An Encyclopedia of Parliament*, Cassell and Company Ltd., London 1961, p. 355.

88 M. N. Kaul and S. L. Shakhder, *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

89 Quoted in M. N. Kaul and S. L. Shakhder, *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

90 Norman Wilding and Philip Laundy, *Op. cit.*, p. 355.

91 See Jalal Firoj, 2003, *Op. cit.*, pp. 72-81.

92 M. N. Kaul and S. L. Shakhder, *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

93 *Ibid.*

government but he will also recognize the rights of government to govern. 'If the Leader of the Opposition lets the Prime Minister govern, he in turn is permitted to oppose.'⁹⁴ The former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan termed the responsibility of the LoO very 'difficult' and 'unrewarding'. Another former Prime Minister of United Kingdom Harold Wilson considered 'being Leader of the Opposition a harder job than being Prime Minister'.⁹⁵ Earnest Barker regarded the opposition as a 'safety valve' of the political system. He held the view that the opposition cannot be utterly negative, entirely critical or totally obstructive since, in democracy, the function it performs is fundamentally positive.⁹⁶ In the conduct of the parliament the expected positive role of the opposition is reflected in the performances of the LoO.

In the pre-1991 parliaments different political leaders including the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (the First parliament) played important roles as the LoHs. Except the first and the sixth parliaments all other Houses had LoOs. But in all post-1991 parliaments two leaders, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, rotated these positions between themselves. Both of them were main leaders of their respective parties. They were the most popular leaders of the country, and especially the anti-autocracy movement of 1980s was led by them. Despite their overwhelming popularity and success as victorious leaders their performances as the LoH and the LoO are not very encouraging. It has been alleged that as the LoH and the LoO they were not very attentive, focused and meticulous. Their parliamentary roles did not get enough priority in their busy work schedules.

Despite various limitations of the leaders it is noticeable that the offices of the LoH, LoO, the Whips and the Chairmen of Committees are developing gradually. Another important point is that these offices have been recognized by constitutional and legal provisions.

4.6 Innovation of Parliamentary Devices

The Constitution of the country has incorporated all essential provisions imperative for smooth functioning of a parliament. Prominent of these provisions are the article 76 (related to the committee system), 77 (for the office

94 *Ibid.*

95 See R. K. Alderman, "The Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister's Question Time", *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January 1992, p. 75.

96 Quoted in Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

of an Ombudsman), 87 (endorsing annual budget) and 127 (for the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General) of the Constitution. The *Rules of Procedure* of the Bangladesh parliament has also provided many necessary devices. Among these the important devices are the 'question hour', 'adjournment motion', 'half-an-hour discussion', 'calling attention to matters of urgent public importance', 'petitions by the subject' and 'no-confidence motion'. So, from the beginning the Bangladesh parliament has 'provided all the essential principles of parliamentary practices through which an effective check could be put on the executive, thereby, in the process establishing a proper parliamentary form of government.'⁹⁷

During the period under review a few new devices have been introduced and some have been reformed to ensure more effectiveness of the parliament. Some laws have also been enacted with a number of decisions taken which contributed to create positive impact and instances in the running of the parliamentary affairs. The features and implications of these devices, reforms and laws/decisions have been discussed below.

4.6.1 Independent Parliament Secretariat

The Constitution of Bangladesh has a unique provision regarding the secretariat of the parliament. The Constitution has emphasized that the parliament should have its 'own' secretariat. The Article 79 of the Constitution has stipulated:

(1) Parliament shall have its own secretariat. (2) Parliament may, by law, regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to the secretariat of Parliament. (3) Until provisions are made by Parliament the President may, after consultation with the Speaker, make rules regulating the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed by to the secretariat of Parliament, and rules so made shall have effect subject to the provisions of any law.

The Constitution has envisaged a secretariat independent of government control and supervision. Despite constitutional mandate no law has been framed to make the parliament secretariat independent. Till 1994 the parliament secretariat was run under the Rules of Business of the Government. After re-introduction of the parliamentary system in 1991 optimism developed that necessary measures would be taken to ensure independence of the parliament secretariat as asserted in the constitution. The optimism was shattered when the

⁹⁷ Moudud Ahmed, 2005, *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

new government of Khaleda Zia issued a circular on 13 October 1991 stating that the parliament secretariat would be put under the Ministry of Law and Justice. This decision resented the MPs. A heated discussion was held in the House on 15 October. The opposition members termed it as an act of 'infringement in the sovereignty of the parliament'.⁹⁸ The government side conceded that the circular was not consistent to the concept of the sovereignty of the parliament. But they insisted that it was a temporary arrangement and a comprehensive law would be enacted to make the secretariat independent.⁹⁹ To cover the issue comprehensively the government placed the 'The Parliament Secretariat Bill' on 28 February 1994. The bill proposed a 'Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat Commission' comprising the Speaker as chairman and Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition, the minister in charge of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Finance Ministry or their nominees as members'.¹⁰⁰ The bill was welcomed by both the ruling and the opposition members. 'Both sides thumped tables on its placement'.¹⁰¹ But with all the opposition MPs being absent from the House, the Parliament Secretariat Bill was passed on 11 May 1994.

Though the bill was initially welcomed by the opposition members, after enactment was made it received adverse reaction from them. The opposition parties rejected the act by saying that it had lost its spirit. The bill curtailed the powers of the Speaker and empowered a minister to run the parliament secretariat.¹⁰² AL MP Tofail Ahmed said that the bill was passed to make the parliament a 'rubber stamp'. He also claimed that it was unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh that such an important bill was passed with the opposition parties remaining absent from the House.¹⁰³ JP leader Moudud Ahmed termed the enactment of the bill 'an anti-climax'. He said that the opposition struggled for the bill but it was passed in its absence.¹⁰⁴ The government defended it by saying that the discussion on the bill was deferred thrice to accommodate the views of the opposition.¹⁰⁵

98 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 16 October 1991.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 1 March 1994.

101 *Ibid.*

102 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 13 May 1994.

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Ibid.*

105 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 12 May 1994.

It is true that the Parliament Secretariat Act 1994 would have been a better law if the opposition could place their suggestions and recommendations on it. However, it could not be denied that the Parliament Secretariat Act 1994 is a major advancement to ensure sovereignty of the parliament. In a situation where the parliament was traditionally considered just an extension of the government machinery and run by the Rules of Business of the Government, this law facilitated a remarkable departure from the past. In fact, by and large, it reflected the mentality of the people and the lawmakers, irrespective of their political affiliation, who sincerely believed in keeping the Parliament Secretariat free from all kinds of governmental control.

4.6.2 Democratization of Committee System

Parliamentary committees have frequently been referred to as ‘mini-parliaments’ in as much as they do perform on behalf of the House, albeit in a particular manner.¹⁰⁶ In modern time the committee is an indispensable part of the parliamentary system. The functions and standards of a parliament are reflected in its committees. Morris-Jones said that a legislature may be known by the committees it keeps.¹⁰⁷ Bangladesh parliament has a long history of maintaining committee system since the British colonial period. After the independence of Bangladesh as an independent state all parliaments, from the first to the ninth, have constituted a number of committees. One of the major features of the committee system of Bangladesh is that committees enjoy constitutional mandate. The committees of the Bangladesh parliament have generally been categorized into some groups. These are: ministerial committees, committees on finance and audit, other standing committees and special committees for specific purposes. The structures, functions, authority of appointing members of different committees are different. The following two Tables show the structures and compositions of the parliamentary committees of Bangladesh. Among the committees the departmentally related committees are very important. These committees play a vital role in scrutinizing government activities and make the executive accountable to the parliament. After re-introduction of the parliamentary system in 1991 the parliament

106 Ziaur Rahman Khan, “Parliamentary Committee System of Bangladesh”, in Nizam Ahmed and A.T.M.Obaidullah (ed.), *The Working of Parliamentary Committees in Westminster Systems: Lessons for Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2007, p. 31.

107 Quoted in Shamsul Huda Harun, *Parliamentary Behaviour in a Multi-National State 1947-56 Bangladesh Experience*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka 1984, p. 82.

strengthened its activities, and high expectation was built among the political circles that parliamentary committees would perform efficiently to check whether the government behaves rightly. As expected, the fifth parliament began its activities with enthusiasm and formed 46 standing committees and 63 sub-committees. But it was felt that parliamentary standing committees were not performing significantly due to some structural deficiencies. One of these deficiencies was chairing of departmental standing committees by the ministers. It was observed that chairpersonship of departmental committees by the ministers left a negative impact on the performances of the committees.

The practice of chairing parliamentary committees by the ministers was criticized by many observers. Khan said that it was impossible for the chairman of such a committee to be dispassionate when his actions and those of his senior civil servants were thoroughly scrutinized, lapses unearthed and responsibility assessed.¹⁰⁸ The opposition parties and civil society organizations were against chairpersonship of the ministers. While campaigning for the seventh parliamentary elections AL pledged to the voters that if voted to power the party would replace the minister as the chairperson of the departmental standing committee by a backbencher MP. After coming to power on 23 June 1996, the AL took initiatives to implement its electoral commitment. The Committee on *Rules of Procedure* (ROP) of the seventh parliament made a sub-committee to suggest changes in the ROP. The standing committee on the ROP and its sub-committee met in thirteen meetings from 4 August 1996 to 8 May 1997 and prepared a report recommending amendments to rule 247 of the ROP.

Finally, the House accepted the amendments on 10 June 1997 which allowed the backbencher MPs to chair the standing committees instead of the ministers. The amendment also provides that if a member after being elected as chairman is appointed as minister he shall cease to be chairperson of the committee.

Table 6: Structure of Parliamentary Committees.

Nature of Committees	Number of Committees (Parliament-wise)			
	First	Second	Fifth	Seventh
Standing Committee				
Departmentally-related Committees (DPC)	-	36	35	35
Financial Committee	3	3	3	3
Investigative Committee	2	2	2	2
Scrutinizing Committee	1	1	1	1
House Committee	3	3	3	3
Service Committee	2	2	2	2

108 Quoted in Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

Ad hoc Committees				
Committee on Bills (Select & Special)	3	3	5	1
Special Committee	-	1	2	1
Total	14	51	53	48

Source: Ahmed 2002, p. 132.

Table 7: Structure and Composition of Parliamentary Committees in Bangladesh.

Types of Committees	No. of Members	Chairman	Appointing Authority	Remarks	Rule(s)
Standing Committees					
Ministerial Committees	10	Backbencher	House	Ministers are not eligible to chair	246-8
Finance and Audit Committees					
Public Accounts Committees	15	Backbencher	House	No minister can be a member	233-4
Estimates Committees	10	Backbencher	House	No minister can be a member	235-7
Public Undertakings Committees	10	Backbencher	House	No minister can be a member	238-9
Other Standing Committees					
Committees on Privileges	10	Usually Speaker	House	To be formed in the first session	240-3
Petition Committee	10	Usually Speaker	Speaker	No minister can be a member	231-2
Committee on Government Assurances	8	Not specified	House	-	244-5
Business Advisory Committee	15	Speaker	Speaker	-	219-21
Committee on Private Members' Bills	10	Backbencher	House	-	222-4
Committee on Rules of Procedure	12	Speaker	House	-	263-5
House Committee	12	Not specified	Speaker	It performs advisory functions	249-56
Library Committee	10	Deputy Speaker	Speaker	-	257-8, 262
Ad hoc Committees					
Select Committees on Bills			House	-	225-30
Special Committees			House	-	266

Source: Hasanuzzaman 2007, p. 43.

This reform created mixed reactions. Many felt that it was an important step toward democratization of the committee system. Political parties welcomed this reform. Finding its positive impact one expert commented that this reform marked the beginning of a new trend in parliament-executive relations.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, this reform has also been seen as ‘cosmetic than real.’¹¹⁰ Replacing ministers by backbencher MPs as chairpersons of the standing committees does not automatically ensure smooth functioning of the committees. But it cannot be denied that it was a major contribution of the seventh parliament toward democratization and ensuring effective functioning of the committee system of the country. Compared with the parliamentary committees of the previous parliaments the committees of the seventh parliament were more active and vibrant. Ahmed has shown that between 1991 and 1996, more than one-thirds of the bills were enacted through executive ordinances, and despite demands of the opposition bills were not submitted to the parliamentary committees. Only seven out of 173 bills passed during this time were scrutinized by the committees.¹¹¹ On the other hand, during the period from 1996 to 2001 less than three per cent of the bills were promulgated by executive ordinances, and all bills were scrutinized by the relevant parliamentary committees.¹¹² But yet it cannot be denied that ‘...the level of committee activism is very low.’¹¹³ The committees are not regular in producing their reports. If reports are produced the House rarely discusses them in elaboration. On the other hand, as the committees are dominated by the ruling party members they tend to use this parliamentary tool against the opposition party for political gain.

4.6.4 Prime Minister’s Question Time (PMQT)

‘Questions to the Prime Minister’ or ‘Prime Minister’s Question Time’ (PMQT) is one of the most effective tools to ensure accountability and parliamentary scrutiny of the Prime Minister and her/his government. It is being widely used in Australia, Canada, Britain and India. Through this, the members of

109 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

110 Nizam Ahmed, *Limits of Parliamentary Control: Public Spending in Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka 2006, p. 90.

111 Quoted in Jalal Alamgir, ‘The Challenge of Democratic Consolidation in Bangladesh’, *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 110, April-June, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka 2006, p. 6.

112 *Ibid.* p. 7.

113 Nizam Ahmed, 2012, *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

parliament seek to question the Prime Minister about policy matters and day-to-day administration. In the parliamentary process, it is considered as one of the most valuable rights of the opposition members. In the British system, putting questions to the Prime Minister 'is a prime opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to put on the political agenda the issue of the day'.¹¹⁴ One author has described the PMQT in Britain as 'the jewel in the crown of political activity at Westminster'.¹¹⁵

In Bangladesh, the PMQT was introduced in the third session of the seventh parliament. It is interesting to note that a tool to scrutinize the activities of the Prime Minister was initiated in Bangladesh by the PM herself. The decision to experiment with this innovation was essentially made by Sheikh Hasina,¹¹⁶ the PM of the AL government of 1996. In a joyful environment the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appeared for PMQT on 25 February 1997.¹¹⁷ The introduction of the PMQT was termed 'historic' and 'epoch-making'. In his introductory speech the Speaker said such a system has been introduced only in a few countries. This process is the best example of the government's accountability to the parliament and to the people.¹¹⁸ The newspapers published special reports and editorials on the issue. Many of them praised Sheikh Hasina for fulfilling one of her election pledges. But some newspapers expressed cautious optimism about the prospect of this device.

Though the PMQT is considered as one of the best parliamentary devices, recent experiences have revealed that the impact of this device is not very impressive. Critics have identified a number of flaws, such as the gradual deterioration in the quality of questions asked and also the nature of response made by the Prime Minister.¹¹⁹ It had been alleged that the ruling party tended to use this device to attack the opposition and highlight the 'achievement' of the Prime Minister. So, in most of the time it did not ensure prime ministerial accountability it rather works as a propaganda tool of the government. Another

114 J.A.G. Griffith and Michael Ryle, *Parliament: Functions, Practice and Procedures*, Sweet & Maxwell, Reprinted, London 1990, p. 260.

115 Quoted in Nizam Ahmed, 2006, *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

117 The first question was asked to the PM by AL member Mirza Azam. Three supplementary questions were raised by Mirza Azam (AL), Saifur Rahman (BNP) and Fazle Rabbi (JP).

118 *The Independent*, Dhaka, 26 February 1997.

119 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

weak point of this system in Bangladesh was that the attitude of the opposition especially the Leader of the Opposition was negative. While the Leader of the Opposition in Britain had great enthusiasm about scoring points on the government through this system, in Bangladesh the Leader of the opposition 'did not even once confront the Prime Minister'¹²⁰ during the PMQs. Despite various limitations it was considered as 'a major departure with the past'¹²¹ and an important contribution of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the parliamentary practices of the country.

4.6.5 Live Broadcasting of the Proceedings

Some sixty countries throughout the world now allow television cameras and radio microphones to record the proceedings of their legislatures.¹²² The broadcasting of the parliamentary proceedings was first introduced in the Commonwealth countries by New Zealand.¹²³ In 1936 New Zealand began radio broadcast of the proceedings of its House of Representatives. Canada and Australia started broadcasting parliamentary proceedings in 1946. Visual recordings, with or without accompanying sound, were permitted in Australia for the first time in 1974.¹²⁴ Canada claims to be the first Commonwealth country to televise live parliamentary debates in 1977.¹²⁵ In Britain the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) attempted broadcasting the proceedings of the House of Commons in 1920s. But eventually, in Britain, permanent radio coverage was allowed in 1978.¹²⁶

The question of acceptability of the radio and television broadcasting of the proceedings of parliaments was an issue of intense debate in many countries especially in Britain for years. Those who were against broadcasting argued that continuous live broadcasting in sound and vision was impracticable and undesirable.¹²⁷ It was undesirable, because, there was a possible 'jockeying' in

120 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

121 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

122 Mary Raine, "Informed Democracies: Parliamentary Broadcasts as a Public Service", See http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/18798/11144257475informed_democracies.doc/informed_democracies.doc, Accessed: November, 2010.

123 Norman Wilding and Philip Laundy, *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

124 R. C. Bhardwaj, "Televising of Parliamentary Proceedings in Australia", *The Journal of Parliamentary Information*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 3, September, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi 1993, p. 659.

125 Mary Raine, *Op. cit.*

126 *Ibid.*

127 J.A.G. Griffith and Michael Ryle, *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

the speech time.¹²⁸ They claimed that it would trivialize and distort the work of the parliament. MPs would be tempted, by the presence of cameras, to play a role to get them on television. The equipment—the cameras, the bright lights, wires trailing everywhere, and technicians operating the equipment—would all be too intrusive.¹²⁹ But those who supported the idea of broadcasting argued that it would raise the standard of debate and increase public interest in the proceedings of the parliament.¹³⁰ It would help make the politicians more accountable and bring the MPs close to the common people. A former Conservative leader of the House of Commons told his colleagues: To televise Parliament would, at a stroke, restore any loss it has suffered to the new mass media as the political education of the nation.¹³¹ However, it was the British Upper House, the Lords, who were first to agree to let themselves be televised in 1985. Now, in Britain, there is a special channel, BBC Parliament,¹³² exclusively dedicated to the coverage of the parliamentary proceedings and related issues. The proceedings of the Indian parliament were not broadcast or photographed and televised¹³³ for a long time. India began telecasting selected parliamentary proceedings since 1989. From 1994 the question hours of both the Houses of the Indian Parliament are being broadcast live on both satellite television and All India Radio. Now the Indian Parliament has its own 24-hour TV channel named ‘Lok Sabha TV’ to broadcast proceedings live.

The selected broadcasting of the proceedings of the Bangladesh parliament started in the year 1991. The Bangladesh Betar (Betar) and Bangladesh Television (BTV) used to edit the plenary session of the parliament and selectively broadcasted them. This practice received positive response from the people. The various sections of the conscious people and many members of the parliaments raised demands to make arrangements for live broadcasting of the House. The live broadcasting of the question-answer session began at the

128 Norman Wilding and Philip Laundy, *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

129 Mary Raine, *Op. cit.*

130 Norman Wilding and Philip Laundy, *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

131 Mary Raine, *Op. cit.*

132 *Ibid.*

133 The speeches made in the House on the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi were, however, recorded and later broadcast by the All India Radio. In the Budget Session, 1946, a question was tabled by a member suggesting to the Government to consider the advisability of installing loudspeakers outside the Chamber to enable the public to hear the proceedings of the House. Speaker Mavalankar did not favour the idea (M. N.Kaul and S. L. Shakdher, *Op. cit.*, p. 920).

beginning of the seventh parliament. The ninth parliament has started a new TV channel named 'Sangsad Bangladesh Television' for broadcasting live parliament's entire proceedings. Bangladesh had to go through a process of debate about the acceptability of the live broadcasting of the proceedings. Some argued that as the parliamentary culture of the country was not very developed and the MPs were more concerned with delivering fiery speeches and putting up a good show for the public (much like a public speech), the live broadcasting would not ensure accountability; it rather would encourage chaos and unhealthy competitions. But the counter-argument was that the live broadcasting would at least acquaint the public with the activities of their representatives in the House. It would serve as an excellent mode of civic education and information for voting in the next elections.¹³⁴

The seventh parliament initiated selected live broadcasting of the parliamentary proceedings. It is true that by live broadcasting much unruly and unparliamentary behaviour of the members were brought to the surface which contributed to creating a negative image of the parliament. But broadcasting of the parliamentary proceedings created enthusiasm among the people about the parliament and the deliberations of the members in the House. It helped disseminate parliamentary information. At the end it is felt beneficial in the institutionalization of the House as the central organization of the political system.

4.6.6 Unscheduled Debates/Zero Hour

The debates are an integral part of the parliamentary proceedings. An important essence of the parliamentary government is debate. It has rightly been mentioned that the meaning of the phrase 'parliamentary government' is that it is 'not a government by Parliament, but government through Parliament. The Government may govern, but Parliament is the forum for public debate and criticism of those acts of government. Parliament is essentially a debating society.'¹³⁵The debates cover various aspects of the activities of the parliament. 'No issue is too big or too small for parliamentary consideration.'¹³⁶ The

134 The UNDP-sponsored project entitled "A Need Assessment of the Parliament of Bangladesh Private Draft 4", 29 August 1996, visit <http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/cap/asia/BGD/ZOVATTO.htm>, Accessed: November 2010.

135 J.A.G. Griffith and Michael Ryle, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

136 *Ibid.*

parliamentary debate is a useful tool for ventilation of opinions and grievances of the members of the parliament. Usually, parliamentary debates are held under certain provisions of the rules of procedures of the parliaments. In normal circumstances, debates take place as per pre-determined date, time and agenda of the House. But unscheduled debates are those which are held outside the rules of the House. The main objective of this kind of debate is to discuss important current issues. In Indian parliament unscheduled debate has been regularized as 'zero hour'.¹³⁷ The zero hour is considered as one of the innovative contributions of the Indian parliament in the history of parliamentary devices. It has been placed in the Indian parliament since 1960s.

In the parliaments of Bangladesh a number of unscheduled debates were initiated by the members. Unscheduled debates often took precedence over the agenda set in advance. The debates dislocated the pre-fixed working schedule of the House. According to an estimate, a total of 29 unscheduled debates took place in the fifth parliament; the number increased to 51 in the seventh parliament.¹³⁸ It has been observed that the excessive trend of resorting to unscheduled debates annoyed the Speakers. The Speaker of the fifth parliament once pointed out that it became very difficult for him to run the House as it became a practice, among the MPs, of speaking outside the rules of procedure.¹³⁹

The seventh parliament took an initiative to include 'unscheduled debates' as a regular parliamentary technique. The BAC decided on 9 June 1998 that at the end of every sitting day there would be regular half-an-hour unscheduled debates. Of the 30 minutes the treasury and the opposition would have fifteen minutes each in the daily debates. The Speaker informed the House of the

137 As leader of the opposition of Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian parliament, Sonia Gandhi wrote: ...Zero Hour, that uniquely Indian Parliamentary practice, that comes naturally to us since we invented and gave the world Zero itself! This gives members a chance to raise local and national issues they consider important with the permission of the presiding officers. It is true that very often lung power is in full display between 12 noon and 1 pm but my own view is that both Question Hour and Zero Hour, if given proper structure and if managed well, have great potential to keep the executive on its toes. For details see (Jalal Firoj, *Parliamentary Shabdokosh (Dictionary of Parliamentary Terms)*, Second Edition, Bangla Academy, Dhaka 2010).

