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# Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)

Ullah, S.M. Akram

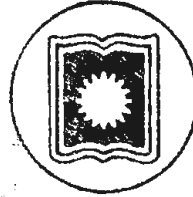
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# **Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)**



*Ph.D. Dissertation*

**Researcher**

**S.M. Akram Ullah**

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi**

**January 2009**

# Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)



*Ph.D. Dissertation*

*This dissertation is submitted to the University of  
Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy*

Researcher

S.M. Akram Ullah

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi**

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**Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)**

*Ph.D. Dissertation*

*Researcher*

*S.M. Akram Ullah*

*Ph.D. Fellow*

*Session: 2001-2002*

*Institute of Bangladesh Studies*

*University of Rajshahi*

*Supervisor*

*Md. Aminur Rahman, Ph.D.*

*Chairman*

*&*

*Associate Professor*

*Department of Political Science*

*University of Rajshahi*

*Rajshahi, Bangladesh*

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi**