138 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

139 He also mentioned that the newspapers were running stories on such discussions. He reminded the newspapers to write objectively that such discussion had been held outside the Rules of Procedures. See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 16 February 1993.

device on 10 June. In his introductory speech the Speaker mentioned about his recent visit to the British House of Commons and hoped that the new tool would be helpful to enhance the performances of the House. As per the decision the first unscheduled debate was held on 15 June. It was viewed that the device would help the members to extract information and enforce accountability of the government. But it did not continue for long. In fact, before it could be a real beginning, the experiment was terminated in the eleventh session of the seventh parliament.¹⁴⁰ But the opposition side wanted to continue the new technique. On the last sitting of the eleventh session the Deputy Leader of the Opposition requested the Leader of the House to restore the recently scrapped zero hour device. He asked, 'What is wrong with the opposition members' raising some issues affecting the people, especially when the government has the opportunity to reply to the opposition contentions?'¹⁴¹ In her reply the LoH mentioned that they had no problem to restore the device but she called upon the opposition to ensure quorum during the zero hour. She said, 'We have no problem. But why should we have to unilaterally meet the quorum of the House so that the opposition MPs can criticize us. If the opposition can make 60 of its MPs present on a regular basis, we have no objection to restore the zero hour.'¹⁴² But the device was not restored.

The seventh parliament could claim some appreciations for introducing the reform named unscheduled debates or zero hour. But regrettably it was not given enough time to institutionalize the device. Despite some limitations and the challenge of ensuring quorum it would help the opposition and the backbenchers of the ruling party to raise their constituency related and other issues in the House if it would sustain for long.

5. Challenges

5.1 Resolution of CTG Issue: By introducing the constitutionally mandated non-party caretaker system, for which the political parties fought hard and sacrificed much—Bangladesh resolved the issue of holding free and fair elections in the country. The successful application of the system helped hold

140 Nizam Ahmed, 2002, *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

141 See *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 27 November 1998.

142 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 27 November 1998. See also Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, *Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsader Bitarka* (Debates of the Bangladesh National Parliament), The Bangladesh Parliament, 26 November 1998 .

relatively free and fair elections thrice—in 1996, in 2001 and in 2008. As a result it received recognition from the national and the international observers. AL and its allies who once struggled to introduce the caretaker system have scrapped it by enacting fifteenth amendment to the Constitution. On the other hand, BNP, while in power during the period from 1992 to 1996, strongly opposed the idea of caretaker system has initiated political movement to restore it. Both sides are placing arguments in favour of their positions but no peaceful understanding or solution is yet to come. Rather politics of violence and confrontation has re-surfaced. To home their demands, the opposition parties led by BNP, are enforcing *hartals*, *gheraos* and other programmes of agitation. The ruling alliance led by AL is not showing any signal of coming into any consensus with the opposition. As a result, volatility is prevailing and confrontation breeding further confrontations. The contending parties, with their un-compromising attitudes, are gradually pushing the country towards a total chaotic situation. But for holding an acceptable and peaceful election the resolution of controversy on the caretaker issue is an imperative. Without a mechanism, recognized and accepted by all the stakeholders, of holding free and fair election, no parliamentary system can work. Finding a peaceful solution of the caretaker issue is the toughest challenge before the parliament and the political leaders of the country.

5.2 Bringing the Opposition in the House: While in opposition, all the parties, be it AL or BNP, prefer to abstain from the proceedings of the House. It has been established as an ill tradition. On the other hand, the ruling party, no matter whether it is BNP or AL, preaches the opposition to come into the House but feels 'comfortable' without the opposition in the chamber. The opposition members keep distance from the House but do not feel shy to receive all kinds of benefits as honourable lawmakers. In this way an unholy nexus of convenience has been developed. The opposition remains stick to their policy of enforcing agitational programmes in the street and the ruling party continues to use the parliament as one party platform. Consequently, the parliament is not getting institutionalized, losing its effectiveness, though many of the parliaments have completed their terms, huge numbers of laws have been enacted and the volume of sessions and working days are increasing. So, to make the parliament vibrant and effective measures should be taken to bring the opposition in the right track. Apart from building pressures on the ruling and the opposition sides, constitutional, legal and procedural reforms should also be

materialized. Existing constitutional provision that allows a member to abstain from the House for 90 consecutive days should be changed. On the other hand, provisions should be included so that the opposition's consideration/services are required to take parliamentary decisions.

5.3 Enforcing Executive Accountability: One of the most important functions of the parliament is to enforce accountability of the government. For parliamentary scrutiny of the government activities Bangladesh has developed various structures and techniques. These include parliamentary committees, questions to the Prime Minister, questions to the ministers, call attention motions, adjournment motions and motions for half-an-hour discussions and motions for discussions on matters of public importance. To increase effectiveness of the parliamentary committees some reform measures were made but the committees failed to deliver as per expectation. Partisan attitudes of the treasury bench members, absenteeism of the opposition lawmakers from the committee activities, dependence on the government for accomplishing committee activities and executives' reluctance to act on suggestions and recommendations made in the committees' reports are factors that contributed for poor performances of the committees. The other techniques designed to ensure the government's accountability also failed to attain desired results. The Prime Minister's question-answer hour, questions to the ministers and other parliamentary techniques have been used mainly to earn partisan political gain. As a result, ensuring the government's accountability remained a distant dream.

5.4 Strengthening Parliamentary Offices: The parliamentary offices like the Speaker, the Leader of the House, the Leader of Opposition, the Chairman of the Committee and the Whips are very weak and have gained impression that they are deviated from their mandated responsibilities. The neutrality and impartiality of the Speakers are always under questions. The leaders who bore the responsibilities of the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition in the post-1991 parliaments are the top leaders of their respective parties. They are the main policymakers of the government/opposition and their parties. They are also in charge of implementing the policies. Their extreme workload and burden of leadership positions rarely give them the opportunity to exert their roles as the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. In practice, these positions are being used as an extension of party chairpersonships. But under far-sighted leadership these offices could be used for strengthening

parliamentary practices in the country. For a backbencher, the opportunity to become a chairperson of a committee is much wider now. Most of the committees are now chaired by the backbencher MPs. Yet the committee chairpersonship has not been institutionalized. The committee chair can hardly work without the support of the government machineries and the officials. The Bangladesh parliament also lags far behind in quality whipping. However, the importance of these offices cannot be denied. For smooth functioning of the parliament the above offices must be made equipped and efficient and the challenges of ensuring their mandated independence and neutrality should be addressed.

5.5 Establishing Parliamentary ‘Code of Conduct’

The *Rules of Procedures* of the Bangladesh parliament has certain rules by which the Speaker can regulate the behaviour of the members and enhance the dignity and image of the parliament. The Speaker can expunge any word used by a member if it is defamatory or indecent or un-parliamentary. The Speaker can also withdraw a member from the House or can suspend a member from the service of the House if he/she behaves disorderly. A special committee can also be made by the Speaker to inquire the conduct of members of the House. Despite these options to check un-parliamentary and unexpected conduct of the lawmakers, many allegations of misconduct have been brought against them. These allegations include excessive walkouts and boycott, undue intervention in local government’s affairs, misuse of parliamentary privileges, gaining personal benefits using the parliament’s membership, ignoring parliamentary responsibilities and un-parliamentary behaviour in the House. Exchange of indecent and derogatory comments between the treasury and opposition members has become a major issue of concern. Behaviour and expression of some of the MPs during rowdy incidents stooped the whole nation. After observing one of such incidents a national daily in its editorial titled ‘A matter of shame’ wrote:

We have no words to express our sense of shame at what happened in the Jatiyo Sangsad on Wednesday. That lawmakers can stoop so low as to indulge in a free and uninhibited use of obscene language and extremely objectionable gestures is something no one in any country can imagine.¹⁴³

143 *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 5 March 2010.

So, it is felt that some urgent measures should be taken to compel the 'disorderly' members to behave themselves. The Speaker will have to utilize all the legal and procedural options to restrain the members and if necessary he will punish the concerned member for his/her un-parliamentary behaviour. It is also required to bring changes in the article/provision of the Constitution/laws and *Rules of Procedures*. A private member's bill has already been placed on code of conduct of the parliamentarians. This bill should be passed after thoughtful consideration of both the treasury and the opposition members.

6. Conclusion

Over the last four decades the functioning of the Bangladesh legislature had not been very smooth. The first parliament started reasonably well. But all of its initiatives lost credibility when the form of government was changed from parliamentary to presidential by enacting the fourth amendment to the Constitution. The successive parliaments—the second, the third and the fourth—were elected merely to give a veil of civilianization to the military regimes. Under these regimes the parliament was reduced just to a loyal organization of the government. But the twelfth amendment resurrected the parliament's dignity and position in the political system of the country. The parliaments—the fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth ones—elected under different caretaker governments were widely accepted by the people. Compared to the previous legislatures the legitimacy of these parliaments was beyond any question. These parliaments survived for the longest period, innovated and realized many parliamentary devices, enacted important laws including vital amendments to the Constitution and endeavoured to cultivate democratic culture in the country. Despite some strong areas, the Bangladesh parliament is well short to reach its goal cherished by the people. The opposition parties/alliances do not feel interested in attending parliamentary proceedings. Excessive walkouts, boycotts and un-parliamentary behaviour have become dominant features of the parliament. The ruling parties/alliances are more comfortable without any opposition in the house. The parliament has turned into a one party/ruling party affair and no difference of opinion or dissention is heard or allowed. Laws are passed without enough consideration from the committee level and almost with no contribution from the opposition side. The parliament's scrutiny over government is less than effective. The vital national and international issues are not discussed in the House objectively

rather issues are usually picked for discussion on the basis of party or narrow perspectives. Important issues like economic prospects and potentials of the country under the given world situation, democratic consolidation, social and demographic polarization, extremism in politics are rarely discussed in the House. The parliamentary offices and devices are being used merely to serve party interests ignoring their importance in institutionalization and development of democratic culture. The fifteenth amendment has initiated new controversy and doubt about prospects of holding next elections in a fair and peaceful environment. Against this dismal backdrop only hope is that democratic process will continue to make progress without major interruption. The parliament has been allowed to function with its true sense and position since the last two decades. Twenty years are not a very long time for establishing parliament as a vibrant and effective institution which was under full domination of military regimes for one and a half decades. But Bangladesh has no scope to be complacent rather she needs urgent initiatives from the top leadership of all responsible political parties to minimize contentions, to avoid confrontational politics and focus on parliament as the centre of all activities of democratic consolidation of the country.

PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES : EVOLUTION OF AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE**

Md. Touhidul Islam*

Introduction

Peace and security are two ardent desires of human life, but simultaneously it is obvious that conflict and violence are integral parts of human society. So, whenever people truly work for peace and security that utterly indicates to 'work against conflict',¹ violence, and insecurity with some ethical values. Peace and Conflict Studies as an academic discipline has come to a current stage gradually evolving from the pacifist philosophy that war is bad and devastating and, on the contrary, peace is good and a complex social goal, which is not impossible to attain.² Non-violent means of resistance as well as conflict resolution approaches are two key aspects of attaining peace for the goodness of human civilization. Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) basically is a discipline that academically analyses and teaches conditions and values of peace, factors of conflict, issues of security, mechanisms of conflict resolution, and ways of conflict transformation with a pursuit of making peace everlasting. The discipline has primarily originated as a liberal and idealistic phenomenon in its own pace during the Cold War period—that academically aimed to create an effective and vibrant counter force to War Studies (WS) and Strategic Studies (SS), more appropriately. Many of the International Relations (IR) theorists, however, see and firmly believe that the roots of Peace Studies (PS) are closely linked with the origin of IR,³ and as a part of IR, PS deals with broader issues of

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1 Johan Galtung *et al*, *Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend*, (Pluto in Association with Transcend, 2000), p. xiii.

2 Johan Galtung, 'Violence and Peace', *A Reader in Peace Studies*, Paul Smoker, Ruth Davies & Barbara Munske (eds.), (Pergamon Press, 1990), p. 9.

3 Terry Terriff *et al*, 'Peace Studies', *Security Studies Today*, (Polity press, 1999), p. 66.

order, norms, structures, power and international organization and governance.⁴ Globally in different schools this subject is being taught in different names and titles such as Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), Peace Studies (PS), Conflict and Conflict Resolution (CCR), Peace and Human Rights Studies (PHRS) and so on. For the purpose of this article, I use these diverse names and titles interchangeably.

This article, which is an output of a secondary research, initially aims to define the concept of peace, and historical construction and development of the concept of global peace—both intellectual and political. Afterwards, I take a historical view to analyse the evolutionary process of the discipline of PACS, which is primarily rooted in religious spirits, different philosophical ideas such as pacifism and non-violence, and certain disorderly traumatic events of the twentieth century. The catastrophic events of the last century have not only forced the pacifists to focus on value oriented social and scientific researches but also encouraged movements, both social and academic, particularly in the European and American countries in order to search alternatives of realist enigma of international politics. Since early 1970s the pacifist movement, for instance, anti-nuclear movement during the Cold War period, has started growing in other continents of the world. All these political factors, human focused and value oriented academic spirit, and social movements have collectively paved the pace for evolving the academic discipline of PACS. To enter into the realm of knowledge this discipline has to face some hurdles and challenges. The central goal of this discipline is making peace everlasting—through preventing the causes of war, bring to an early end, if war starts, and to promote peace values through education across the globe.⁵ In the Post-Cold War platform, PACS has become an academic discipline being studied at the global level, however, it is not only studied in the Western and developed countries, but developing countries of the Global South expressed their high interests and pursuits to offer courses and degrees in PACS, PS or PHRS. As a part of this trend this article further explores and analyses how this discipline has started in the universities and academic institutions of South Asia.

South Asia is an important consideration in this context because it is a region that is full of socio-economic problems (poverty, unemployment, economic

4 Oliver P Richmond, *Peace in International Relations*, (Routledge, 2008), p. 98.

5 Paul Rogers, in his class lecture on “The Evolution of Thinking About War and Peace 2: The Evolution of Peace Studies as an Academic Discipline” in the University of Bradford, on 28 September 2010.

disparities are high in South Asia that cause many proto-type internal conflicts as well as problems like terrorism and extremism), political tussle, interstate contentions as well as nuclearization of the region, by India and Pakistan in 1998, that not only pose threats to state and people's security but also reduce the applicability of peace dividend as defense budget of the countries follows an increasing trend. Considering this socio-political context this article focuses on how an academic subject like PACS or PHRS or Conflict Peace and Development Studies (CPDS) has started in the classrooms of South Asia, and what are the central aims that the South Asian institutions think best suit for their programs. Before approaching to the analysis of the evolutionary process of the discipline of PACS, however, it is crucial to get a basic understanding of peace, and what are the basic objectives and principles does this discipline focus on?

Peace and its Dimensions

Peace generally indicates an individual's perception towards the surrounding and the world. Such a perception mainly focuses on happiness, harmony, goodness as well as a tension free and apprehension-less situation⁶ that are always expected to be enduring. There is no universal definition of peace although the word 'peace' has both negative and positive meanings, and very often it is conceived in 'rather negative terms as the absence of war or the absence of violent conflict'—that means absence of direct violence.⁷ This negative definition is proved 'theoretically poor', and it is 'fairly Eurocentric';⁸ whereas the positive definition, which emphasizes social justice that can guarantee 'a state of harmony'.⁹ Galtung terming peace as 'social goals' has broadened the scope of peace that is related to 'social justice' as well as 'absence of violence', in particular structural form of violence.¹⁰

Thomas Aquinas during his time stated that 'the absence of war does not equate peace in the absence of justice'.¹¹ Focusing on management aspect of conflict James H. Laue states peace as 'a continuous and constructive management of

6 Md. Touhidul Islam, "Violence against Women in Bangladesh: A Structural Setback to Peace and Security", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2010, p. 54.

7 Nigel Dower, *The Ethics of War and Peace: Cosmopolitan and Other Perspectives*, (Polity Press, 2009), p. 3.

8 Hakan Wibeng (b), 'What is the use of Conflict Theory?', Peter Wallensteen (ed), *Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges*, (West View Press, 1988), p. 106.

9 *Collins English Dictionary*, (Collins Publishers, 1982), p. 1078.

10 Johan Galtung, *Op cit*, 1990, p. 9.

11 Hakan Wibeng (b), *Op cit*, 1988, p. 106.

differences for mutually satisfying relations, which prevent the escalation of violence for universal well-being of human beings and their groups from the family to the culture and the state.¹² In a real world affair, which is full of conflict, violence and war like problems, positive peace seems ‘an idealistic dream rather than a practical goal’;¹³ however that does not indicate that it is impossible to attain positive objectives of peace. In fact, once objectives of positive peace are fulfilled that fundamentally curbs the possibilities of war and violence. Moreover, there is an ethical priority of every individual to promote and pursue this goal, because peace is not only an ultimate goal to achieve, but an essential way to accomplish also. Istvan Kende stresses, ‘peace is not only an everlasting dream, but also an everlasting source which inspires theories and encourages cooperation’ among people, nations and states.¹⁴

Additionally, Nigel Dower has coined the term “just durable peace”, in which global justice mechanism can play a crucial role to sustain it¹⁵ through appropriate and effective applications of international laws. Such applications have to be supported by ethics of domestic and international politics, and public opinion. Natalie La Balme argues that public opinion and voice can play a kinetic catalyst role for sustainable peace.¹⁶ Despite having globally acknowledged and established two dimensions of peace, the necessity of bringing this third dimension in academic space, I argue, is to ensure ethical, pacifist and humanitarian standard of PACS. ‘Just durable peace’ has a chance to influence both negative and positive dimensions equally. ‘Just durable peace’ in some ways is closely linked with Kenneth Boulding’s state of ‘stable peace’, in where the probability of war is very limited,¹⁷ only if rules of engagement of the parties are obeyed and maintained in bi-lateral and international relationships. However, disagreement may come from the realist perspective that there is no as such a strong position of ethics in international politics. I argue in this respect that if morality has any place in domestic and local politics, in where ethics play substantial role than international politics,¹⁸ that also have

12 James H Laue, *Approaches to Peace*, (United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC. 1999), p. 301.

13 Nigel Dower, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 6.

14 Istvan Kende, “The History of Peace: Concept and Organizations from the Late Middle Ages to the 1870s”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1989, p. 245.

15 Nigel Dower, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 6.

16 Natalie La Balme, as quoted in Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia (eds.), *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, (Routledge 2001), p. XV.

17 Kenneth E. Boulding, *Stable Peace*, (University of Texas Press, 1989), p. 13.

18 Joseph S Nye Jr., *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, (Rahul Parint O Pack, 2008), p. 21.

such power to influence bi-lateral, regional and international relationships with the support of greater public opinion. The figure 1 explains the basic components of peace in the 21st century, which indicates that peace touches much more than no war situation. However, neither the development of the concept of world peace nor the expansion of the discipline of PACS does come at the present stage in a short period of time; rather a well focused religious understanding, European philosophical movements of peace and conflict research, and social movements have contributed substantially to the evolution of the subject at every stage.

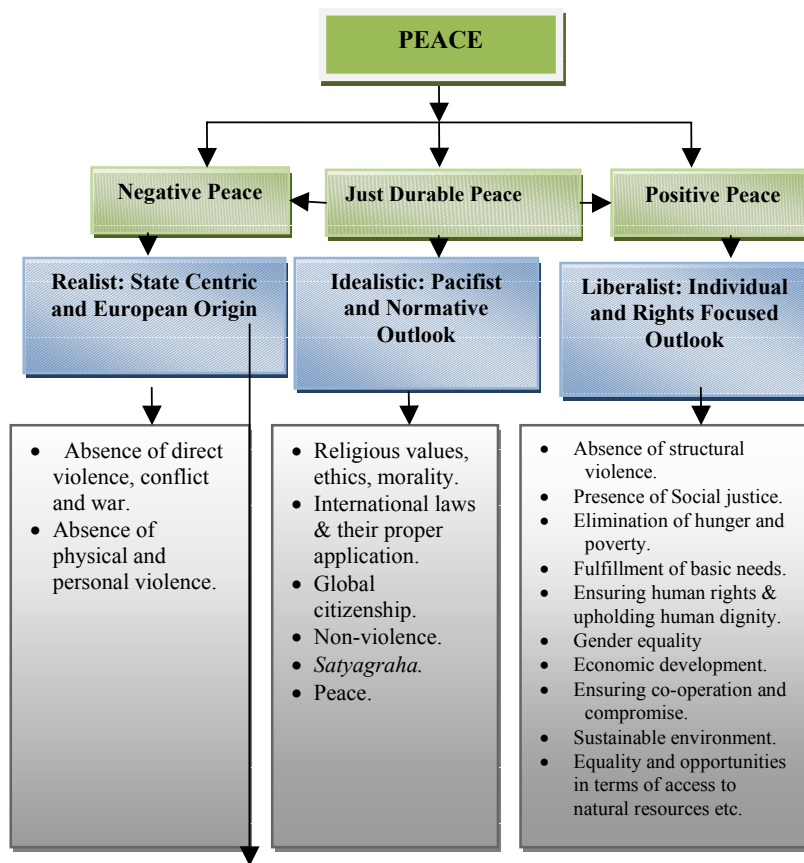


Figure 1: Dimensions of Peace

Peace and Conflict Studies: Objective and Principles

Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), is a well-established and well-functioning academic discipline now across the globe, which ‘systematically study the causes of war and violence and the conditions of peace.’¹⁹ As an academic discipline this subject adheres to some basic principles for maintaining its own standard, which clearly distinguishes it from other established disciplines. The principles of PACS are to maintain rules of sound pedagogy and rigorous scholarship, to exercise interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach of education, to focus more on civil society rather than policy experts, to focus more on non-violent approaches of conflict management than coercive approach, to emphasize values, morality, ethics, justice and world community, and to reform and transform existing structures in order to sustain peace.²⁰ The discipline does not come overnight rather a number of other methodological and analytical approaches of studying conflict and war issues, and different historical peace proposals and plans, movements, peace education programs, and arguably peace actions are well associated with the development of this discipline.²¹ Beside religious motivations, peace movements, in this respect, is also a key contributing factor for the genesis of the discipline that does not expect to see results immediately, but tends to focus on a possible peaceful future world.²²

The discipline of PACS or PS, however, lacks any strong political back up, which other disciplines may have enjoyed during their genesis period; instead keeping pacifism as a spirit and responding to different traumatic events of global affairs and wars of the twentieth century the discipline has marched alone. David J Dunn in this respect states that ‘if international relations and strategic studies emerged with some visibility, and significant backing, at fairly specific times in relation to given circumstances, this is certainly not the case with regard to peace research.’²³ IR as an academic discipline was established in

19 Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin, ‘Introduction: Thinking About Peace’, Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin *Rethinking Peace*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), p. 5.

20 Joseph J. Fahey, ‘Peace Studies: Beginning and Development’, Nigel J. Young (editor in chief), *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Vol. 3, (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 491.

21 Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin, *Op cit*, 1994, p. 5.

22 Bob Overy, *How Effective are Peace Movements*, (Harvest House, 1982), p. 1.

23 David J. Dunn, *The First Fifty Years of Peace Research: A Survey and Interpretation*, (Ashgate, 2005), p. 41.

the post-World War I period, and the first Chair of IR was immensely sponsored by the Welsh industrialists and Liberal MP David Davies. The realist dominated IR discipline may plausibly claim that ‘war and peace at the heart of its concerns’, whereas pacifist dominated discipline PACS’s central concern is not only to reduce and eventually eradicate war but also to control and reduce violent conflicts ‘by peaceful means’.²⁴ Though the latter’s formal launching was in a skeptical and pessimistic political scenario of the post-World War II period, but its overall objective is neither limited nor narrow focused. Pointing to its purpose and agenda David Dunn and Pedro Bernaldez cogently state:

As a whole, the objective of peace studies is to distill and spread the knowledge of peace research to wider community, in order to better understanding of peace and conflict issues in different and varied forms with certain values within a particular process and try to influence policy-making process successfully.²⁵

The overall commitment of PACS is not merely to keep peace, but to building, furthering and promoting it from an ethical ground²⁶ as well as to pursuing ‘cooperation between states’ for world peace.²⁷ The discipline became visible as a ‘formal field of study’ with its own institutions and journals in the post-1945 period,²⁸ and gradually has seen a decisive shift away from the foundational commitment to positivism.²⁹ The discipline has a multidisciplinary reach rather than claiming itself as a self-evidently distinct field. The comprehensive definition of peace and interdisciplinary origin of the subject arguably have two better foundations for distinguishing it from other cognate fields. Lawler points out, ‘the multidisciplinary origins of the foundations of peace research helped arguably to stymie their original goal of establishing a methodologically distinctive and theoretically robust field of social scientific enquiry’.³⁰

24 Peter Lawler, ‘Peace Studies’, Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction*, (Routledge, 2008), p. 74.

25 David Dunn and Pedro B. Bernaldez, ‘Peace Studies’, Young Seek Choue (ed.) *World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Vol. IV (second edition), (Oceana Publications, Inc., 1999), p. 266.

26 Nigel Dower, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 3.

27 Terry Terriff *et al*, *Op cit*, 1999, p. 6.

28 Paul Rogers, ‘Peace Studies’, *Contemporary Security Studies*, Alan Collins (ed.), (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 70.

29 Peter Lawler, *Op cit*, 2008, p. 73.

30 *Ibid*, p. 74.

Although the emergence of the concept of peace in the world affairs has a very close connection with the religious believes; however, the discipline cannot be characterized by a particular emphasis on religious imperatives to pursue peace. It is almost impossible to undermine the contribution of religious thinking for the genesis of the discipline, but of course, there are many other factors that played crucial roles to developing global peace plans as well as to establishing a full-fledged discipline. PACS, or in different other titles, is now teaching in about 50 countries across the continents.

Philosophies and Proposals of Peace: Religion, Pacifism, Quakerism, and Global Peace Plans

The underlying philosophy of peace and the origin of the discipline of PACS are very closely associated with morality, religion, ethical practices, normative values and pacifism. This spiritual philosophy, in fact, is a common source for peaceful thinking for all religious communities in the world.³¹ There is hardly any religion in the world that does not invite or speaks for peace but only promotes violence.³² Ho-Won Jeong explains that the ‘concepts of peace have been reached in content across various religious and philosophical traditions. The search for inner and communal peace derives from the ideal sought in the spiritual life’.³³ Many religious traditions renounce war as a principle or goal of society, and oppose military conscription³⁴ as do the pacifists.

Peter Brock traced that pacifism is nearly two thousand years old.³⁵ The inspiration of pacifism, as Martin Ceadel pointed, came from ‘respected religious, ethical, or philosophical position’.³⁶ In Britain the ‘oldest and most durable’ motivation has been religion, ‘exclusively Christianity’.³⁷ Eastern religions also have strong emphasis on connections ‘between a spiritual life and

31 Antony Adolf, ‘Monotheistic Peaces: Judaism, Christianity and Islam’, *Peace: A World History*, (Polity, 2009), pp. 83-102.

32 In this respect it is important to mention that Buddhism, as a religion, only keeps peace in the center of spiritual thinking, but war resistance is not prominent in Buddhist teachings.

33 Ho-won Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*, (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), p. 7

34 *Ibid*, p. 337.

35 Ronald Bainton, *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace*, 1961, as cited in Peter Brook’s *Pacifism in Europe*, 1972, p. 3.

36 Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith*, (Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 13.

37 *Ibid*.

action for social justice'.³⁸ Istvan Kende pointing to the Chinese, Indian, Arabic and other cultures states that there were similar thinking from the beginning in other societies and cultures to create peaceful societies.³⁹ The Buddhist religious belief—that is based on justice, equality, tranquility, nonviolence, concerns for the well being of others and harmonious interpersonal relationship—has a well grounded contribution for the development of the philosophy of peace.⁴⁰ Although pacifism is well rooted almost in all religions, however, Christian pacifism has played most significant and leading role for exposing and expanding peace philosophies across the globe.

Christian pacifism sees war as wrong because it 'denies the fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man'.⁴¹ Jesus Christ's 'innovative form of pacification, pacifism and peacemaking'⁴² were the guiding principles for the early Christian churches. The early Christian churches preached for anti-militarism and objected to participate in active wars. Henry Cadbury points out that 'for the Christian, antimilitarism . . . is a well-defined opposition to war as a system and to participation in war in any form'.⁴³ Peter Brock clearly argued that until the early of the fourth century 'the official stand of the church . . . opposed Christian participation in war or the shedding of human blood'.⁴⁴ During that time church fathers not only spoken for anti-militarism, but also explored the pacific virtues of patience, humility, love of peace, and non-resistance.

These early churches were successful to influence many young and converted Christian for abstaining military services and many of them willingly laid down their arms.⁴⁵ The church fathers saw war "as an iniquity, 'madness', and a product of the lusts of the flesh".⁴⁶ Churches were seen as 'a moral agency' for

38 Paul Smoker and L Groff, "Spirituality, religion, culture and peace: Exploring for the foundations for inner-outer peace in the twentieth century", *International Journal for Peace Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1996. pp. 77-113.

39 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 233.

40 Ho-Won Jeong, *Op cit*, 2000, p. 7.

41 William .E Wilson, *The Foundation of Peace: A Discussion of Pacifism and the Prevention of Wars*, (Headley BROs. Publishers Ltd, 1918), p. 12.

42 Antony Adolf, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 88.

43 Henry. J. Chadbury, "The basis of early Christian administration", *Journal of Biblical Literature* (New Haven, Conn.) vol. XXXVII, 1918 as cited in Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1972, p. 3.

44 Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, (Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 4.

45 *Ibid*, pp. 5-22.

46 *Ibid*, p. 7.

raising the Empire, creating peace as well as converting barbarians.⁴⁷ However, when Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity the church regarded him as the ‘champion of Christianity’. He made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and formally Christianity started sanctioning war, and thus pacifism lost its philosophical values and as a consequence it became ‘a subterranean element within the church’.⁴⁸ With both the religious and administrative powers Roman’s defined pacifism for their own determined term and, as a result, pacifism was abandoned by the church.

African born Roman citizen St. Augustine’s contribution to ‘just war’ theory in the fourth century, the early medieval Christianity, and crusades had turned pacifism into ‘quasi-pacifism’ that was prolonged for several centuries.⁴⁹ Pacifism got its lost momentum back and returned to its’ true form once the movements of Mennonites and Quaker were founded in the mid-sixteenth and in the mid-seventeenth centuries respectively with the aim of upholding the ‘lasting values of Christian pacifism’.⁵⁰ True pacifism perhaps is the cornerstone for the genesis of the discipline of PS as many of the earlier and twentieth century peace thinkers, philosophers and researchers came from the Mennonites and Quaker sects. Peter Van Den Dungen states that those thinkers’ and researchers’ underlying ‘philosophy or ideology’ was concentrated to pacifism.⁵¹

Pacifism is a founding block of Quakerism. However, Sebastian Franck firstly brought the issue of pacifism in the light of literature saying that ‘all wars as crimes, sins committed against God, even if waged in God’s name, under the token of the cross’, which was perhaps the very first manifestation of ‘pure pacifism’.⁵² According to Nicholas of Hereford, Jesus Christ was their role model and duke of their battle, who taught them ‘law of patience and not to fight bodily’.⁵³ The cornerstone of pacifism is that ‘all war is always wrong and

47 *Ibid*, p. 12.

48 *Ibid*, pp. 21-24.

49 *Ibid*, p. 24.

50 Martin Ceadel, *Op cit*, 1980, p. 21.

51 Peter Van den Dungen, ‘Pacifism: Sources, inspiration and motivation’, in Peter Van Den Dungen (ed.) *West European Pacifism and The Strategy for Peace*, (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1985), p. 19.

52 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 236.

53 As quoted in Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914*, (Sessions Book Trust, 1990), p. 1.

should never be resorted to, whatever the consequences of abstaining from fighting; and the assumption that war, though sometimes necessary, is always an irrational and inhuman way to solve disputes'.⁵⁴ The main commitment for pacifism, therefore I can say, is not to fight as well as it is always wrong to fight in war.

The 1659 crisis—when a militant spirit predominated amongst Quakers—was a turning point for the emergence of Quaker peace testimony. But Quakers accepted pacifism in 1660, when the Society of Friends (SoF) was established and pacifism became the official principle of the sect.⁵⁵ The essence of Quakerism during the period of troubling political landscape of Europe of mid-seventeenth century was as Geoffrey Nuttal wrote 'the spirit of God was in every man'.⁵⁶ SoF bound the members together not only by a common religious faith but by an efficient organization and a discipline enforced against those who overstepped the limit of the allowable behavior.⁵⁷ Pacifism, as the principle of Quakerism, therefore, became an important and effective alternative way of 'disarming the old order'.⁵⁸ Based on the teachings of Jesus teaching, George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, emphasized not to engage with war as that was contrary to Quaker principles; for them weapons were spiritual rather than carnal.⁵⁹ Henceforward of the 1661 Declaration, pacifism became a hallmark of Quakerism. Quaker pacifism regarded war as evil,⁶⁰ which Wilson termed as 'morally wrong',⁶¹ whereas most optimistic position for pacifists was to conduct 'non-violent resistance'.⁶² The main motto of Quaker pacifism was not to fighting, but suffering⁶³ in order to bring 'spiritual reforms'.⁶⁴ Although there

54 Martin, Ceadel, *Op cit*, 1980, p. 3.

55 The year 1652 has been assigned traditionally as the starting point for Quakerism, founded by George Fox, who had a very clear pacifist conviction since his early age that became evident when he was in jail because of rejecting joining army and to attain war. He emphasized not to engage with war as it "contrary to our principles; for our weapons are spiritual not carnal".

56 Geoffrey Nuttal, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 1947, p. 3, as quoted in Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1990, p. 10.

57 Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1990, p. 24.

58 *Ibid*

59 Norman Penney (ed.), *The First Publishers of Truth*, 1907, p. 324, as quoted in Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1990, p. 25.

60 Martin Ceadel, *Op cit*, 1980, p. 15.

61 William .E Wilson, *Op cit*, 1918, p. 11.

62 Martin Ceadel, *Op cit*, 1980, p. 16.

63 Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1972, p. 275.

64 *Ibid*, p. 255.

were speculations about Quakerism in the early stage, as they were viewed as ‘left wing’, ‘socially disreputable’ ‘trouble makers’; but after 1661 the position of Quakerism became more established as a ‘pacifist group’.⁶⁵ Though Quaker pacifism derived from Christian religious tradition, it rigorously challenged church’s political and warfare supporting role, and gradually extended their activities beyond Europe, particularly in America with their pacifist vision. At the same time, many philosophers, thinkers and researchers of different traditional academic fields started contributing to the development of the concept of world peace. Kenneth Boulding in this regard stated:

The movement goes back a long time and it inherits a long tradition of philosophical, historical, and literary studies of war and peace and a classical literature in many societies in the study of international law and political philosophy. Thinkers such as Erasmus, Grotius, Kant, William Penn, and so on represent a long history of human thoughts and concern about the problems of war and peace.⁶⁶

Their intellectual and innovative ideas had provided a ‘very legitimate demand for peace’⁶⁷ in Europe since late-Middle Ages to Renaissance time, and up to the era of Reformation.⁶⁸ The Christian peace, in particular the Roman Christian peace, concept had started changing into a human era—into one related to entire humanity—during Renaissance and Reformation era.⁶⁹ Münzer asserted that ‘the basic change of the social structure, perfect equality of people’ as the preconditions for peace.⁷⁰ The Renaissance understanding of peace focused on ‘real human way of life: life is peace’. Kende considering that shift argues that the ideal of peace indicated more than simply non-war situation—peace meant from the Renaissance period of ‘the improvement of life, the way to realize social justice, freedom and development as well’.⁷¹

65 Barry Reay, *The Quakerism and the English Revolution*, 1985, p. 3, as cited in Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1990, pp. 9-11.

66 Kenneth E. Boulding, *Op cit*, 1989, p.128.

67 *Ibid*, p. 137.

68 Before the Renaissance era, during the Middle Ages, the philosophical development of the concept of peace was related with the Christianity, specially the Roman Catholic Church and the Emperor. Most of the philosophers and thinkers of that time supported the goal of peace to achieve through a Catholic military victory. Pierre Dubious advocated for the unification of all Christian Emperies to avoid war between Christians and supported supremacy of Pope to all united people. Alighieri Dante proposed a secular, of course Christian, a united monarchy, where the secular ruler would ensure happiness for the world people and the church would lead humanity towards spiritual happiness. George of Podebrady, King of Bohemia, spoke for ‘Christian peace’, with a victory against the infidel.

69 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 235.

70 *Ibid*.

71 *Ibid*, p. 236.

Desiderius Erasmus Rotterdamus,⁷² the ‘apostle of peace’, not only brought ‘the subject matter of peace into form’ but turned that ‘into the topic of one of the earliest masterpieces of political literature’.⁷³ He broadened the narrow Catholic-papal concept of peace towards ‘human, and then to reasons’⁷⁴ and simultaneously urged Christians to overcome their own warlike tendencies and religious intolerance.⁷⁵ Contrasting Machiavellian concept of power in *The Education of the Prince* he argued that ‘rulers should be classically trained, biblically guided model citizens’ for ensuring peace inside and outside the territory.⁷⁶ On the other hand, Emerice Cruce and Hugo Grotius worked ‘on the rights of war and peace’; where the latter dealt mostly with the issues of war, in particular to regulate war for a single goal of peace,⁷⁷ and the former contributed for great initiatives like the Peace of Westphalia.⁷⁸ Jeremy Bentham, The English thinker and the father of ‘utilitarianism’, who mainly worked for the principles of international law, looked for the reasons of wars, and produced two main suggestions: to reduce and limit the size of armies and arms to a low level; and to liberate the conquered territories dependence (colonies),⁷⁹ which certainly gave much impetus to the twentieth century arms control and disarmament movements.

Abbe de Saint-Pierre architected for *The Plan for Perpetual Peace in Europe* in order to ensure ‘sufficient security’—only through permanent and sufficiently strong alliance among the European rulers.⁸⁰ He, however, did not support a balance of power mechanism as because of lacking appropriate control mechanism. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of a contemporary of Saint-Pierre, who criticized the latter’s work, and proposed a *Project for Perpetual Peace* that empowered authority to society instead of the ruler. Such a proposal of empowering a nation was a precursor to the French Revolution. The *World Peace Declaration* on 22 May 1790, as a form of law, declared that ‘the rights for war and peace belong to the nation . . . The French nation would never wage war for conquest, and would never use its force against the freedom of any

72 Rottedamus Erasmus (1466-1536) studied Theology at the University of Paris and ordained as a Catholic priest.

73 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, p. 235.

74 *Ibid*, p. 235.

75 Antony Adolf, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 113.

76 *Ibid*, p. 113.

77 Istvan Kende, *Op cit.*, 1989, p. 237.

78 Antony Adolf, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 126.

79 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 240.

80 *Ibid*, p. 238.

people'.⁸¹ French revolution is a permanent symbol of rights, equality, freedom, as well as dignity, and ultimately peace for all people across the world.

William Penn, a leading Quaker of nineteenth century, in 1862 took initiative to introduce Quaker pacifism in government services to influence ruling authority with pacifist believes. He expressed his views in a way that signified the power of positive virtues saying 'love and persuasion' have 'more force than weapons of war',⁸² and believed that actual 'peace is much more profitable, more useful than war'.⁸³ Moreover, considering the troubled political context of the then Europe, he thought and articulated for an organization for peace, and urged the rulers saying that Europe 'needs an olive branch, the doctrine of peace, as much as ever', and simultaneously he proposed an European Dyet, Parliament or Estates.⁸⁴ This proposal undoubtedly signifies his thinking for global peace through 'international government' where arbitration would replace war as the regular method of settling disputes and adjusting rival claims⁸⁵ by 'ongoing diplomacy'⁸⁶— based on 'strict legal principles'.⁸⁷ This plan was harshly criticized by a German Scholar terming that—a childlike quality—as it designed for a blend of realism with idealism and common sense with naivety.⁸⁸ However, for building modern Europe its contribution was mentionable.

In the *Perpetual Peace* Immanuel Kant, a leading Enlightenment German thinker and philosopher, suggested 'a federation of states, which pronounced the concept of 'world citizenship', and claimed that 'such a federation could only be established when people were free, the citizen would live in republican states'.⁸⁹ With a 'trading spirit', the proposed federation was expected to profit through preventing wars and leading to perpetual peace. Henri de Saint Simon, a successor of Kantian ideas, also planned for a 'federal government'—where an alliance of states remaining completely independent but would be controlled from the central. This 'world government' would only be dealing with matters of general interests, but be supported by the catalytic force that is public

81 *Ibid.*, p. 239.

82 Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1972, p. 275.

83 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 237.

84 Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1972, pp. 275-76.

85 *Ibid.*

86 Antony Adolf, *Op cit*, 2009, p. 127.

87 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 237.

88 Peter Brock, *Op cit*, 1990, p. 76.

89 Istvan Kende, *Op cit*, 1989, p. 240.

opinion, which always remained outside the power.⁹⁰ His peace plan has immensely contributed and influenced further global peace plans than any of his predecessors, and that happened only because of integrating greater importance of public opinion in power mechanism as well as empowering spiritual and secular powers for peaceful international society.

Peace and Conflict Studies: Emergence as a Discipline

Peace and Conflict Studies is a very well-articulated academic discipline now, which 'systematically study the cause of war and violence and the conditions of peace'.⁹¹ It does not come overnight rather the endeavor for establishing an academic discipline like PACS or PS has started only hundred years ago. Various actions, activities and approaches like peace movements, peace research, peace education and arguably peace action are rigorously associated with its evolution. Intellectual inspiration for PS has started emerging just after the Great War, but many of the IR theorists see that underlying foundations of PACS are closely associated with the origin of IR, and deals with particular issues like 'mediation, conflict resolution, conflict transformation or peace building'.⁹² However, the field of PACS has a normative and value oriented understanding and standing against war and direct fighting. In Lederach's view, Conflict Resolution (CR) is titled as a younger sister of a big brother, IR, that mostly focuses on soft and humanitarian issues of international relationships; whereas the latter deals with more hard core real *politik* issues.⁹³ In his writing Lederach examines the debate between a big brother (IR) and a younger sister (CR) relating with realism and idealism:

Over the years, in what might be called 'corridor conversations', I have heard some bickering between two professional communities, the fields of International Relations and of Conflict Resolution. At times it almost sounds like a spat between two siblings, as older brother and a younger sister, who situate themselves along a rather odd continuum that runs from 'realism' to 'emotionalism'.

The big brother, International Relations, trained in political science and with experience in the trenches of international conflict, has tended to see himself as needing to deal with the hard politics of the real world. He sees his younger sister as at best well-intentioned, at worst soft and driven by sentimentalism, and for the most part irrelevant. He finds himself constantly telling her,

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 241.

⁹¹ Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin, *Op cit*, 1994, p. 5.

⁹² Oliver P. Richmond, *Peace in International Relations*, (Routledge, 2008), p. 98.

⁹³ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (United States Institute of Peace, 1997), p. 24.

‘Listen, touchy-feely is good for the glee club, but it holds no answer for the big time. We are dealing with hard-core gangsters out there.’ In contemporary conflict situations, he does not have to go far to find examples of who and what he is talking about.

For her part the younger sister, Conflict Resolution, has tended to see the big brother as locked into power paradigms and unable to reach the root of problems in creative ways. Having been trained in social psychology and influenced by the helping professions, she sees herself as integrating the emotional and substantive concerns in the resolution of conflicts. She finds herself repeating, ‘Mediators are not marshmallows, you know.’ She does not have to go far to find child-soldiers abducted into killing to make the case that more than hard politics is needed to support sustainable transformation and change in the society.⁹⁴

As a soft minded and philosophically non-violence oriented discipline, PACS has a challenging past but also has a shining future in the arenas of non coercive foreign relations, security and safety, development and peace, and conflict resolution and post-conflict transformation works.

Foundation Phase

Academically PS has started its journey with the ‘quantitative analyses of war’⁹⁵ during the interwar years, particularly focusing on the trauma of World War I, by three men namely Quincy Wright, Lewis Fry Richardson and Pitirim Aleksandrovich Sorokin.⁹⁶ As an ‘intellectual inspiration’⁹⁷ this phase indicates a well combination of social science research and scientific approaches to investigate war, and focuses on finding alternatives of solving problems of peace, conflict and war in more rigorous ways. Kenneth Boulding has rightly stated that ‘peace research is an intellectual movement, mainly within the social science, to apply the methods of science to problem of conflict, to war and peace, and to the improvement of these processes’.⁹⁸

Richardson’s *The Mathematical Psychology of War* was the first research in the realm of PACS, published only 300 copies in self-finance in 1919. Moreover,

94 *Ibid*, pp. 24-25.

95 Carolyn Stephenson, ‘The Evolution of Peace Studies’, Daniel C. Thomas and Michael T. Klare (eds.) *Peace and World Order Studies*, (Westview Press, 1989),

96 Quincy Wright (1890-1970) was a Professor of Political Science and International Law at the University of Chicago from 1923 to his retirement. Lewis Fry Richardson (1881-1953) was a Quaker and a famous meteorologist, who graduated in Physics and Psychology. Pitirim Aleksandrovich Sorokin was a Professor of Sociology in czarist Russia and the founder of the Department of Sociology at Harvard in 1930; Hakan Wiberg (a), ‘The Peace Research Movement’, Peter Wallensteen (ed.), *Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges*, (West view Press, 1988), p. 32.

97 Joseph J. Fahey, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 490.

98 Kenneth E. Boulding, *Op cit*, 1989, p.127.

his two other main works *Arms and Insecurity* and *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*, which investigated the causes of war and of arms race in rigorous scientific way, were published after his death in 1960 with the assistance of ‘invisible college’ around Kenneth Boulding and Elise Boulding.⁹⁹ Many of next generation peace researchers have used his interactive hypothesis, which Richardson drew in *Arms and Insecurity*. Sorokin’s *Social and Cultural Dynamics* of 1937 (third volume) that analyzed battles and wars since the sixth century B.C., and concluded that wars and internal disturbances generally occur during the time of transition due to the upsetting of various equilibrium in the societies.¹⁰⁰

After five years in 1942 Wright’s quantitative data collection was reflected in *A Study of War*, which analyzed modern wars since 1480, was a pioneering work in the field of peace and conflict studies.¹⁰¹ His main emphasis was to transcend balance of power and supersede by supranational integration, which has not only given intellectual insights for contemporary other fields of studies but indeed inspired next generation prominent peace researchers namely Kenneth Boulding, Anatol Rapoport, Amitai Etzioni, Ernest Hass and Karl Deutsch.¹⁰²

The Take-Off

It is difficult to identify when exactly the discipline of PACS took-off. It is measured by some scholars that inter-war period of 1918 to 1945 was the period when the field was kicked off with primary researches. When idealism enchanted ‘supranational structure’, for instance, the League of Nations,¹⁰³ was unable to stop the World War II and its subsequent casualties of more than 50 million people, the involvement of North American and Western European universities in peace research has started. In the post-1945 pessimistic scenario, particularly when SS and WS were launched in many North American and European institutions, the discipline of PACS also got a start as a formal field of study with its own institutions and journals.¹⁰⁴ During 1950s, the field was shaped in relation to the pre-eminence of realism but mostly focused on social science positivism.

99 Hakan Wiberg (a), *Op cit*, 1988, p. 33.

100 *Ibid*, p 33.

101 *Ibid*, p 35.

102 *Ibid*.

103 Ghanshyam Pardeshi (ed.), *Contemporary Peace Research*, (Harvester Press, 1982), p. 2.

104 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 70.

Peace research theoretically moved from ‘an idealistic normative rhetoric’ to ‘empirical and factual analysis’¹⁰⁵ that focused on ‘social science positivism’.¹⁰⁶ This shift helped to present the problems of peace and war with more rigorous arguments that was connected with scientific authenticity.¹⁰⁷ Peace Research Laboratory by Theodore Lenz in St. Louis, and the Institut Francais de Polemologie in Europe were established in 1945. Lenz’s *Towards the Science of Peace* of 1952 became an important hallmark in the genesis of peace movement and scientific peace research.¹⁰⁸ During the height of Cold War, when academic subjects like SS and WS were full-fledged functioning, *American Psychologists* appealed for systematic and ‘pacifist approaches to foreign policy’ to maintain peaceful inter-state relationships.¹⁰⁹ Einestine and Russell manifesto of 1955 asked for greater ‘role of scientists to prevent a nuclear catastrophe’.¹¹⁰ Richardson Institute of Peace Centre, on the other hand, was established at the Lancaster University, in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion in 1959, which was the first peace related institution in Britain. Keeping the initial spirit of founding Quaker scientist, Lewis F Richardson, the center has been undertaking cutting-edge research and outreach activities in peace and conflict studies.¹¹¹ As a whole, peace research from the beginning has a multi-dimensional flavor –‘multidisciplinary in the sense of breaking down and breaking through disciplinary barrier’¹¹²—which made it possible for the discipline to study the whole enigma of war, conflicts and conditions of peace. In fact, interdisciplinary feature neither meant internationality nor real multi-disciplinary character of the subject during that period, because the field of PS was pre-dominantly controlled only by the western social scientists.

Maturity and Institutionalization of Peace Research

The field of PACS has started becoming institutionalized with adequate research centers and institutions, journals and periodicals in both sides of the

105 Hakan Wiberg (a), *Op cit*, 1988, p. 39.

106 *Ibid.*

107 Terry Terriff, *Op cit*, 1999, p. 69.

108 Kenneth E. Boulding, *Op cit*, 1989, p.127.

109 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 71.

110 Wallensteen, Peter, ‘The Origin of Peace Research’, Peter Wallensteen (ed.) *Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges*, (Westview Press, 1988), p. 14.

111 Lancaster University, ‘The Richardson Institute: Research applied to peace and conflict’, available at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/centres/richinst/>, last accessed on 23 November 2012.

112 W Eckhardt, ‘Changing concerns in peace research and education’, *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1974, pp. 280-284, as quoted in Ho-Won Jeong, *Op cit*, 2000, p. 44.

Atlantic particularly after the mid-1950s. Regular publication of journals and periodicals, as Kenneth Boulding sees, is a significant feature for the development of peace research and academic studies. From that point of view it was clear since late 1950s that peace research was a raising discipline.¹¹³ During the altitude of Cold War, peace research was mostly focused on arms control, disarmament, conflict and conflict theory, conflict resolution, and dependency and development issues. However, in the post-Cold War scenario the agenda of peace and conflict research has broaden its' jurisdiction that includes many non-traditional security issues like human security, new factors of global insecurity such as non-state actors and terrorist activities, rebellion as well as insurgent groups and insurgency. Figure 2 illustrates the broader agenda of peace research up to the end of the first decade of the twenty first century.

The Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) was established in 1956 at the University of Michigan, which has started publishing the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (JCR) since 1957.¹¹⁴ Both the center and the journal emphasized how to prevent global war and to bring intellectual efforts to study international relationships as 'an interdisciplinary enterprise'.¹¹⁵ Conversely, within three years peace research crossed the Atlantic when Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) was founded by Johan Galtung in 1959.¹¹⁶ Galtung as a 'social physician'¹¹⁷ brought the issue of 'ethical code'¹¹⁸ for peace research. The *Journal of Peace Research* (JPR) and *Security Dialogue* (SD) were started publishing by PRIO since 1964. Galtung broadened the perspectives of PS, which Paul Rogers terms as "'maximalist' agenda" of European peace research.¹¹⁹ It is mostly related with positive peace that stresses on the elimination of all forms of structural violence that exist in the societies and states.

113 Kenneth E. Boulding, *Op cit*, 1989, p.130.

114 The center was initiated by Kenneth E Boulding, who was personally and spiritually motivated as a member of the Society of Friends (SoF). Professionally he was an economist and other group members of this center were Anatol Rapaport, the mathematician-biologists; Herbert Kelman, the social psychologists; and Robert Cooley Angell, the sociologists.

115 *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1/1, 1957, p.3, cited in Paul Roger *Op cit*, 2010, p. 70.

116 Johan Galtung studied Philosophy, Mathematics and Sociology. His father was a physician, from whom Galtung absorbed that ethic transforming into the peace research is crucial—for what we call him 'social physician'.

117 Oliver Ramsbotham *et al.*, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (2nd edition), (Polity Press, 2005), p. 41.

118 Terry Terriff *et al.*, *Op cit*, 1999, p. 69.

119 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 73.

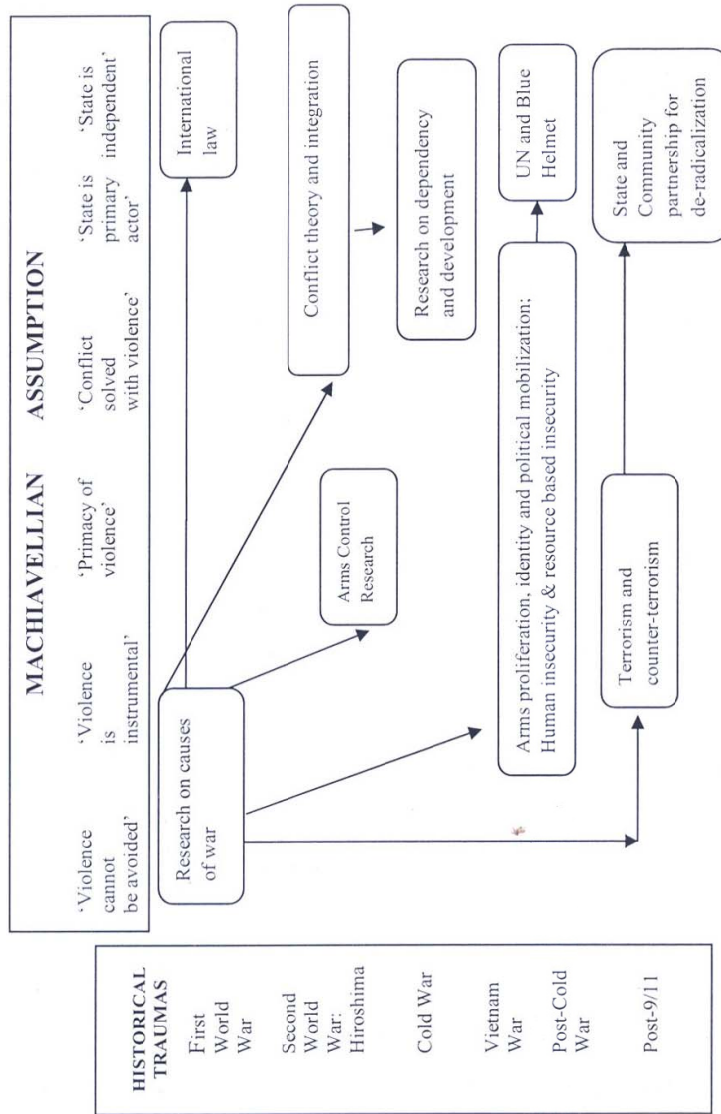


Figure 2: Traumas, political development and the development of peace research¹²⁰

¹²⁰ This figure is primarily taken from Peter Wallensteen, *Op cit*, 1988 p. 20. The bottom two sections of this figure—post-Cold War and post 9/11—are outlined and sketched by the author.

This Scandinavian approach focuses more on human empathy and solidarity than nation-state.¹²¹ Many of the IR theorists, who were mostly connected to WS and SS during the Cold War period, were skeptical about this maximalist approach of analysis. The controversy between ‘Atlanticist outlook’ and ‘idealist outlook’,¹²² I would say, actually made the subject area of PS more interdisciplinary, and strengthened its aptitude in academic arena.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was set up on 1st July 1966 under the auspices of the Swedish parliament that focused primarily on two broader projects: to preventing further development of biological weapons, and to disarmament research, including the study of anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system.¹²³ Nonetheless, International peace societies and professional associations like Peace Research Society International (PRSI) and the International Peace Research Association (IPPA) were established in 1963.¹²⁴ The IPRA Statute clearly set out its’ aim as ‘to advance interdisciplinary research into the conditions of peace and the causes of war’.¹²⁵ Moreover, some national peace associations, for instance, the Council on Peace Research in History (CPRH) in USA,¹²⁶ the Japan Peace Research Group (JPRG) and Canadian Peace Research and Education Association (CPREA) were formed in 1963, 1964 and 1966, respectively. On the other hand, Indian and Latin American Peace Societies were established by mid-1970s only when the issues of structural violence, Gandhian philosophy and dependency came into the broader umbrella of peace research and education.

Expansion to Classrooms

As a value oriented discipline PS¹²⁷ has started getting gradual expansion to undergraduate and postgraduate classrooms specially in the United States and

121 Peter Lawler, ‘New directions in peace research’, Hugh V. Emy and Andrew Linklater (eds.), *New Horizons in Politics: Essays with an Australian Focus*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990, p. 115.

122 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 72.

123 Adam Roberts, “New peace research, old International Relations”, Jaap Novel (ed.), *The Coming of Age of Peace Research: Studies in the Development of a Discipline*, (Styx Publications, 1991), p. 6.

124 PRSI was founded by Walter Izard in Sweden in 1963, and IPRA emerged from the Quaker International Conference in Clarens, Switzerland.

125 *International Peace Research Newsletter*, Vol. iv, No. 1, IPRA, Groningen, February 1966, as quoted in Adam Roberts, *Op cit*, 1991, p. 6.

126 CPRH was established in response to the John F Kennedy’s assassination and the escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

127 Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, (Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 13-15.

European countries after 1970s, in particular to the reaction of Vietnam War. Joseph Fahey states in this respect that ‘peace studies grew modestly during the 1970s and expanded rapidly in the 1980s’.¹²⁸ Although the Manchester College in Indiana established the first PS programme in 1948, and that was mostly focused on ‘spirituality and social transformation’.¹²⁹ But largely the program began there in early 1970s, as titled ‘Problems of War and Peace’, under the auspices of a church of the Brethren Institute.¹³⁰ The Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPACR) was established in 1966 at Uppsala University, Sweden, and aimed to conduct ‘research on social and economic structures’, focusing on both national and international aspects.¹³¹ In Britain, in response to an initiative from a small group, the Quaker SoF, the first PS department was established in 1973 at the University of Bradford (UoB) under the leadership of Adam Curle.¹³² Since then UoB has been offering post-graduate and undergraduate degrees in PS. The department set its main aim as ‘to study peace as a condition of social and political systems, in conjunction with attendant concepts such as justice, war, dignity and so on. The object of the study is an appreciation of the nature of peace, the achievement of it, the obstacles of it, the components of it and the different social interpretations and evaluations of it’.¹³³ On the other hand, two organizations namely Institute for World Order (now the World Policy Institute) and COPRED played very significant role in developing new programs and curriculums of PACS or PS in both sides of the Atlantic. Surprisingly following the Vietnam War, the *JCR* brought a change and broaden its’ original agenda that included ‘international conflict over justice, equality, and human dignity; problems of conflict resolution for ecological balance and control’.

In the post-Cold War scenario, PS is more relevant for the countries of the Global South, where most of the poverty-stricken people are struggling with social injustice, economic disparities that not only aggravate unemployment and poverty but indeed instigate and drive social problems and proto-type conflicts.

128 Joseph Fahey, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 490.

129 *Ibid*.

130 *Ibid*, p. 491.

131 Adam Roberts, *Op cit*, 1991, p. 6.

132 Adam Curle was a Quaker and educationalist, who was involved in the mediation of Biafra War and West Pakistan-East Pakistan conflict in 1971. He retired in 1978 from the University of Bradford.

133 David Dunn and Pedro B Bernaldez, *Op cit*, 1999, p. 270.

People of many Global South countries are mostly vulnerable to global warming and climate change, and subsequent migration induced conflicts, either inter-state or internal, as well as resource based conflicts. Hence, academic subject like PS or PACS has more necessity as well as demand in the countries of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Based on this background, in South Asia PACS as a fully-fledged academic discipline opened its' window of knowledge under the leadership of Dalem Chandra Barman of the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1999.¹³⁴ Advocating for a discipline like PS or PACS in Bangladesh Peter Wallensteen in 1997 wrote to Professor A.K. Azad Chowdhury, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and stated,

internationally there are already now a large number of such programmes, not only in Sweden (where our training programme includes Bachelors, Masters and Ph.D of peace studies/research), but also in Britain (Bradford), Syracuse in the US and several programmes in the University of California System. Thus, Dhaka University would take its rightful place in a distinguished group of universities forwarding this subject in training as well as in research.¹³⁵

After two years of procedural activities, as an independent subject PACS started its journey in the University of Dhaka at the very outset of new millennia on 08 June 1999. The department commenced with only Masters' Program and conclusively fixed the purpose of advancing 'interdisciplinary study and research into the conditions of peace and the causes of war and other forms of violence'.¹³⁶ The long-term vision, however, of the department is to make a contribution to the advancement of peace studies, non-violent conflict management processes and a future peaceful world. From 2000-2001 academic year, the department started four-year undergraduate degree of PACS.

At the outset of the 21st century University of Kashmir, that is situated in one of the most turbulent areas of the world, founded a center—Gandhian Center for

134 Professor Dr. Dalem Chandra Barman was the founder Chairman of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. In personal life he is a *Gandhian* non-violence believer and professionally a political scientist. Dr. Barman was inspired to establish this discipline from Uppsala University while he was attending Conflict Resolution program, where he met Dr. Peter Wallensteen in 1995 in the Uppsala University, Sweden.

135 Peter Wallensteen, as quoted Dalem Ch. Barman, 'Department of Peace and Conflict Studies: Origin, purpose and activities', *Peace: Our Turn to Think and Act*, Vol. ii, (Dept. of Peace and Conflict Studies, DU, 2005), p. 09.

136 *Ibid*, p.10.

Peace and Conflict Studies (GCPCS)—with an aim to bring conflicting relationships down through non-violent teachings of Gandhian philosophy. For this, the center from the beginning offering post-graduate diploma courses on conflict resolution.¹³⁷ However, as a research institute, the International Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IIPCS)—a premier think tank that has a mission of developing an alternative and independent framework for peace and security studies for South Asia—was founded in Indian Capital, New Delhi, in 1996.¹³⁸ IIPCS research jurisdiction covers both traditional and non-traditional security issues, for examples, nuclear security, non-proliferation of nuclear arsenals, disarmament, approaches of tackling terrorism and peace processes etc. Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (NMCPCR), the first Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution among the Indian universities, was established in 2004 at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, India. Although NMCPCR started with certificate course followed by diploma course; hence, since 2007 the center started MA course and PhD in Conflict Analysis and Peace-Building (CAPB), and Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) respectively.¹³⁹ Academic objective of this center is not only to do critical analysis of contemporary studies of conflicting issues but to fill the gap that exists in Indian academic arena—‘the lack of serious and purposeful analysis of types and sources of conflict in our country and neighbourhood, and the methods of dealing with them that India has adopted’.¹⁴⁰

Considering the complex conflicting context, another neighbouring country of India, Nepal commenced its two-year multi-disciplinary Master program in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies (CPADS) in 2007 at the University of Tribhuvan. This program was designed to improve analytical and practical skills of the students that they can apply to prevent and resolve different aspects of conflict and to sustain peace.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, very recently, perhaps in

137 Gandhain Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (GCPCS), “Profile of the Gandhian Center for Peace and Conflict Studies”, *University of Jammu*, December 2007.

138 Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), “About Us”, available at <http://www.ipcs.org/about-us/>, last accessed on 31 July 2012.

139 Jamia Millia Islamia, “Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution: Introduction”, available at <http://jmi.ac.in/aboutjamia/centres/conflict-resolution/introduction>, last accessed on 31 July 2012.

140 *Ibid.*

141 Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies, “Message from the Program Co-ordinator”, available at <http://dcpds-tu.edu.np/content/23/message-from-the-program-co-ordinator.html>, last accessed on 31 July 2012.

2012, the subject matter of PACS got a position in the Pakistani academia. Under the umbrella of National Defence University (NDU) that primarily provides training to military officers on defence, security and war issues, the Department of PACS started two-year MSc and MPhil degrees.¹⁴² Pakistan's geo-strategic position and contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force played crucial and enforcing role to launching such an academic curriculum at this military institute. Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), which is based in Mirpur cantonment, Dhaka, aims immediately to launch a two-year Master program in Peace and Human Rights Studies (PAHRS), which would not only benefit the Bangladesh armed forces personnel who participate in the UN Peace Operations but indeed posture a vibrant civil-military relationship that would effectively contribute to the development of the country.

Challenges to Peace and Conflict Studies

Although the discipline of PACS got rapid expansion to undergraduate and post-graduate classrooms, different stumbling blocks challenged and undermined its progress in different phases. The most extreme policy obstacle faced by the department of PS during the Second Cold War, a short militarily-renewed tension period between the USA and USSR from the late 1970s to early 1980.¹⁴³ 'A palpable risk of all out nuclear war'¹⁴⁴ was evident in Europe during that period; on the contrary, the activities of the discipline of PS and peace movements, i.e. anti-nuclear movement, became more visible across the globe in order to minimize nuclear tension. Because of such activities and involvements PS faced a policy war against it. At that period in Britain, peace researchers' engagement in anti-nuclear movements was viewed from a clear 'political polarization' perspective, and as a result the discipline faced severe and harsh criticism—such as 'unpatriotic appeasement studies',¹⁴⁵ and practitioners were termed as "communists", 'pacifists', and 'anarchists'.¹⁴⁶ A critical survey of that time on PS over speculatively suggested that 'concern has

142 "Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University (NDU)", available at <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/pakistan/peacebuilding-organizations/ndu/>, last accessed on 31 July 2012.

143 It is worthy to mention that the Cuban Missile Crisis was seen as imminent to nuclear war for the first time. Terry Terriff, *Op cit*, p. 75.

144 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p.77.

145 *Ibid*.

146 Joseph Fahey, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 491.

recently been expressed over the nature of peace studies as an educational discipline . . . We argue that this concern is justified, that both the subject itself and the intentions of many who propagate it are open to serious criticism and that it is educationally desirable to exclude Peace Studies from our schools'.¹⁴⁷ The survey report concluded that the discipline 'discourages critical reflection and encourages prejudice, about peace, war and disarmament'.¹⁴⁸ Such critique is not unlikely in any context of contemporary initiatives of establishing the discipline of PACS in Global South countries, but the dynamics and dimensions of critiquing might be different. Once the communist Soviet ideology collapsed, many of the critics started taking side of PS because of its standard works on many agendas like mediation, peacekeeping,¹⁴⁹ social justice, human rights, and environmental issues¹⁵⁰ and so on.

However, in the post-Cold War period the discipline faces some new real life global problems, for instance, environmental degradation induced migration and potential conflicts, resource based conflicts, climate change vulnerabilities of the poor countries, economic disparity and deprivation based ethno-national conflicts, radicalization, extremism and terrorism, and social conflicts of protracted nature across the world, where more attention are required. More importantly, traditional patterns of inter-state conflicts and war continue in new dimension—where fifth generation of technological arsenals, like drone, replaced the position of soldiers—that is not only a concern for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) but also an unpleasant event for the standards of human rights. Considering the challenges and lessons, in the 21st century the discipline has not only gained academic and political acknowledgement from policy makers but indeed set its priority agendas of academic and research works for national, regional and global peace and security.

Concluding Remarks

The above discussion represents a brief overview of how the discipline of PACS has been evolved from religious beliefs, Quaker's movement of pacifism,

147 Caroline Cox and Roger Scruton, *Peace Studies: A Critical Survey*, Institution for European Defence and Strategic Studies, London, 1984, as quoted in David Dunn and Pedro B. Bernaldez, *Op cit*, 1999, p. 269.

148 *Ibid*.

149 Paul Rogers and S Whitby, 'Peace Studies at the University of Bradford', Carol Rank (ed.), *City of Peace: Bradford's Story*, (Bradford Libraries, 1997), p. 144.

150 Paul Rogers, *Op cit*, 2010, p. 77.

and through academic treats to different traumatic events of the twentieth century. Peace is no longer a utopia rather peace movements, peace research, and peace studies programs across the globe have turn it into a reality through knowledge and education of peace. As an interdisciplinary academic discipline PACS focuses on studying causes, actors and dynamics of conflict and war, as well as finding non-violent and creative alternatives of conflict resolution and transformation, and means of comprehensive security. Now, it is urgently needed to take a collective approach, which I see missing among peace researchers, academics and practitioners across the world, to tackle new threats and challenges of the twenty first century. At the same time, it is indispensable to take newer inter-cultural research initiatives, publish authentic research reports and disseminate such newer knowledge amongst the wider audience, including both policy makers and academics, for academic excellence of this discipline.

INSURANCE BUSINESS AND KHUDA BUKSH'S CONTRIBUTIONS

M. Obaidur Rahim *

Introduction

Life insurance was originally designed to protect a person's family when his or her death left them without income. It is perhaps fitting, then, that there is an expression that says, "where is life insurance there is hope." Indeed, insurance, no matter what type, is the light at the end of tunnel for people who have experienced some kind of loss and are then faced with a seemingly insurmountable financial burden. The concept of insurance has been around since the time of Babylon. Each great civilisation since then, from the Greeks to the Romans to the British Empire, has offered its citizens protection from loss of a loved one or prized possessions. The insurance industry itself is dependent on the hardworking and passionate individuals who take it upon themselves to deliver insurance to those who fail to see the need for it.

Khuda Buksh is the definitive textbook on the birth and growth of the life insurance industry in Bangladesh and Pakistan. He was the "life and soul of the insurance industry for nearly forty years."¹ His dedicated work and accomplishments in life insurance business earned him a reputation as the country's "most outstanding and sensational insurance salesman in Pakistan."² Khuda Buksh made it his life's goal not only to change preconceived ideas about insurance, but to create and sustain a positive image of insurance workers and the services they offered. His birth anniversary just crossed the centenary mark and reminds us the contribution made by the then Bengali insurance personality in developing the insurance industry in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

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1 Muhammad Obaidur Rahim, *Khuda Buksh: The Pioneer of Life Insurance in Bangladesh* (University Press Limited, Dhaka 2011), p. xi (henceforth this source will be referred to as *KBTPOLIIB*).

2 A.F.M. Safiyyullah and Mir. Mosharraf Hossain (ed.), *Symposium on Insurance in Pakistan*, pp. xxiv-xxv, July 1967.

During the last decade while working on two books, I have pondered many times how life insurance business in Bangladesh sprang up full-blown in the late-twentieth century. After doing study and research, I have come to the conclusion that insurance industry developed due to handful visionaries and hard work of many field workers, inspectors, development officers, administrators and managers led by Khuda Buksh who took insurance as a motto in life and sparked the life insurance awareness in public. His leadership and motivational techniques captured the attention of many people as “he played an educator to the vast number of field force who placed faith in his leadership and took insurance as a career.”³

This article attempts to trace the evolution of life insurance and its development in British India till 1947, the growth of insurance business in East Pakistan and Bangladesh till 1973 and contributions of Khuda Buksh to the growth of life insurance business.

Growth of the Insurance Business in British India and its development up to 1947

The life insurance started in India in the 19th century to transact life insurance business on the European model. Modern insurance appeared first in big cities and coastal towns. At that time Indians were in a majority of cases ignorant of the advantages and utility of life insurance. In fact, there was a well established superstition that to insure one’s life was to court death; and in vernaculars of the country, life insurance was described as Death Registration.⁴

An organized life insurance institution had been established in 1818 in the Indian subcontinent. That year, the British founded Oriental Life Assurance Company in Calcutta. In the beginning, it was conceived only as a means to provide for English widows in India after the death of their husbands. The great reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy worked to direct the nation’s attention of the need to protect widows and orphans. In 1822 he appealed through the columns of the *Calcutta Journal* requesting the wealthy Hindus of Calcutta to start an institution for the maintenance of the poor widows.⁵

3 A.F. M. Safiyyullah, *Ultima Thule: A loud Thinking of Life Insurance in Pakistan*, (Dacca 1967), p. xiii.

4 A.N. Agarwala, *Life Insurance in India. A Historical and Analytical Study* (Allahabad Law Journal Press), p. 3.

5 G.R. Desai, *Life Insurance in India. A Historical and Analytical Study*, Allahabad Law Journal Press, (India 1961), p. 3.

Babu Mutty Lal Seal was responsible for influencing Oriental Life to accept Indian lives. Since then Indian enterprise made very good progress in Bengal and leading people of the province such as Sjts. Dwarkanath Tagore, Ramtanu Lahiri, and Rustomji Cowasji took an active role in the development of insurance in this country.⁶

At that time, when foreign life insurance companies started insuring Indian lives, they were treated as “sub-standard,”⁷ which treated lives with physical disability and heavy extra premium of 20% more were being charged on them. The Bombay Mutual Life Assurance Society started its business in 1871. It was the first company to charge the same premium for both Indian and non-Indian lives. The persons who took insurance at this time were clerks, government servants, advocates, barristers and some merchants who had adapted to some extent European ways of life.

It wasn't until the later part of the 19th century that Indians were given full security in insurance with the establishment of the Oriental Government Security Life Assurance Co. Ltd (OGSLA) in Bombay 1874 by Duncan McLauchlan Slater, a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries, who gained considerable experience in life insurance business. OGSLA was successfully prevailed upon to offer life insurance policies to Indians. The company's authorized and subscribed capital was Rs. 1 million and Rs. 1.5 million, respectively, with eighty percent of the premium income to be invested in government securities. This gave tremendous confidence to insurance seekers. As a result, for sometime thereafter, the growth of OGSLA equaled the growth of life insurance on the subcontinent. Since then Indian enterprise made progress in Bengal, and leading entrepreneurs of the province were proactive in the development of insurance.⁸

6 Arjun Bhattacharya and O'Neil Rane, “Nationalisation of Insurance in India,” *The India Economy*, p. 379.

7 Tapen Sinha, “An Analysis of Evolution of Insurance in India.” *SRIS discussion paper Series-2005.III*. Foreign Life insurance companies made a rate adjustment for sub-standard lives with “a “rating-up” of five to seven years to normal British life in India. This meant, treating $q(x)$, the (conditional) probability of dying between x and $x+1$, for an x year old Indian male as if it was $q(x+5)$ or $q(x+7)$ of a British male. . . . This was a common practice of the European companies at the time whether they were operating in Asia or Latin America.”

8 Radhe Shyam Rungta, *Rise of Business Corporations in India 1851-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 12.

The first comprehensive legislation was introduced with the Insurance Act of 1938 that provided strict state control over insurance business with the objective of protecting the interests of the insuring public. Subsequently the insurance industry grew in leaps and bounds, as did other Indian enterprises. To illustrate the notable period of growth for insurance in India is the evidence that 292 indigenous insurance companies were promoted in the subcontinent from 1818 to 1939 although 111 of them closed their offices before the passage of the Insurance Act in 1938.⁹

Birth of Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company

Life Assurance Company, and much of the industry's growth could be focused on companies that were run by Indians but other issues of prejudice were left to overcome. Once the matter of discrimination against Indians by the British was alleviated by the increase in indigenous insurance companies, another problem was brought to light – religious discrimination against Muslims in British-ruled India.

In the early 1920s two young men, Khondoker Fazle (K.F.) Haider and Abdur Rahman (A.R) Siddiqui had a vision to advance Muslims cause in the business world. Haider after completing early education from Murshidabad, West Bengal went to England for studies at law school Lincoln Inn. Born in Surat, A.R. Siddiqui a stern protagonist of the Khilafat Movement, which promoted Muslim political interests in India, had studied law at Oxford. Both recognized that under British-ruled India, Muslims did not hold any responsible positions in the business world. They established a trading firm, named "Haira Trading." Haider became its manager. Soon after the formation of the company Haider came into contact with an Englishman, B.M. Collins, who owned a medium sized brokerage firm at Lloyds of London, one of the largest and most famous insurance companies in the world. Collins's firm began looking after the insurance requirements of Haira Trading and so began an association that would break through the religious barriers in Indian business.¹⁰

Collins, and his friend, C.H. Falloon, who was the General Manager of the Atlas Insurance Company in the U.K. at that time began envisioning a larger scope for their businesses. Together, they planted the idea of establishing an

9 G.R. Desai, p.10.

10 Wolfram W. Karnowaski, *The THE EFU SAGA (TES)* (Karachi, 2001), p.167.

insurance company targeted for the Muslim populace in Kolkata into Haider's head, who then discussed the proposal with his partner, Siddiqui. After further discussion with a close group of friends that included Shoaib Quereshi, the Prince Hamidullah Khan (last Nawab of Bhopal), the outcome was the creation of a company owned by and for the Muslims of India. Siddiqui and Haider executed an agreement in 1931 with the Atlas Insurance Company Ltd. and B.M. Collins & Co. Ltd. Thus, the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company was incorporated on 2 September 1932 in Kolkata with E.N. Menhinick, a senior manager of Atlas as the first chief executive officer of the company. The main objective of the company was to provide "insurance service to the community and also to produce competent Muslim insurance personnel."¹¹ Siddiqui faced lot of problems in raising capital for the EFU. Aga Khan and Hamidullah Khan became the "Patrons" of the new company. Ghulam Muhammad helped to arrange substantial subscriptions from the Hyderabad State and Bhopal. Sir Victor Sasoon became the largest foreign shareholder and subsequently M. A. Ispahani,¹² the only "large hearted" Muslim agreed to take the balance of the shares and placed his entire business with Eastern Federal. EFU initially started as a general insurance company; in 1936 it started its life insurance business.¹³ Siddiqui served as founding director and chairman for almost 20 years and Haider later served as the general manager of the company for nine years.

Subsequently Muslim Insurance Company and Habib insurance company were established in Lahore and Karachi in 1935 and 1942, respectively. When Pakistan was born in 1947, M.A. Ispahani moved the EFU's head office from Kolkatta to Karachi and registered office to Chittogong. M.A. Ispahani

11 M. Amir, "Eastern Federal: Its Genesis and Progress. Eastern Federal 1st Convention 5th March-7th March. Pakistan Observer Supplement, Dacca, March 1963.

12 Mirza Ahmed Ispahani, business magnate, philanthropist and politician of the then Indo-Pak sub continent. His forefathers came to India from the Iranian province of Ispahan, and settled first in Bombay, and then in Kolkata. MA Ispahani built industries and business houses in Kolkata. He established Orient Airways, which linked East and West Pakistan by air. He settled in Chittagong and built an industrial empire of jute, textiles, tea, dockyard and plywood etc. and provided employment of about 150,000. He was the founder-chairman of the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, which contributed to the development of industries in the then Pakistan. He was the first ambassador of Pakistan to USA.

13 Buksh, *30 Progressive Years- THE EFU 1932 to 1962*, The Pakistan Observer, 5 March 1963.

controlled the EFU shares till 1960. Due to bad underwriting against Marine Hull business the “London Loss”¹⁴ occurred and Ispahani was bound to sell his shares and the control of the EFU went to West Pakistan.

Growth of Insurance Business in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) till 1973

The life insurance business began in East Pakistan with the relocation of the EFU personnel along with insurance personnel from few other companies in India. Most of the insurance companies moved to East Pakistan were foreign origin except three national companies, Eastern Federal, Muslim Insurance and Habib Insurance Company. After the Partition of Bengal in 1947, seven Bengali insurance personnel moved to East Pakistan from India and took charge of the insurance business of various companies:¹⁵

- Mustafizur Rahman Khan who joined the EFU in 1935 in Kolkatta was transferred to Chittagong as in-charge of general and life departments in 1947. In 1950, he was transferred to the Dhaka office as branch manager of those departments.
- M.A. Rahim joined the EFU office in Kolkatta and was transferred to the Dhaka office as inspector of the EFU in 1949.
- Golam Mowla who joined Oriental Fire and General Insurance Co. in 1946 took transfer from Kolkatta to Dhaka.
- A.K. Fazlul Haque (Mowla) resigned from Oriental Fire and General Insurance Company and joined as chief of East Pakistan for the newly established Co-operative Insurance Society of Pakistan at Lahore in 1949.
- M. Mohibus Samad a senior officer of Prudential Assurance Company joined as chief of Prudential Assurance in East Pakistan.
- M.A. Samad, who was a part-time agent of Muslim Insurance Company, left Delhi All India Radio and joined Dhaka Radio station. Later he joined as an inspector of Prudential Life.
- Harunur Rashid who joined as an officer in the EFU in 1948 was first transferred from Kolkatta to Karachi in 1950 and then from Karachi to Dhaka in 1951.

The main force of insurance activities in East Pakistan was provided by the EFU staff when a section of the company personnel in Kolkata moved to

14 *KBTPOLIIB*, pp.75-82.

15 Syed Monsur Ahmed, *Tar Shomoya O Bangladeshi Bima Shilper Bibarton* in Mustafizur Rahman Khan Smaraak Grantha, 60.

Chittogong and Dhaka. Jamaluddin, a non-Bengali was first selected as Life Manager of the EFU in East Pakistan in 1951. After his sudden death in Dhaka in January 1952, Khuda Buksh was appointed as the Life manager of the EFU in East Pakistan in July 1952.

Buksh's entry into East Pakistan insurance arena was a significant milestone in the development and growth of life insurance business for the EFU, East and West Pakistan and later Bangladesh. This section briefly highlights the problems in insurance growth and the contributions of Bengali insurance personnel in the growth of insurance business in East Pakistan and Bangladesh till 1973.

East Pakistan "did not inherit an experienced entrepreneurial class for historical reasons."¹⁶ Moreover, this part did not receive adequate economic incentives from Pakistan Government to promote entrepreneurial activities. Lack of capital by Bengali people in East Pakistan had proved a stumbling block in owning insurance industries. The contributions of Bengali personnel in the growth of insurance industry in East Pakistan began in the early 1950's by a handful of Bengali people. As a result the early growth of this industry was very slow and difficult and credit goes to those people who chose to serve this industry.

There was a long history of political, economic, and cultural factors that created a gulf of difference between the then East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan suffered from political maneuvering, social injustices, and economic deprivation since the birth of Pakistan. The "power elites of West Pakistan formulated certain policies that provoked as much opposition and bitterness from the East that the system was brought to the verge of collapse."¹⁷ Severe gap in the investments between the two wings of the country handicapped the economic development of East Pakistan.

Disparity originally emerged because of the relatively higher levels of investment in West as opposed to East Pakistan. Investment in East Pakistan was virtually neglected from 1947. In 1964, out of a total insurance investment of Rs. 280 million, less than five percent was invested in East Pakistan, whereas of the total insurance underwritten in Pakistan, more than fifty percent came

16 Entrepreneurship Banglapedia www.banglapedia.org/HT/E_0062.HTM

17 Abdus Sattar Ghazali, *The Islamic Pakistan: Illusions and Reality*, 2, Online, Internet at http://www.ghazali.net/book1/Chapter6a/body_page_2.html.

from East Pakistan. Funds built up with premium income were not utilised in the development of the province's economy; as a result, "West Pakistan's gain has been East Pakistan's loss."¹⁸ West Pakistani insurance companies used to underwrite the bulk of business in East Pakistan and they transferred the fund generated from the insurance business in East Pakistan to West Pakistan for investments for the projects located there. Although the Pakistan Constitution required more "emphasis on the accelerated development for less developed areas and parity, the investment in the (West) Pakistani Insurance Companies including the Pakistan Insurance Corporation in the industrial projects located in the then East Pakistan was deplorably low."¹⁹ The capitalist class of Pakistan was so powerful that an insurance bill could not be passed in the national assembly due to the pressure of the vested interest-groups.²⁰ Subsequently, the public realised that investment of the insurance industry was one of the sources of the problem, and "in this circumstances some political parties proposed for nationalization as a remedy for this and included the programme of nationalization of insurance industry in their manifesto and ultimately became a national election issue in the 1970 election."²¹ However, far-sighted few Bengali personnel understood Pakistan's policy long before 1970 and started to take action on the economic development of East Pakistan.

Muzibur Rahman, a civil servant played a pioneering role in floating an Insurance company in East Pakistan. He took a bold step and established Homeland Insurance Company in Dhaka in 1960. This company was sponsored by the East Pakistani entrepreneurs purely from their own local financial resources. He was not only successfully operated this company but his vision paved the way for socio-economic development in the country. As a result, other entrepreneurs followed his path in later years.²² Later when Bangladesh was born and all insurance companies were nationalized he was selected as the managing director of the Jatiya Bima Corporation by the Government of Bangladesh.

18 E.H. Imran, "Insurance Industry in Pakistan, *Pakistan Observer* (Bank and Insurance Supplement), 28 September 1964, p. 14.

19 Shahid Uddin Ahmed, *Insurance Business in Bangladesh*, Bureau of Business Research, University of Dacca, 8 August 1977, p. 58.

20 *Ibid.*, 17.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Profile of Late Mujibur Rahman (1918-1975), *Installation of office Bearer & Bima Padak- 2008 Award Ceremony, souvenir*, Bangladesh Insurance Executive Club, 15.

In 1960, A.K. Fazlul Huq (Mowla) took a leading role in establishing East Pakistan Co-operative Insurance Society (EPCIS). In five years, the Society became the largest co-operative venture of the country. The Society played a great role in providing benefits of insurance to the common people living in the remote villages deprived of amenities of modern life.²³ In 1965 he established National Insurance Company of Pakistan Limited.

Mustafizur Rahman Siddiqui (M.R. Siddique), an entrepreneur played a leading role in the establishment of a Eastern Insurance Company Ltd. in 1959. He served as the Chairman of the company. After Bangladesh was born he was appointed as Minister for Commerce and Foreign Trade. He was the only Cabinet Minister to oppose Nationalization Policy of Bangladesh Government.²⁴

In 1965 Eastern Mercantile Insurance Company, a general insurance company was established by Bengali jute merchants, one of them was Kafiluddin Mahmood. Ali Ahmed, a retired Bengal Civil Servant became chairman of the company.

In 1965, Golam Mowla of Oriental Fire took the initiative and established the Great Eastern Insurance Company Ltd with Bengali entrepreneurs M. Shamsul Alam. When Bangladesh was born Golam Mowla became the first managing director of Sadharan Bima Corporation.

The other insurance personalities who contributed in the insurance industry during that period includes Mustafizur Rahman Khan, M.A. Rahim, M. A. Samad, Harunur Rashid, Moyeedul Islam and A.F.M. Safiyyullah.

Mustafizur Rahman Khan served for the EFU's general insurance in Chittagong and Dhaka till 1960. From 1961 to 1970, he was appointed by the Pakistan Government to serve Pakistan Insurance Corporation for East Pakistan. During that period, he was appointed as Custodian of enemy properties after India-Pakistan war in 1965. All the Indian insurance companies carrying on business in insurance in East Pakistan were declared "enemy property" after the India-

23 *Ibid.*, 16.

24 Profile of Late M.R. Siddiqui (1926-1992), *Installation of office Bearer & Bima Padak-2008 Award Ceremony, souvenir*, Bangladesh Insurance Executive Club, 18.

Pakistan war.²⁵ Khan later served as general manager of EPCIS from 1970 to 1972. After Bangladesh was born he was appointed chairman, Karnafuli Insurance Corporation.²⁶

Haruner Rashid of the EFU served as superintendent and received training in general insurance which includes fire, marine and accidents. He served as branch manager of Sylhet for the EFU till 1960. From 1961 to 1969 he served as branch manager of Khybar Insurance Company Ltd., first general manager Eastern Mercantile Insurance Company Ltd. and manager Great Eastern Insurance Company. In 1969 he joined Pakistan Insurance Corporation as chief manager and subsequently appointed to officiate as managing director for Bangladesh Insurance Corporation from October 1972 to January 1973. After Bangladesh was born Rashid served as director Karafuli Bima Corporation and general manager, Jiban Bima Corporation.²⁷

M. A. Rahim worked for the EFU from 1949 to 1960 as one of the senior officers in the company. He contributed towards the life insurance growth and success of the EFU during that period. In 1960 he joined as chief of Adamjee Insurance Company in East Pakistan.

M.A. Samad served as life manager, Great Eastern Insurance Company and general manager Federal Life and General Insurance Co, Ltd. When Bangladesh was born he was selected as Chairman, Surma Jiban Bima Corporation.

Moyeedul Islam, left his teaching job at Murari Chand College, Sylhet and joined as secretary, EPCIS. Later he was promoted to the managing director, EPCIS. Subsequently he was selected as the managing director, Pakistan Insurance Corporation and posted in Karachi.

A.F. M. Safiyyullah, (son of Dr.Md. Shahidullah), was another insurance salesman and executive who served for the cause of insurance industry with his "head and heart"²⁸. He played a key role in developing and conducting state-of-the-art training classes for the insurance salesman in the EFU. Under Khuda

25 Profile of Late Mustafizur Rahman Khan (1910-1996), *Installation of office Bearer & Bima Padak- 2008 Award Ceremony, souvenir*, Bangladesh Insurance Executive Club, 19.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

27 Profile of Haruner Rashid, *Installation of office Bearer & Bima Padak- 2008 Award Ceremony, souvenir*, Bangladesh Insurance Executive Club, 22.

28 Khuda Buksh, *Foreword: On to Ultima Thule*, August 1967.

Buksh's leadership Safiyyullah developed and conducted first Professional Agency training for the EFU in East Pakistan.²⁹ At that time, there was no book "to impart technical as well as practical know-how of insurance salesmanship"³⁰ to the insurance workers. He is known as the first Bengali who wrote his first book "Life Insurance Salesmanship" which did a pioneering job for salesman.³¹ Safiyyullah later authored "Ultima Thule: A loud Thinking of Life Insurance in Pakistan," which received praise from insurance professionals all over the country.

To judge the performance of life business of any insurance company, eight factors indicating growth in market share are used as yardsticks. These growth indicators are new life policies written, total number of life policies in force, new sum insured, gross sum insured in force, total life insurance premium income, total life account income total life fund, and total life and non-life premium income during each year of the review period.³²

This part will look into the performance of those life insurance companies which invested insurance premium in East Pakistan with head office in Dhaka and Chittogong. A research on Insurance Business in Bangladesh in 1977 found the scripts about the investments made by Bangladesh origin insurers. However, the research failed to establish investment claims of all other Pakistani owned insurance companies except Eastern Federal.³³

Table 1 shows that business performance of 10 registered insurance companies in East Pakistan. Only business performance data were provided which were available at the time of writing this article. The tabulated data shows that Eastern Federal exceeded business performance all insurance companies owned by East Pakistani companies. Initially, this company created a large number of field organisations in East Pakistan. Later, it expanded its field organizations to West Pakistan. Ultimately the EFU became the top insurer in the country and claimed that "every second person in the country was insured with them."³⁴

29 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.92.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 Profile of Late Mujibur Rahman (1918-1975)," *Installation of office Bearer & Bima Padak- 2008 Award Ceremony, souvenir*, Bangladesh Insurance Executive Club, 15.

33 Ahmed, *Op cit*, p. 50.

34 Wolfram W. Karnowaski, *Roshan Ali Bhimjee, Between Tears and Laughter A Biography*, (Karachi 2001), p.160.

Table 1
Business Performance Data on Insurance Companies Investing in East Pakistan (1951-1970)

Name of Insurer (Year Estd.)	Year	No. of Policies	New Sums Insured (Rs. in thousands)	Total Life Insurance Premium Income (Rs. in thousands)	Business in Force at the end of the Year (Rs. in thousands)	Life Fund (end of the year) Rs. In thousands	NOTES*
Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company Ltd. (1932)	1951	3,122	17,901	1,755	37,441	2,730	Major portion of new policies were generated from E. Pak and 65% business generated from E. Pak with Khuda Buksh, Life Manager, EFU, East Pakistan
	1952	3,567	21,128	2,462	51,039	5,319	
	1953	3,622	25,011	3,334	66,370	5,921	
	1954	3,607	24,306	4,019	79,421	8,456	
	1955	4,336	27,912	4,678	98,094	11,546	
	1956	5,523	33,643	5,143	121,387	15,048	
	1957	6,737	42,576	6,388	140,286	18,273	
	1958	6,491	37,883	7,466	155,883	23,266	
	1959	9,543	57,546	9,017	186,705	29,347	
	1960**	11,439	76,741	11,913	235,779	37,642	
	1961	14,198	95,123	13,998	276,001	46,426	
	1962	17,252	130,815	18,077	363,519	57,780	
	1963	21,419	162,462	23,783	456,379	74,339	
	1964	30,697	259,560	32,202	617,259	93,705	
	1965	40,784	342,859	42,182	796,124	117,959	
	1966	50,122	435,539	53,684	964,837	146,165	
	1967	49,976	448,700	63,859	1,196,253	183,031	
	1968	45,615	430,736	73,751	1,351,817	228,722	
	1969	39,230	433,192	101,184	1,605,144	286,533	
1970	41,492	423,941	110,053	1,777,569	343,054		

Source : Pakistan Insurance Year Book (1952-1971).

* M.A. Ispahani and his family controlled the major share of Eastern Federal before 1960.

** In 1960, due to London Loss, Ispahani sold his shares to "Habib Family" ARAG Ltd. and control of the company went to West Pakistan and thereafter lack of investment of insurance premium in East Pakistan became one of the hot political issues of economic discrepancies between two wings of the country.

**Table 1 (Contd.)
Business Performance Data on Insurance Companies Investing in East Pakistan (1951-1970)**

Name of Insurer (Year Estd.)	Year	No. of New Policies	Sums Insured (Rs. in thousands)	Premium Income (1 st Year) (Rs. in thousands)	Premium Income (Renewal) (Rs. in thousands)	Business in force at the end of the year (Rs. in thousands)	Life Fund (end of the year) (Rs. In thousands)	NOTES
Homeland Insurance Company Ltd. (1958)	1960	1,839	7,236	NA	NA	6,315	7	Muzibur Rahman, a Civil Servant established Homeland
	1961	2,285	8,178	NA	NA	10,269	108	
	1962	1,767	7,209	NA	NA	12,286	332	
	1963	2,428	10,025	NA	NA	17,929	617	
	1964	2,035	10,292	NA	NA	21,218	1,069	
	1965	2,705	14,120	NA	NA	24,983	1,700	
	1966	2,993	16,168	565	840	32,555	2,238	
	1967	3,892	20,165	688	1,002	39,804	3,105	
	1968	3,142	16,118	621	1,249	38,642	4,134	
	1969	1,956	10,209	443	1,301	37,692	4,962	
Eastern Insurance Company Ltd. (1959)	1961	690	2,655	NA	NA	2,511	-26	Mustafizur Rahman Siddiqui, an entrepreneur, played a leading role in establishing Eastern Insurance
	1962	1,870	7,375	NA	NA	7,431	-106	
	1963	2,246	10,677	NA	NA	13,173	-67	
	1964	2,831	14,983	NA	307	20,565	89	
	1965	3,622	17,723	NA	NA	NA	490	
	1966	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	1967	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	1968	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	1969	6,496	34,090	1,196	NA	27,570	-226	
	1962	314	1,445	NA	NA	1,371	5	
1963	1,284	5,950	NA	NA	6,156	22		
1964	2,057	10,287	NA	NA	11,723	128		
1965	2,676	13,284	NA	NA	16,086	369		
1966	4,113	24,244	816	522	27,821	831		
1967	5,777	40,566	987	891	54,640	1,606		
1968	6,726	38,018	1,310	1,326	64,268	2,860		
1969	6,967	38,231	1,564	1,693	76,527	4,334		
1970	4,674	23,976	NA	2,203	78,180	NA		

Table 1 (Contd.)
Business Performance Data on Insurance Companies Investing in East Pakistan (1951-1970)

Name of Insurer (Year Estd.)	Year	No. of New Policies	Sums Insured (Rs. in thousands)	Premium Income (1 st Year) (Rs. in thousands)	Premium Income (Renewal) (Rs. in thousands)	Business in force at the end of the year (Rs. in thousands)	Life Fund (end of the year) (Rs. In thousands)	NOTES
Great Eastern Insurance Company Ltd. (1965)	1966	2,319	16,503	451	NA	15,036	11	Golam Mowla established Great Eastern
	1967	5,442	32,108	963	267	35,258	7	
	1968	4,205	25,704	917	589	42,977	220	
	1969	3,411	22,761	846	1,071	51,790	822	
Pakistan Guarantee Insurance Company Ltd. (1965)	1966	41	561	-	17	561	3	
	1967	22	452	31	8	695	4	
	1968	41	211	6	31	634	8	
Greenland Mutual Assurance Company Ltd. (1963)	1964	159	794	NA	30	NA	NA	
Union Insurance Company Ltd. (1963)	1964	520	4,135	NA	NA	3,477	-41	
	1965	828	8,445	NA	NA	9,561	-96	
	1966	670	4,569	1NA	122	9,049	-74	
East Bengal Mutual Insurance Company Ltd. (1966)	1968	178	1,636	55	15	NA	39	
Federal Life and General Insurance Company Ltd. (1969)****	1969	2,594	25,759	875	-	24,998	12	Khuda Buksh established Federal Life
	1970	4,770	39,478	2,059	606	NA	NA	

*** Source: Federal Life and General Insurance Co. Ltd., Vol. 1, No. 1-3, Jan-Sept. 1971.

NA- Not Available

The man behind significant life insurance business growth in East Pakistan was Khuda Buksh. He was life manager of the EFU, East Pakistan from 1952 to 1960. In 1960, he was promoted to Life manager of East and West Pakistan. In 1963 and 1966 he was promoted to deputy general manager and general manager respectively. He established Federal Life and General Insurance Company in 1969 after resigning from the EFU. He was also selected as managing director of Jiban Bima Corporation in Bangladesh in 1973. Since Eastern Federal made significant contributions to the growth of life insurance business in East Pakistan the key factors behind the insurance business growth and development will be reviewed in more details following Buksh's early life.

Contributions of Khuda Buksh in the growth of Insurance Business

Khuda Buksh was born on 1st February, 1912 in a village named Damodya under the jurisdiction of Shariatpur (Shariatpur in now a district) of the then greater Faridpur district. He was the eldest child of Shonabuddin Hawladar and Arjuna Khatun.

In 1929, Buksh passed the Entrance (Matriculation) examination from Shyama Charan Edward Institution in the first division with distinction in Mathematics. He went to Kolkatta and got himself admitted into Islamia College in 1930. He studied there for two years and passed the Intermediate examination in 1932 in first division and got admitted in the prestigious Presidency College of Kolkatta to pursue B.A. He completed full course of study for two years, unfortunately, he could not appear in one of the papers in the final examination for his B.A. degree due to his serious illness.³⁵ Subsequently due to financial hardships he accepted a part-time job in the library of the Presidency College. In December 1935, Buksh started his career as field agent at

Oriental Government Security Life Assurance (OGSLA) in Kolkatta. He chose this profession to serve humanity.³⁶ Perhaps Buksh witnessed the fate of many families when the bread winner died without leaving any resources for the family. His life mission was to raise the standard of living of individuals and families by alleviating poverty, misery, humiliation, charity and homelessness in the society.³⁷

35 *The Daily Ittefaq*, 15 May 1974; *The Purbodosh*, 16 May 1974.

36 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.28.

37 Khuda Buksh, "Life Insurance Selling-A profession", *Eastern Federal News Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 7, July 1965.

Buksh developed a passion for his career and knocked door-to-door to sell life insurance policies in Kolkatta and surrounding regions. His “highly developed sense of persuasive power”³⁸ helped him to establish himself as a First Class Insurer and became popular with the Muslims and the Hindus in Kolkatta.³⁹ Buksh was promoted to Inspector of OGSLA in 1946. After 17 years field experience he returned to Dhaka and joined Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company (EFU) as life manager, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in July 1952. In the beginning, Buksh faced the most challenging task of his life – how to develop an insurance business in a negative environment as specified herein?

- Number of people willing to buy insurance was limited.
- Salespersons did not have any certainty of pay check at the end of the week or month.
- There was fundamentalist propaganda against life insurance – “Insurance Un-Islamic”
- Insurance agents were looked down by the society as people had negative views against the insurance agents.
- Agents or chief agents could not make a profit in the business and they frequently quit profession.
- Agents suffered “octopus of inferiority complex” as they had a feeling that they were doing a mean type of work.

Public negative attitude was the primary barrier to the sale of life insurance policies. Insurance business was vague and colored with suspicion as public avoided insurance agents. The overall view of the public was that “those who have no job join insurance and only, worthless people worked for insurance companies.” Moreover, Khuda Buksh found that educated people were reluctant to join this profession due to religious, cultural prejudices and negative views against life insurance workers. But he was workaholic and a determined man, “life insurance was his mission,”⁴⁰ Buksh had a strong conviction about

38 Karnowaski

39 Astryx, *Op cit.*

40 Roushanara Rahman, Obaidur Rahim, Hossain Mir Mosharrif, Moslehuddin Ahmed, Sazzadur Rahman, Tanisha Bukth, Shafique Khan and Bazlur Rahim (ed), *Beemabid Khuda Buksh Smarak Grantha, Commemorative Volume* (Dhaka, Khuda Buksh Memorial Trust and Foudation, February, 2009 ((Henceforth this source will be referred to as *BKBSG*))

this profession and he believed that “insurance is a service,” and profession is noble service-oriented profession-in which the manifestation of skill facilities one to ascend the ladder of success up to the sky. By becoming a member of this noble and active environment, the insurance workers should feel honored. Buksh’s philosophy was insurance policies are not just business but they are a service to the society as well and can help reducing unemployment in the country.⁴¹ Buksh’s message to the field workers reflected his philosophy:

Be proud of your job. Let it be written in letters of gold in pages of your mind that is your honorable duty as a life insurance salesman to mobilize and to channelize the social force of life insurance in the greater parts of your community. Keep your watchful eyes ever vigilant so that no breadwinner of your area of activities dies leaving his family uncared for. . . Have firm conviction that life insurance is the noblest profession . . .⁴²

Business Development Strategies

It cannot be denied that life insurance, by its nature, must depend for new business upon the effective working of the field force. Unfortunately, during that time, insurance salesmen were “ill-educated and ill-informed”⁴³ and “ignorance of the people at large and absence of any efforts towards imparting education giving information to the people about the benefits of insurance pushed the image into greater darkness.”⁴⁴

Knowing all the practical problems Buksh primarily focused on recruiting and training, public relationship, developing human resources, building inter-personal relationships, motivation of insurance workers, helping salesmen, providing superior service, setting goals, organization and management, compete with other companies and developing methods to reach the public.

Buksh believed selling life insurance begins with selling yourself, establishing a good inter-personal relationship and gaining trust. He realized that, “gaining trust is the biggest single task of life insurance,”⁴⁵ a salesman must master. With

41 *BKBSG*, p. 110.

42 Buksh, “Record Rs 35 Cr. Business in 1965 by Eastern Federal,” *The Pakistan Observer*, 14 June, 1966.

43 M.A. Chishti, *Insurance Industry Policies and Practices in Pakistan* (Karachi, 1987), p. 51.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Perin Stryker, *The incomparable Salesman: a study of the extraordinary life insurance agents in Million Dollar Round Table, including the greatest salesmen in the business world* (McGraw Hill Book Company, 1967), p.5.

his experience he was aware that he must achieve confidence of public by developing a good relationship with them before selling the idea of life insurance to them. Let us review a few key techniques Buksh applied to accomplish his life insurance mission and its outcome.

Recruitment and Training

Buksh was confident in his profession, and he was fully aware that his profession was going to provide benefits to the public. As soon as he joined the EFU he started educating people about this business. He shared his 17 years field knowledge and experience to the trainees. From 1952 to 1960 Buksh personally offered classes for the agents and trained them in the insurance business – how to inspire people, how to run an office, how to develop salesman’s confidence, how to communicate with a client, understand methods of persuasion, how is a customer’s financial position, whether the customer will be able to run the policy after accepting the proposal, kind of service is to be given after the proposal.⁴⁶

Buksh often visited Myranda Restaurant located on the lower level of Mukul Cinema hall near old Dhaka. This restaurant was popular with the public at that time for good quality food. Buksh’s intend was to socialize with people and recruit people in this business.⁴⁷ When Buksh faced recruitment problem of insurance agents he started a new system. He arranged salary-based jobs for all the employees, regardless of whether or not the company was making money. In the field of insurance this system was unique in East Pakistan as a result the educated section was motivated to come to enter the profession.⁴⁸

Buksh understood that a company could not grow without selling agents. He often visited various district towns on official duties. On such occasions, he would host gorgeous tea parties. People from the elite to the university teachers and students used to attend. And from here, he took many to the insurance business. During that time, Buksh brought many Bengalis into the insurance profession.⁴⁹

46 *BKBSG*, pp. 31, 89.

47 *KBTPOLIB*, p.48.

48 *BKBSG*, p.31

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 78.

Buksh had a unique capability to recognize a promising salesman. He used his persuasive skills to convince many key producers from rival companies to join the EFU. He personally hired all administrative and key marketing people including development officers, inspectors and managers for the company.

In 1963, the EFU invited P. Robello, Public Relations Officer of Life Insurance Corporation Bombay to provide a six week training courses to senior field officers of the company at Dhaka and Karachi. Later a full-fledged training scheme for the members of the company staff was introduced at the Dhaka office to train batches of 10 employees every two weeks.⁵⁰ In insurance training the EFU played a major role in developing the industry. It has been reported that many officers who received their training or gained experience in the EFU held high and responsible positions in several other insurance companies operating in the country.⁵¹

In training arena, Buksh appointed A.F.M. Safiyyullah, who was the life manager with Pakistan Premier Insurance Company. Buksh convinced him to join the EFU and made him adviser of planning and development. EFU management later expanded the training program by offering 10-week training and Executive Officers training courses at Karachi.⁵² Buksh sent several insurance personnel to Karachi for training.

To motivate people in this profession Buksh wrote several articles in the newspapers and in-house magazines on the importance of life insurance career. *Selling Life Insurance Successfully*, *Life Insurance Selling- A Profession and Your Duty Onerous* are the titles of three published articles. In one article Buksh said the public judges a profession by different standards. First, they see to what extent the profession is beneficial to society as a whole. Second, they ask if the members of this profession come from the educated and well-cultured section of the people. Third, they consider the prospects of the profession against the monetary returns it can bring to its members. Buksh pointed out that life insurance sales satisfy all these criteria. Life insurance helps one to plan for financial stability, by making provisions for one's old age and for the education and future provisions for one's dependents in the event of one's premature death or sudden loss of income. Therefore, "the role of

50 *KBTPOLIIB*, p. 92.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 92-95.

Insurance Agents in the social and national service is also very great.”⁵³ Perhaps this message helped Buksh to recruit more educated people during that time.

Public Relations

Public relations are a prime tool in any marketing effort. Public relation is in fact the foundation on which the edifice of an insurance company can be built. Without public relations an insurance company cannot make much headway.

Soon after joining the EFU, Buksh became a member of Dhaka Club and Dhaka Rotary Club. His intent was to increase public awareness about life insurance through the club's members. This initiative helped him to expand his circle of acquaintances with professionals and intellectuals. He also believed that key to successful career in business is “to develop personal relationships on all possible levels.”⁵⁴ He followed this practice throughout his life. He invited high ranking people to tea parties or dinner, sometimes twice a month. He spent money from his own salary. He frequented various functions and also took part in multi-purpose social gatherings. All his intent was to develop and maintain public relationship. ⁵⁵ Buksh was nominated twice as Chairman Dhaka Insurance Institute. Through his vigorous public relations effort he connected himself with high government officials, insurance executives, industrialists, professionals, politicians, educators, and many other people of all walks of life. His public relations helped to create a strong positive image of the company which sparked interest among customers and paved the marketing efforts.

His acquaintances included Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Head, Alpha Insurance Company, East Pakistan later became Bangabondhu), Tajuddin Ahmed (Politician, later became Prime Minister), Muzibur Rahman (Civil servant, insurance executive), Golam Mowla (Insurance Executive), Dr. Md. Shahidullah (Bengali educationist, writer and linguist), Abdul Jabbar (Speaker Pakistan Assembly), A.K. Khan (Industrialist), M.A. Ispahani (Industrialist), Aatur Rahman Khan (Lawyer, politician and writer), Justice Abdus Sattar (former President Bangladesh), Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (former President Bangladesh), Habibur Rahman (former Central Minister of Education), S.M. Morshed (former Chief Justice, East Pakistan), Kazi Anwarul Haque (Minister for Education, Health, Labour and Social Welfare), Hafizur Rahman (Education

53 Buksh, *Op cit.*

54 *BKBSG*, p. 214.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Minister), Shafiul Azam (Chairman, East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation), Dr. M.N. Huda (Minister planning and Finance, East Pakistan), Abul M.A. Muhith (CSP, former Chief and Deputy Secretary of Pakistan Planning Commission), Professor Md. Shamsul Haque (former Foreign Minister), A.K.M. Hafizuddin (Chairman, EPIDC), Abdus Salam (Editor, the *Bangladesh Observer*), Moinul Hossain (Editor, the *Ittefaq*), Zahur Hossain Chowdhury (Editor, the *Sangbad*), Enayetullah Khan (Editor, the *Holiday*), A.B.M. Musa (Journalist), Sufia Kamal (Poet), Fateh Lohani (actor, film director, writer and journalist), Kamal Lohani (Journalist and cultural personality). Buksh popularized life insurance among the intellectuals and educated section of people.⁵⁶

Developing a Marketing Team

It is well known that the insurance profession is the most difficult profession in the world because it is very difficult to sell insurance policies, this is a universal dictum.⁵⁷ Buksh firmly believed that insurance training and education are vital to the future of the individual as well as industry. However, in its very nature, must depend for new business upon the effective working of the field force.

To motivate an agent in insurance business Buksh would not hesitate to double or triple an agent's salary and even provide car to the potential salesman. In early 1950's A.R. Chowdhury (former General Manager, Chittogong) was an agent in Chittogong and his salary was Rs. 125 per month. At one stage, Buksh increased his salary to Rs. 400 and helped him with a car loan with a string attached— Rs. 30,000 premium must be earned for the EFU. This was one of the actions that business and agents started to grow in Chittogong and surrounding area. In mid sixties S. R. Khan (former managing director, Sunlife insurance company) joined as an agent for the EFU in Dhaka. Khan displayed great skills in policy selling and brought good business for the EFU. In the first month Buksh doubled his salary and at the end of one year he arranged a car for him.⁵⁸

Buksh developed the field organizations under two categories: Supervisory Cadre of Officers and Non-Supervisory Cadre of Officers. The first category included senior regional managers, regional managers, divisional managers, field managers, district managers, superintendent of agencies, agency managers,

56 *Ibid.*, p. 22

57 *Ibid.*, p. 147

58 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

district development officers, chief development officers, senior development officers, development officers, assistant development Officers, senior inspectors and inspectors. The non-supervisory cadre of officers included chief development officers, senior development officers, development officers comprised of Khuda Buksh's primary marketing team. He built up the confidence and credentials of his team mates by being humble, down-to-earth, sincere fair, straight forward with himself and his field force. He built the trust by empowering people by delegating them the authority for important managerial decisions.⁵⁹

In order to pursue his business target and sales strategies and to ensure that sellers remained motivated. Buksh announced various contests for the sales force through newsletters from time to time such as income tax contest, monthly contest, revival drive contest, unit quota contest, 4-day contest et. cetera. Buksh created a unique motivation system: instant reward, instant recognition and photographs. This was a convention in the insurance industry during those days, but he would give the rewards quickly, and that made all the difference. Buksh was well respected, loved and trusted for his fascinating charisma.⁶⁰

With his 17 years field experience Buksh knew how the customers mind work and how to get business in those days. When he had spare time he himself acted as salesman and generated business for the EFU.⁶¹

Helping Salesmen

Helping salesmen was one of his business development strategies. Buksh visited house of every field agent, development officer, inspector and manager and established relationships not only with the person himself but with all his family members. In spite of being a top insurer, Buksh kept close contact with ordinary insurance workers. They could meet him anytime and discuss freely about various problems. Buksh also helped employees in financial crisis, regardless of whether he worked in the field or in the office. "He believed that for motivation it was essential to establish the personal financial goals for enhanced social status needs of individuals."⁶² He used to look after salesmen

59 *KBTPOLIIB*, p. xii.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *BKBSG*, pp. 195-200.

62 *KBTPOLIIB*, p. xii.

families, and was genuinely concerned for their welfare. This encouraged them to do business wholeheartedly.

Buksh motivated even the commonest worker in marketing- so forcefully that it brought him considerable income. Whenever he found that an agent was unable to sell a life insurance policy to a potential client, he accompanied the agent to client's home and demonstrated his selling techniques. He left no stone unturned to convince a client in buying an insurance policy. He talked to a client with patience and conveyed the merits of life insurance. It was not unusual for him to sell an insurance proposal in the course of talking.⁶³ When Buksh accompanied an agent to a client's home often a policy amounting to one to two lakh taka were sold, but he never claimed any credit for this.⁶⁴ Agents rather received a commission due to their efforts resulting in revamping enthusiasm for job. In this way life style of many salesmen changed in life insurance business. Buying cars and houses became easy and regular acts of the EFU agents, inspectors and field managers.⁶⁵ Thus, he helped countless salesmen in getting business for the company.

Field Organization, Management and Business Development

During early period, Buksh found that the EFU insurance policies were issued from the head office in Karachi, with clients in Dhaka, Chittagong and other places. Naturally, this caused many delays in paperwork and did not reflect well on the company. To these unnecessary delays he convinced management to have policy renewals, premiums and other arrangements could be done to increase business from East Pakistan. The management agreed with him, increasing manpower in Dhaka regional office and other divisional and sub-divisional towns. Thus insurance business grew and a new class of insurance workers was also created in East Pakistan.⁶⁶

Before Buksh joined the EFU there was hardly any organized field force worth the name in the beginning. Buksh took the initiative and created a large number of field organizations in East Pakistan. This method soon started showing rich dividends and the number of agents and field officers significantly increased.⁶⁷ The Company thereafter continued showing tremendous upward trends and

63 *BKBSG*, p. 78.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

67 Buksh, *30 Progressive Years, Op. cit.*; *BKBSG*, p. 315.

number of new policies of the EFU increased from 2,567 to 9,543 from 1953 to 1959 respectively and new business from Rs.21.1 million to Rs.57.6 million during the same period as shown in Table 1. It may be worthwhile to mention that more than 65% of business was generated from East Pakistan before 1960.⁶⁸

Later when Buksh became life manager of the EFU for both wings of Pakistan, he divided the life organization into three zones, Central zone (Karachi, Head office), Western zone (Lahore, Regional HQ) and Eastern zone (Dhaka, regional HQ). Later, Western zone was bifurcated into two zones, Lahore zone (Lahore regional HQ) and Rawalpindi zone (Rawalpindi, regional HQ). The overall business performance of the EFU from 1960 to 1970 is shown in Table 1.

Buksh used to love his field force just like a father would love his children. From Chittogong to Peshawar he knew the name of each and every field worker, whether he was an agent, a manager, or a regional manager. He personally knew the name and family circumstances of a person, irrespective of its designation.⁶⁹

Buksh worked hard himself and he was instrumental in achieving company's business target through his field team scattered around the country. In early 1962 Buksh announced a target of Rs. 125 million new business in Karachi. The management at head office became skeptical of meeting this target. In early December 1962 when Buksh reviewed the business data he became doubtful of achieving his target. Without delay he rushed to eastern zone and worked day and night with his team and exceeded the business target by Rs 5 million.⁷⁰ Buksh was measured by the amount of business he produced and was called "the most outstanding salesman in the country."⁷¹ The performance of life

68 EFU In-house magazine, Khuda Buksh Life Manager- Mr. Khuda Buksh during his connection with this company has been able to create large number of field Organisations in East Pakistan and the Company could complete from East Pakistan business exceeding 3-3/4 Crores in 1959. In appreciate of the services rendered by Mr. Khuda Buksh he has been promoted to the rank of Life Manager by Board of Directors. He is now at the helm of affairs of the Life Department and he assured the Company that he would complete a business of Rs. 10 Crores by 1962 and would reach 15 Crores by 1964. He is very much optimistic and hopes he will fulfill his desire by his hard and sincere work in all the future years." Promotions news of Mr.Khuda Buksh, undated.

69 *KBTPOLIIB*, pp. 235-242.

70 *Ibid.*, 98.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 104-106.

business operation with field supervisory officers, non-supervisory officers and agents in three zones from 1964 to 1966 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Life Insurance Business Operation in Three Zones.

Particulars	Eastern Zone			Central Zone			Western Zone		
	1964	1965	1966	1964	1965	1966	1964	1965	1966
No. of proposals completed	18,401,130	20,460	22,815	5,866	8,977	NA	6,430	11,163	NA
Amount of paid for business (Rs. in Millions)	4.96	140	163	64	92	NA	67	109	NA
Total 1 st year premium income (Rs. In millions)	18	5.50	6.69	2.75	4.01	NA	4.83	7.07	NA
No. of supervisory officers	152	29	36	7	9	NA	28	61	NA
No. of non-supervisory officers	170	180	255	63	103	NA	122	217	NA
Total no. of field officers	20	209	301	70	112	NA	152	283	NA
Average no. of active agents per organisation	763	19	16	11	14	NA	NA	NA	NA
Average sum assured per organization (Rs. in thousands)	3,519	672	542	817	828	NA	361	365	NA
Total no. of agents participated	--	4,015	4,905	797	1,629	NA	1,141	2,680	NA

Source: Muhammad Obaidur Rahim, *Khuda Buksh: The Pioneer of Life Insurance in Bangladesh* (University Press Limited, Dhaka 2011).

To develop and spread company's business in East Pakistan Buksh divided eastern zone into two zones, zone A and zone B. Dhaka and Chittogong (Chittogong Hills tracks) were under zone "A". Zone "B" covered all other districts.⁷² During that time there were 17 districts in East Pakistan. Figure 1 shows the district wise breakdown of agents for 1965 and 1966.

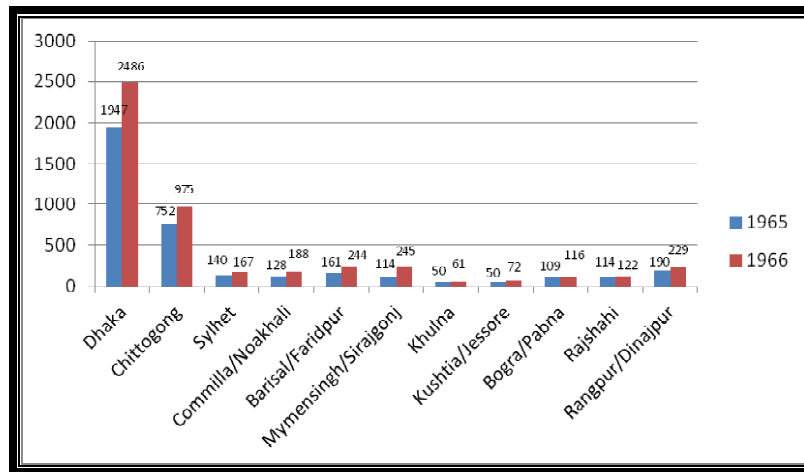


Figure 1: No of Active Agents Vs Zone Units.

To achieve a competitive advantage over rival companies such as American Life Insurance company he always tried his best to retain the trained employees. He did not let them go easily from the company.⁷³ Whenever there was any dispute or clash between the company and its employees Buksh applied his own personal relationship. In Dhaka at one stage some senior field officers resigned. Buksh went to their homes and persuaded them to come back and join the EFU.⁷⁴

Field management is a difficult task, because the field officers are not under any service rules and they are not under any strict control of management. However, Buksh was able to win the heart of all field officers in East and West Pakistan and developed a strong and efficient dynamic team.⁷⁵ Interestingly, Buksh's

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 251.

73 *BKBSG*, pp. 31, 80, 107, 141.

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

75 *Ibid.*

eastern zone team was ahead in business performance then western zone team from 1952 to 1963.⁷⁶ Buksh frequently toured all zones and motivated them for aggressive marketing. Since sales force was scattered all over the country, he kept in touch with field officers and his managers on a daily basis.

Public Trust and Confidence

Buksh's personal qualities of generosity, warmth, and thoughtfulness showed that he had a secret to his success, it was to see other people as human beings who could benefit from his services, rather than as mere customers.⁷⁷ People disliked insurance agents and buying life policies in early period of 1950s. However, he was able to bring about a change in the minds of the people who gradually realised its fruitfulness and became interested in buying policies. Buksh's team deserves a lot of credit for spreading the life insurance message door-to-door.

In early period of 1950's if any insured person died, Buksh personally handed over the cheque to the wife or other member of his family. In those days, it was normal for Buksh to deliver benefit cheque of the deceased's residence before burial or at the graveyard⁷⁸ This not only benefitted the family financially, but his action helped to spread the usefulness of the insurance policy to reach every one. Whenever a death claim came, he waived many things as soon as possible and informed his managers to pay the claim quickly. His public relationship, quality of services, and prompt benefit payment policy played a dominant part in changing public attitude towards life insurance. The public attitude towards insurance agents gradually changed over time and they were no longer viewed as "worthless". Thus Buksh's practical steps taken in this regard resulted in the deep trust for life insurance among the general public. Thus the once backward and neglected insurance industry won the confidence of the people.

In a relatively short period from 1950 to 1970, the life insurance industry boomed. Insurance industry was able to cross the darkness of religious superstitions just in two decades. EFU provided life insurance benefits to 250,000 families through ordinary and group insurance. Death and maturity

76 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.100.

77 *Safiyullah*, p. xiii.

78 *BKBSG*, p. 80.

claims paid by the company were approximately Rs.250 million.⁷⁹ Insurance raised per capita income in the country rose from Rs.1.9 in 1950 to Rs. 40.0 in 1970.⁸⁰ The changing scenario of insurance business in East Pakistan was reflected in an article published in 1964 which acknowledged: “several thousand people are now engaged in this industry and making a good income. Young educated people, who earlier regarded this line as without any prospect, are taking to this profession.”⁸¹

Buksh implemented Bengali in insurance documents. During this time in Pakistan, all the documents of insurance were in English. In East Pakistan, Buksh first took the initiative of transforming those into Bengali. Mir Mosharraf Hossain, his personal secretary accomplished this task.⁸²

Buksh’s leadership and his untiring efforts, dedication and passion was recognized as the driving force in making the EFU the largest company in the country. Moreover, the EFU business data revealed that the business in East Pakistan was spread out all over East Pakistan. Buksh developed business in East Pakistan more at the grassroots level than at concentrated upper level in West Pakistan.⁸³ The expansion of life insurance by the EFU took unprecedented stride under his leadership. Buksh became an “undisputed leader”⁸⁴ in insurance and “his name was also synonymous with the life insurance industry.”⁸⁵ By the middle of 1960’s Buksh became a “household name”⁸⁶ and people called him the “Wizard of Insurance”⁸⁷.

Role in Insurance Investment

Buksh was proud to be a Bengali and he strived all his life to promote the interest of Bengali. He had a major dispute with Roshan Ali Bhimjee (managing

79 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.150.

80 The Pakistan Insurance Year book 1971, p. 6.

81 Mohammad Tahir Jamil, “Insurance in East Pakistan.” *Pakistan Observer*, 21 May 1964.

82 *BKBSG*, pp. 83, 365.

83 *Ibid.*, 104.

84 *Ibid.*, 25.

85 Waheeduzzaman Manik, A Tribute to an unsung hero of Life Insurance, *The Daily Star*, 12 March 2012

86 Wolfram Karnowaski, *Loc. cit.*, p.310; *BKBSG*, p. 22.

87 Jiban Bimar Ekti Obisharaniya Nam, *The Daily Ittefaq*, 15 May 1974; Jiban Bimar Jadugar Khuda Buksher Ananna, May 1974, *The Purbodesh*, 16; *BKBSG*, p.367.

director, EFU) about the company's investment policy.⁸⁸ Buksh played a vital role in convincing the EFU management in investing in East Pakistan as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Eastern Federals Investment in East Pakistan (1960-1968)⁸⁹

Year	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Investment in East Pakistan (Rs. in millions)	6.0	NA	13.8	17.7	NA	NA	19.71	NA	NA

NA: not available.

Buksh was not a political person, but he was a man of principle and "his love of justice, fairness and advocacy for the interest of Bengalees brought him into clashes"⁹⁰ with the EFU management. Buksh believed that the EFU management did not apply a sound and an effective investment policy and injustice was done to East Pakistan. Bhimjee understood Buksh's position on insurance investment disparities. In September 1966, the EFU board of directors agreed to establish two separate investment board (one for East Pakistan and the other for West Pakistan) as a part of long term investment policy. According to this policy, insurance premium earned in East Pakistan was planned to be invested in East Pakistan.⁹¹ Incidentally EFU management took this action just after six-months Awami League launched their 6-points programme. However, Buksh's desire was to do something permanent for the Bengalees so that they do not feel themselves deprived of insurance facilities. He handled the investment issue with the EFU management with his own style staying outside politics.

Firstly, he purchased two bigha plot in Dilkusha Commercial area without the EFU management's approval.⁹² Secondly, he took the initiative to build a 20-story building at a construction cost of Rs. 20 million. It was the plan for the tallest building in Pakistan at that time. The eminent architect Muzharul Islam was selected for building design, Messrs Gehrman and Wiesbaden (West

88 *BKBSG*, p. 25.

89 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.178.

90 *Astryx, Op. cit.*

91 *KBTPOLIIB*, p.166.

92 Wolfram W. Karnowski, *TES, Op. cit.*, p. 314; *BKBSG*, p. 25.

Germany) were appointed as consultants, and Bengal Development was assigned the civil works. Finally, Buksh received the approval of the design and construction of the building from the Government of East Pakistan.⁹³ However, the conflict with the EFU management on investment and other issues continued. He showed his courage and patriotism by suddenly resigning from the EFU in April 1969 and formed his own company Federal Life. EFU building subsequently proved to be the biggest real estate investment in Bangladesh initiated during Pakistan period.

The Federal life and General Insurance Company started in Dhaka in May 1969 with nine leading Bengali industrialists and businessmen as shareholders. As soon as Buksh started the company, a large number of field officers from the EFU and other west Pakistani companies joined his company. The Anti-Ayub movement in 1969 created such an attitude among the Bengalis that they were against working in West Pakistani companies. Due to this Buksh had no recruitment problem for his company. The company proved to be a great success in business. In one year Federal Life was able to declare dividends to its shareholders.⁹⁴

Role after Insurance Nationalisation

In order to manage the affairs of insurance companies, the government promulgated a number of ordinances from January 1972 to March 1973 which nationalized 44 insurance companies (Pakistani 29 and Bangladesh 15) excluding all foreign insurance companies and Postal life insurance. On 8 August 1972, Bangladesh Insurance (Nationalization) Order 1972 created Jatiya Bima Corporation to look after four insurance corporations: Surma, Rupsa, Karnafuli and Teesta. Buksh was selected as one of the three directors of the Jatiya Bima Corporation. Subsequently, Jatiya Bima Corporation was dissolved and integrated the general and life insurance companies into two corporations, Jiban Bima Corporation (JBC) and Sadharan Bima Corporation (SBC). The government appointed Buksh as the first managing director of the JBC.

JBC inherited 71 branches all over Bangladesh. It is likely that majority of the branches outside Dhaka and Chittogong were earlier established by Buksh

93 *KBTPOLIIB*, pp. 161-162.

94 *Ibid.*, 186.

while he developed the life insurance business organizations for the EFU. JBC opened only two new branches. In 1973, 9,335 agents worked for JBC and it cannot be denied that majority of the agents participated, originated from the EFU's field organization as shown in Figure 1. In fact, a baseline infrastructure and manpower resources were already available for rapid development and growth of life insurance business. JBC also spent about Tk 1.70 million for the review of 20-story building construction in 1973.⁹⁵ Incidentally, this was the same EFU building discussed earlier whose foundation was laid just after Buksh resigned from the EFU. The EFU building was later completed in Bangladesh, it is known as Jiban Bima Tower, it reminds us Buksh's vision and spirit of nationalism.⁹⁶

After Buksh became managing director he took this responsibility as a challenge, and started to reorient the JBC. Under Buksh's leadership during the year 1973, JBC issued 31,789 life insurance policies for assurances amount of Tk 404 million. JBC received first year premium Tk 18.7 million. Life Insurance fund at the end of 1973 was Tk 218 million.⁹⁷ It may be safely said that this sudden business growth was possible due to Buksh's leadership in life insurance industry. His entire EFU and insurance sales personnel of other insurance companies deserve a lot of credit for the development of this industry. A total of about 10,000 claims were settled from 1 January 1972 to June 1974 on account of death and an amount of over Tk 400 million were paid to the beneficiaries.⁹⁸ It is difficult to visualize the social impact if these people had no life insurance.

As soon as Buksh took over as managing director of JBC, he faced a very hostile political environment – JBC trade union. He had clear conflicts with the JBC trade union leaders due to their various illegal demands. Buksh did not bulge and comply with their demands. He tried to find out amicable solutions but did not compromise his “principles even under tremendous political pressure of the unruly trade union leaders. Nor was he willing to be bullied around by the self-declared political touts.”⁹⁹ Government relieved him from

95 Jiban Bima Corporation (JBC), Director's Annual Report for the year ended 31st Dec 1973, p.5.

96 *KBTPOLIIB*, p. 214.

97 JBC Director's Annual Report. *Op cit.* p. 6.

98 Shahid Uddin Ahmed, *op cit.*, p.34.

99 *Ibid.*

his position on 27 November 1973 and all on a sudden his life-long career in life insurance came to an abrupt end. Government selected Moyeedul Islam as managing director of JBC. Islam returned to Dhaka from Pakistan prior to this event.

Buksh died of a heart attack on 13 May 1974. His death marked the end of a legendary era in life insurance history. He not only became a legendary figure in his lifetime he is recognized as “one figure among Bengali Muslims who popularised life insurance among the people.”¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Despite all the negativities against life insurance and political upheaval there is no doubt that development of this economic institutions took place because of few visionaries in East Pakistan. Besides, thousands of untiring insurance agents, salesmen, administrators and managers in the 1950s and 1960s led by Khuda Buksh. In Bangladesh, the growth of insurance industries in urban and rural areas resulted in the creation of a new class of insurance workers providing many new economic opportunities developing newly demarcated social groups in its structure.

The initial development of insurance industry was difficult due to stereotyped image of the insurance workers and other problems in the region as discussed earlier. There was a “general apathy among the people rewards insurance.”¹⁰¹ As a result very few educated people were inclined to enter this field. But Buksh was passionate about insurance and believed in his heart on this profession. He worked for life insurance promotion in a difficult time. Other people entered the field after some ground had already been built.¹⁰² Buksh struggled and devoted his whole life and succeeded to reverse the trend of public negative attitude towards life insurance. Buksh is known to have “played a pivotal role in establishing salesmanship of life insurance policies and programmes as a respectable profession in the last century.”¹⁰³

100 Syed A.T. Qamruzzaman (ed.), *Beloved Rtn. Khuda Buksh is no more*, *Rotary News*, Dacca, number 35, May 14, 1974; *BKBSG*, p.366.

101 Shams Siddiqui, “A Negative Attitude,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 May 1960, p. 999.

102 *KBTPOLIB*, p. 218.

103 Manik, *Op. cit.*

Buksh's contributions in life insurance business may be summarized into five elements¹⁰⁴:

- Providing Bangladeshis with basic social welfare benefits through his insurance awareness movement.
- Recruiting and training countless numbers of young people in this profession.
- Helping to develop and expand the life insurance industry across the country.
- Changing the image of the insurance salesman from "worthless" to "honourable."
- Paving the way for the growth of the modern life insurance industry in Bangladesh.

The insurance salesmen who emerged in the 1950s to 1960s under Buksh's tutelage eventually helped to develop and progress the industry. In summary it may be said that, in tracing the evolution and development of life insurance industry Buksh played the pioneering leadership role in the development and growth of life insurance industry in Bangladesh.

104 *KBTPOLIIB*, pp. 210-211.

THE LEGACY OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSION IN IRAN

Md. Abul Kalam Azad*

Introduction

The American Presbyterian¹ Mission, originally known as the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was organized in 1789 under the leadership of John Witherspoon in the wake of the American War of Independence. Generally, Presbyterians trace their history to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation of Europe. The early Presbyterians in America came from Scotland and Ireland. The American Presbyterian missionaries originated from prosperous middle class families, mostly from the northeastern America. They were highly educated and two thirds of them were female. The American Presbyterian Mission has been a leading US denomination in mission work, and involved in operating many hospitals, clinics, colleges and universities worldwide. A vital part of the world mission emphasizes the

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1 The term “Presbyterian” refers to a representative style of church government. Each congregation elects elders from among its members. The elders, together with ministers of Word and Sacrament, are called *presbyters* (derived from a Greek word for “elder”). Presbyterian simply means “government by presbyters”. Presbyterians are Christians who affirm Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Savior and through him worship the one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are Reformed and their roots are in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. They are evangelical who believe that the essence of the faith is the good news (evangel) that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose for the salvation of humankind. They affirm the unity of all Christians as a gift of God, and share with believers of every denomination the worship and work of the Church “catholic” (meaning “universal”). Presbyterians insist that God alone is Lord of the conscience, and therefore welcome diversity and open inquiry. As Reformed Christians, Presbyterians also stress God’s sovereignty as Creator and Redeemer of all. This theme puts special emphasis on: human responsibility -- the election of God’s people for service, not just for salvation; a proper stewardship of all the gifts of creation which celebrates simplicity and shuns ostentation; the insistence that ultimate allegiance belongs to God alone; a call to work for the transformation of society in obedience to God’s Word.

denomination in building and maintaining relationships with Presbyterian, Reformed and other churches around the world, even if this is not usually considered missions.

The missionaries were responding to early 19th century evangelical revival, which called on American Protestants to preach the Gospel to all humankind.² The American Missionary activity in Iran began in December 1830, when Eli Smith, Harrison Gray and Timothy Dwight came to Azerbaijan, (previously an Iranian territory) and explored the area for the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions under the banner of Presbyterian Mission.³ However, the Presbyterians officially renamed the enterprise in 1870-“The Mission to Persia”.⁴ The mission was sent mainly with the aim of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all mankind. Under the direct authority of the Iranian government, the Presbyterian Board expanded their mission throughout the country. A new Evangelical church was organized in 1855. By 1862 the first presbytery was organized and in 1872 Presbyterian work began in Tehran. Over time, their multi-dimensional activities and stations were expanded to Tabriz, Rasht, Hamadan, and Mashhad, Qazwin, Kermanshah, Azerbaijan (Urmiah, Khosrowa) and parts of Kurdistan, Caucasus, and Armenia.⁵ They established schools, hospitals and Evangelical Church. In this way, the American missionaries engaged themselves into missionary and other charitable activities in many parts of Iran.

2 For more about the issue see: Frank Joseph Smith, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in America*, USA, 1985, pp. 13-17; Lefferts A Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, New York, 1983, p. 22; Donald K. McKim, *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers: Exploring Christian Faith*, Louisville, Kentucky, USA, 2003, pp. 1-9.

3 The first American Protestant Missionary group in Iran was called the Congregationalists and since 1870 the group was called the American Presbyterian Mission in Iran.

4 Robin E. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestant*, First Published in 1973, (this edition first published in 2011), Routledge, United Kingdom, p. 111; A. Reza Arasteh, *Educational and Social awakening in Iran, 1850-1968*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, the Netherlands, p. 116; Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin (ed.), *Women, Religion and Culture in Iran*, Curzon Press, Great Britain, 2002, p. 51.

5 Robert Benedetto and Donald K. McKim, *Historical Dictionary of the Reformed Churches*, Scarecrow Press, USA, 2010, P. 303; Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin, *op. cit.* p. 51; In 1934 the evangelical churches of Iran joined to create a single Protestant church by the name of the Evangelical Church of Iran which turned out to be the largest Protestant church in Iran. The church adopted a constitution in 1963. The 1979 Islamic Revolution largely impacted church life.

Unfortunately, in course of time, proselytizing mission lost its momentum and in 1939, all the properties (of the American Presbyterian Mission) except the Girls' Middle School in Tehran were sold to the government for \$1,200,000 and thus over a century's educational work by American Missionary school was at an end.⁶

However, the fact is that before facing the nationalist onslaught of Reza Shah the American Presbyterian Mission was able to leave indelible legacy in Iran. This article will shed light on the legacy left by the American Presbyterian Missionaries in Iran.

American Protestant Mission in Iran and Iranian Response

It was reported that there were twenty thousand Nestorian Christians in Urmiah (later renamed Razeh in 1935) of Tabriz (earlier a place of northwestern Iran). The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions hoped that the city of Urmiah would provide a base for future mission. Under this consideration, the Board finally approved plans for sending and establishing of a permanent mission in the area. The first American missionaries (that included Harrison Gray, Eli Smith and others) arrived in Tabriz on December 18, 1830. They all were considered the first Americans to call Iran their home. In 1834, Presbyterian missionary leader Reverend Justin Perkins D.D. (1805-1869) and his wife arrived in Tabriz. There Justin Perkins founded the Persian mission. Other American missionaries joined the work before long. In this way the first permanent missionary centre in Urmiah came into being in 1835. The centre included a library, hospital, school and a print shop.⁷ Gradually more missionaries arrived and between 1834 and 1871 the Board sent some fifty-two missionaries with several physicians including Dr. Asahel Grant (1807-1844) and his wife to Iran.⁸

The missionaries were sent with an uphill task of converting Iranian Shi'i Muslims (though covert in nature but through periodic attempts) from Islam to

6 Robin E. Waterfield, *Op. cit.*, p. 143.

7 Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Post-Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf*, Ashgate Publishing Company, USA, 2011, pp. 34-38; In 1870 the work of the missionaries was transferred to the Board of Missions of the American Presbyterian Church.

8 They were later joined by Dr. W.W. Torrance and the first woman doctor ever to be seen in Tehran, Dr. Mary Smith and Dr. J. G. Wishard.

Christianity and the Assyrian and Nestorian Christians to Protestantism as the primary objective as well as to provide medicine and education to the community (especially the Christian minority) in its development as secondary objective.⁹ Therefore, the American Protestant Missionaries came to Iran with a social agenda: to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to establish for Iranians a life-style which might be expressed in the following way:

1. All boys and girls should be educated in modern schools;
2. There should be adequate, modern housing and clothing for all;
3. Modern medicine should ease pain and sufferings;
4. A major part of educated, modern women was to keep house, for the benefit of all society;
5. Gender relationships should be modernized in this way:
 - There should be no child marriage, no polygamy, no easy divorce;
 - Marriage should be by 'romance', that is, by choice of the marriage partners, not simply arranged by families;
 - Women should have the possibility of remaining single and following careers;
 - In marriage the role of the wife was to be a partner and help-mate of her husband and the mother of their children.¹⁰ In brief, this programme amounted to 'a campaign to advance the freedom' of Iranians.

With the arrival of more missionaries in Iran, the evangelization programme got an impetus. As has been stated that the missionaries opened a Church in 1855 in Iran for their religious purposes, however, the missionaries found difficulty to convert Shi'i Muslims to American-style Protestant Christianity. Therefore, they confined their efforts of proselytizing to non-Muslims, especially the Assyrians or Nestorians. In addition, they involved in several humanitarian activities by opening schools and hospitals in Iran. Justin Perkins, the founder and leader of the mission established the first boys' school, called the Male Seminary at Urmiah in 1835.¹¹ The school adopted Persian as its language of

9 James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, Yale University Press, London, 1988, p. 15; Michael P. Zirinsky, "A Panacea for the Ills of the Country: American Presbyterian Education in Inter-War Iran", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring), 1993, p. 120.

10 Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin, *Op. cit.* p. 53.

11 Mehdi Heravi, *Iranian-American Diplomacy*, Ibex Publishers, Inc. USA, Third Printing 1999, pp. 9-14; In 1846, the school was moved to a village about six miles away named. In 1878, the school was recognized as a college and by 1895 it began to grant academic diplomas.

instruction. This move of the mission school helped to draw the attention of the Iranians. Later it was reorganized into two separate institutions. One was Qalla College for boys and the other was Fiske Seminary for girls under the leadership of loving-natured Miss Fidelia Fiske.¹² By 1841 the mission was able to open about seventeen schools in sixteen different villages. In 1851 it is reported that a total of 871 pupils of whom 203 were women were studying in 45 schools.¹³ As time passed, American missions began to send Assyrians to America to obtain education in colleges and universities.¹⁴ In 1841 Perkins has put: "... our education efforts hold out the cheering prospect, in connexion with our other labours, of furnishing the Nestorians with an intelligent and pious ministry; and with their aid, of gradually raising the whole mass to an intelligent and various people."¹⁵ Dr. J. Perkins and his colleagues organized classes in their mission for the instruction of English. They operated the printing press and spent years translating old Assyrian religious books into the modern language and published them at a new mission publishing press. The number of published books stood about 30. Since 1849, the Presbyterian Mission began to publish "The Rays of Light" periodical. As the time went by the missionaries built more than forty village schools and secondary schools in Urmiah. Similar institutions were also established in Iranian cities of Tabriz, Hamadan, Kermanshah, Rasht, Mashad and Tehran. The missionaries also opened first girls' school in Tehran on April 24, 1874. At the beginning the school was called Iran Bethel. However, finally it was named Noor Bakhsh. By 1895 there were 117 mission schools in Urmiah and by 1926 the mission established 13 more schools in northern Iran, including both boys' and girls' schools in Tehran, Hamadan, Rasht, and Tabriz. In 1936, the long-planned-for Sage College for Women had been opened. In the year 1938-1939 no less than 2,000 Iranian students were being educated in the Presbyterian mission schools in Iran. However, by 1940 all but one of the mission schools was turned over to the Iranian government.¹⁶

12 According to Robin E. Waterfield, She took up the school work amongst girls which had been started by Dr Grant's wife (d. 1939).

13 Robin, *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

14 Vasili Shoumanov, *Assyrians in Chicago*, Arcadia Publishing Charleston, USA, 2001, p. 10.

15 Lyle L. Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record: Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East, 1800-1938*, William Carey Library, USA, 1934, pp. 116- 117.

16 Zirinsky, Michael P., "Render Therefore unto Caesar the Things which are Caesar's: American Presbyterian Educators and Reza Shah", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4, Summer/Fall 1993, pp. 337, 356.

These activities were followed by the medical and hospital works which was obviously a desirable line for missionary work in Iran. As Iranian medicine was at this time was very primitive, therefore, the missionary doctors who were serving with modern medical facilities were much in demand. According to James A. Bill, during their first twenty-five years in Iran, the missionaries made fundamental contributions to the health, education, and overall social well-being of the Iranians they served.¹⁷ In 1879, Dr. Joseph Cochran who had settled himself in Urmiah as a missionary, founded as Iran's first modern medical school. It later became the Medical College of Urmiah. To influence the culture and the minds of the Iranian people attempts were also made by establishing hospitals after the name of western pattern. Example of this was the "West Minister" hospital, which was established by a physician named David W. Torrance in Tehran. Before long these schools and hospitals became centres for the diffusion of western culture in Iran and began to create reputation for America. Dr. Justin Perkins and his medical assistant, Dr. Asahel Grant, were the pioneers of the American Mission in Iran. Rev. Austin Wright, M.D. developed the plains dispensary while Grant began work among the scattered Nestorians, Kurds and Yezidis in the mountains. The mission's tackling of a serious cholera epidemic that broke out in Iran in 1891 won wide appreciation in the country.¹⁸

Iranian response to the American Protestant mission was of utmost importance. The Qajar ruler Muhammad Shah (1834-1848) granted Reverend Justin Perkins the authority to establish the first American school in Urmiah in 1835 to educate the people of the region in history, geography, arithmetic and geometry.¹⁹ Muhammad Shah's successor Nasiruddin Shah (1848-1896) entertained liberal views towards the Christian and Jewish minorities. He showed special appreciation to the USA missionaries and authorized them to establish churches and distribute their religious tracts and books among the people in Urmiah. In 1842 his predecessor outlawed proselytizing among the Nestorian Christians but in 1851 Nasiruddin Shah repealed the edict. He went further and made legal conversion of the Jews to Christianity in 1878. In actuality, the Iranian government, in line with its policy of trying to persuade the political and economic support of the USA, did everything possible within

17 Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

18 Robin, *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

19 Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani, *Iran and America: Rekindling a Love Lost*, Published by East-West understanding Press, USA, 2005, pp. 1-2.

its limited powers to accommodate the American missionaries in Iran.²⁰ And with some exceptions Iranian were impressed by the missionary activities. When Iran's first girls' school was established in 1874, Iran welcomed it. Nay, in 1889, Nasiruddin Shah issued orders for payment of the sum of 100 *Tomans* annual subsidy to the school. He also paid a visit in the morning of November 4, 1890 and encouraged the Muslim girls to attend the school. Originally most of the students in the mission schools were from Christian minorities: Assyrians and Armenians. Gradually the students' base expanded to include Jews and Muslims. The Muslim girls from government officials, royal families, landowners, and business class dressed in the fashion of American girls began to attend the school. Although the Shah of Iran put some restrictions on the dress of Muslim girls, it would have lifted after the fasting month of Ramadan. In this way the school helped greatly to improve the social standards of Iran.

Realizing the benefits of the services rendered by the missionaries, the Shahs of Iran also took considerable interest in the missionary activities particularly in founding schools and hospitals which were dispensing education and providing health services among the people of Iran. The Iranian Shahs were subscribers to the schools of the mission and used to appoint physicians connected with the mission hospitals as their personal physician.²¹ When Nasiruddin Shah (1848-1896) was assassinated Dr. John G. Wishard from the American Presbyterian Mission was summoned to confirm the shah's death and to sign the death certificate. Nasiruddin's successor Muzaffaruddin Shah (1896-1907) appointed Dr. George Holmes his personal physician.

Positive Aspects of the Mission

There is no denying the fact that the American Protestant Missionaries left a long-lasting legacy on Iranian society as well as on the Iran-US relations. It was the American Protestant mission that initiated the interchange of culture

20 In the early years of 1890s, when the Kurds living in the Ottoman Empire tried to cross into Iran through the province of Azerbaijan caused a great alarm for the American missionaries in Iran. The Iranian Prime Minister assured the American Minister at Tehran Alex McDonald that Iran itself was anxious about the issue and he was going to protect the Iranian people including the Christians of that region by sending a regiment of soldiers to the Azerbaijan Province. Iranian government also agreed to accept the Christians refugees who were fleeing from the Ottoman Empire during that time. Thus Iran offered a shield within its territory for the Christian missionaries of the USA who were going to be crushed at the hands of the Kurds. The then American Secretary of State Richard Olney appreciated these Iranian initiatives.

21 Heravi, *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

between Iran and America. The work of the missionaries was the sole factor that heightened American image and reputation in Iran in the early days of Iran-US relations. Many of the missionaries lived and died in Iran in the service of the people. They dedicated their lives to the humanitarian cause in Iran. Some of them even dedicated their lives to the national cause of Iran. This finally helped to develop “a vast ocean of good will between Iran and the United States.”²² George Lenczowski has aptly put that these missions in Iran created uncontested good will and respect for the US which gave the Americans the additional advantage of spreading the light of their civilization in Iranian territory.²³

Moreover, with the beginning of the missionary activities both the Iranians and the Americans were exalted by the possibility of mutual cooperation. By providing the Iranians with skills, game of life, and vision of the world the USA missionaries ultimately laid the foundation of subsequent Iran-USA cooperation.²⁴ It is beyond doubt that the American Presbyterian missionaries played an important role in establishing friendly relations between Iran and the USA even when two countries had no diplomatic ties and thus pioneered the origin and development of Iran-USA relations, which was later got impetus under Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979). Mehdi Heravi in his famous book “*Iranian-American Diplomacy*” has argued that by the actions of the missionaries the two countries were coming closer in a primitive diplomatic sense.²⁵

The missionaries also gave the Iranians a grand view America. Being impressed by the missionary activities Iran’s boy-Shah by the name of Ahmad Mirza once exclaimed: “Of course I like Americans. They fought for freedom, doing ... many heroic things. They are inventors of wonderful machines...America is the land where everything is done with electricity...and where the people are...very free.”²⁶ Indeed, the Presbyterian mission did much to transform Iranian society largely along American lines, introduce modern Western medicine and

22 Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

23 George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1949, p. 281.

24 Zirinsky, “A Panacea for the Ills of the Country: ...”, *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

25 Heravi, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

26 Kamyar Ghaneabassiri, “U.S. Foreign Policy and Persia, 1856-1921”, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1/3 (Winter-Summer, 2002), p. 150.

education, and encourage the Iranian government to adopt laws protecting women and children from exploitation. Their benevolent activities, schools and their lives presented Iranians with a cultural image of the USA based on altruistic American capability and good will. American culture began to penetrate into Iranian society through the missionary schools, colleges and hospitals. Living in Iran and studying in that missionary schools and colleges many Iranians acquired western education got acquainted with the American values. According to Michael P. Zirinsky, the USA Presbyterian mission was important to the development of Iranian and American perceptions of each other. Missionaries represented America to Iran, and they transmitted perceptions of Iran back to the United States. For Iran's part the country always turned to the USA and favored its initiative in finance, commerce, and even politics because of the favorable view of America presented by the missionaries. Michael P. Zirinsky even went further and commented that the Pahlavi-US partnership of 1953-1978 developed on the basis of goodwill created in Iran by the American Protestant missionaries during the early history of Iran-US relations.²⁷ Barry Rubin, a Middle East scholar wrote that the hell of America's post-1978 relations with Iran was paved with good intentions. The base of that pavement was laid by the US Presbyterian missionaries. That is, the missionaries created bond of goodwill between Iran and the USA.

Now we turn to some prominent American individuals (except Justin Perkins and Dr. Asahel Grant) who undertook life-long mission to work for modernizing Iranian education and to promote cultural linkage between Iran and America.

Dr. Samuel Jordan (1871-1952)

Dr. Samuel Jordan is generally considered as the most renowned and respected American among the Iranians. He came to Iran along with his wife Mary as a missionary in 1898. He started learning Persian and devoted 43 years of his life to the cause of education in Iran, which won him the epithet "the Father of Modern Education" in Iran.²⁸ Although Jordan came to Iran as a missionary, his principal job was to assume the leadership of the American School for Boys of the country. Under him the School grew into a full twelve-year elementary and

27 Zirinsky, "A Panacea for the Ills of the Country: ...", *Op. cit.*, pp. 119-137.

28 Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani, *Op. cit.*, p. 14-16; Heravi, *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

high school in 1913, and finally evolved into a full college in 1925, which was known as the Alborz College of Tehran. Soon the College became a demonstration of the success of diversity. The student body of the College contained representatives of all racial and religious groups including Muslims, Armenians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. They came from both rich as well as poor families. They worked and played together and made their friendship regardless of distinctions. Thus the College helped develop secular culture in Iranian society. The College also made great contribution by providing English-speaking assistants to the American advisers for the Ministry of Finance, who were brought by the Iranian government beginning with Morgan Shuster in 1911, and during two administrations of Dr. A.C. Millsbaugh in 1922-1927 and 1943-1945. Many Iranians, trained and placed in responsible positions that continued to hold after the American left were also products of the College. Faculty members of the College were highly regarded graduates of Lafayette College, Yale, Princeton, University of Chicago, Syracuse, and Indiana University. A number of Iranian scholars including Dr. Rezazadeh Shafagh, a Ph.D. from Berlin University and Dr. Yahya Armajani, a Ph.D. from Princeton and many more also served as faculty. In 1940 the institution was purchased by the Iranian government and incorporated it into the national school system.

Dr. Jordan brought a revolutionary change in the lives and the mindsets of Iranians and their society through the College. His service to the Iranian people in every area of life was undoubtedly commendable. His legacy with the Alborz College also included the transmission of some American values such as the dignity of work, the virtue of community service, democracy and equality, equality of women, and love of country.²⁹ Justice William O. Douglas in his book entitled *Strange Lands and Friendly People* described him as “The man who did more to create goodwill between Persia and America than any other man.”³⁰ During Mr. and Mrs. Jordan’s stay in Iran, a Boarding School was established in 1910, Summer Camps and Boy Scouts were formed in 1911, a bilingual school paper (Persian-English) was established in 1921, a famine relief group was formed, and an International Relations Club in affiliation with

29 Ramin Asgard, “U.S.-Iran Cultural Diplomacy: A Historical Perspective”, *al-Nakhlah*, The Fletcher School Online Journal for issues related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization, Spring 2010, p. 3.

30 Quoted in *Iran and America: Rekindling a Love Lost* of Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani, p. 17.

Carnegie Endowment For International Peace was established. For his service and contribution to the Iranian nation the Iranian government awarded Jordan the First Scientific Medal-the highest honour in education of the country. The government also named one of the principal streets in northern Tehran after him. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 the street was renamed *Afrika* (Africa) to show the revolution's sympathy with the oppressed (*mustazafin*) of the world.

Howard Conklin Baskerville (1885-1909)

Howard Conklin Baskerville is often called "the American Martyr" in Iranian constitutional history was another American who came to Iran in the missionary group but dedicated his life to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1906-1909). A Nebraska-born American missionary-turned-educator, Baskerville fought and died on the side of Constitutionalists on April 19, 1909, at Tabriz.³¹ A graduate of Princeton University, then a teacher at the American Memorial School in Tabriz in the Province of Azerbaijan Baskerville actively participated in the latter part of the Constitutional movement. He supported the group, which was fighting for reforms and a return to constitutional government. He helped them organize their military actions. Finally, he led 150 constitutionalists and died in a bloody battle. A question is asked, what did impress Baskerville to get involved in the revolution? Needless to say, the spirit of Iran, its people and culture inspired Baskerville a lot. He first became interested in Iranian politics, then established relations with some leading nationalists, and finally made commitment to serve the national cause of Iran. For this he had to resign from his teaching position to devote full time to the cause of reform of Iranian politics, which he supported whole-heartedly. He joined the Revolutionary Movement despite the warning of the USA's diplomat in Iran.³² Consequently, Baskerville's actions were jeopardizing American neutrality in Iran, but to the Constitutionalists he was regarded as a hero. He took up arms with his students

31 Abbas Milani, *The Myth of the Great Satan: A New Look at America's Relations with Iran*, Hoover Institution Press Publication, USA, 2010, p. 42.

32 Baskerville had no support for this from the US government or the American Mission and Legation at Iran. Therefore, his actions in Iran were in no way the reflections of the US government. Even when he was killed in Iran, the US government did not move to protest his death chiefly due to the official non-interventionist diplomatic policy toward Iran. However, the important point is that Baskerville, though carrying out the espoused American ideals of freedom and democracy for all nations, was reprimanded and disavowed by the US government.

and revolutionaries in support of the Iranian Constitutional Movement and gave his life on the battlefield.³³ The American Consul preferred a private funeral, but the Constitutionalists arranged a public gathering where around 3000 persons attended for giving him a public hero's funeral. His sacrifice for the Iranian people won him great admiration and love. He is regarded as an Iranian hero from America till today. There is a bust of him in Tabriz's Constitution House bearing the legend "Howard C. Baskerville—Patriot and Maker of History."³⁴ Baskerville has had a permanent place in the memory of the Iranian public ever since 1909 for his self-sacrifice for the cause of the Iranian constitution.³⁵ Iran still regards him as their "Yankee Hero". In 2005, Iran's President Mohammad Khatami unveiled a bust of Baskerville at the Constitutional House of Tabriz.³⁶

Annie Stocking Boyce (1880-1973)

Among female missionaries, Annie Stocking Boyce, a pioneering educator and journalist woman missionary began her missionary career in Iran from 1906. She served as teacher and principal of the American Girls' School in Tehran, as teacher and house-mother at the American (Alborz) College of Tehran, and as founder, manager and editor of *Alam-i-Nesvan*, a durable and influential magazine dedicated to uplifting Iranian women. Being an engaged observer of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909, Annie regularly wrote to New York. At the end of the summer of 1908 she wrote about the fighting in Tabriz that: "The last word we had was that the Revolutionists were victorious. I hope so for I can't bear to have the Shah have everything his own way and it does my American blood good to know that there are Persians who are willing to fight to the bitter end for liberty."³⁷

Under direct influence of the missionary activities particularly under missionaries like Annie Stocking Boyce and others, women in Iran became conscious about their rights and position in the society. They felt urgent need to publish their own newspapers and to form woman's club. The bi-weekly

33 Badiozamani, Badi and Badiozamani, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

34 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Baskerville

35 Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani, *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

36 A. Christian Van Gorder, *Christianity in Persia and the status of non-Muslims in Iran*, Lexington Books, USA, 2010, p. 92.

37 Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin, *Op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

Zaban-i Zanan (Women's Tongue) was published in 1919.³⁸ And by 1920s Woman's Club (*Kanun-i-Banuan*) became a fact. Every Thursday afternoon the teachers of the government elementary schools for girls are required to attend lectures on marriage, and other important social issues arranged for them at the Woman's Club. Muslim women were seen very anxious to understand foreign ways of doing things including correct social procedure.³⁹ These newspapers and women activities through the Woman's Club paved the way for Reza Shah's social reforms including the end of the use of the Islamic dress code, the *hijab*.

Negative Aspects of the Protestant Mission

During their stay and work in Iran the American Presbyterian Missionaries also left some negative legacies. According to Michael P. Zirinsky, the Presbyterian missionaries were Christian evangelists. They failed to distance themselves from the millennium-old conflict between Islam and Christianity. Therefore, they engaged themselves in conflict with Iranian people to win over their hearts and minds for Christianity. This tinged their whole work, even their beneficent secular work, with proselytization or a church-militant aura which conflicted with Iranian aspirations.⁴⁰ This was one of the negatives of the missionary activities. However, there were other negatives legacies left by the American Protestant Mission in Iran. The Iranians did welcome the American mission and they did applaud their many humanitarian activities that radically transformed Iranian society in education and healthcare. But equally they resented the activities of the missionaries who were telling them that their religion was wrong. Initially, the proselytizing mission was confined to two communities: Nestorians and Jews. Later on, the missionaries tried to teach them Christianity; generating negative publicity about Iran and labeling them as barbarians. Whenever the missionaries tried more aggressively to convert Muslims, inter-faith tensions flared up. In that case the Iranian government forbade establishing schools which were operating under the umbrella of spreading education and science but were actually proselytizing. This prohibition, however, was not total. Ignoring the Shah's decree, the missionaries often established schools and kept continuing their activities. However, throughout this period the

38 The publisher of the newspaper was Sadiqa Daulatabadi (b. 1882).

39 Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin, *Op. cit.*, 64.

40 Zirinsky, "Render Therefore unto Caesar the Things which are Caesar's: ...", *Op. cit.*, p. 355; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion, Op. cit.*, p. 15.

predominant problem was that the American citizens and missionaries were somewhat disrespectful of Iranians, their traditions, values, and religion. The main mistake that the USA government committed during this time was that it had focused its effort on supporting the USA citizens in spite of the troubles they were causing by aggressively promoting religious conversion of Iranian Muslims and Christians. Although Iranians had admired strongly the USA abilities and technological advances, they did not appreciate being looked down upon. Thus the American cultural contacts were heavily tinged with ethnocentric strains of superiority. In some cases the missionaries were assigned by the US government to collect political-economic intelligence about Iran using the charity as a cover. Therefore, the early missionary activities were to some extent mixed with political interests.⁴¹

Conclusion

There is no denying the fact that the American Protestant Missionaries came to Iran with a social agenda: to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to modernize Iranian society through imparting education, providing medical services and thus establishing Iran- the USA bilateral political relations. The relationship between the two countries, which thus began remained positive and cordial up until the onset of World War II in 1939. This War found the USA well-entrenched in Iran as the Iranian always welcomed it. This was because the Americans in missionaries created a good image for America and for Americans in Iran. Despite ethnocentric strains of superiority and proselytization of the early years, the USA enjoyed the psychological advantage of the humanitarian, sympathetic, and wholesome friendliness which the American missionaries created in Iran. The early activities of American missionaries in Iran created bases for subsequent educational and cultural relations between Iran and the USA in spite of Reza Shah's nationalist onslaught against foreign schools during the inter war period. The missionaries were the harbingers of cultural ties between Iran and America. While at the same time they provided the Iranians with skills and vision of the world. They came to Iran with an ever-increasing zeal of upholding the humanity and establishing and strengthening cultural ties between Iran and the USA. They played life-long role in the growth and development of Iranian society and Iran-the USA cultural relations during the

41 Marie and Naghshpour, *Op. cit.*, pp. 39-53; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion, Op. cit.*, p. 15.

early years of these two country's interactions. Although the legacies of the American Missionaries were mixed with some negatives, the positive aspects of their activities are still remembered in Iran despite historical wounds of the later periods. They are remembered for their educational work and medical works and social development through imparting knowledge to women community.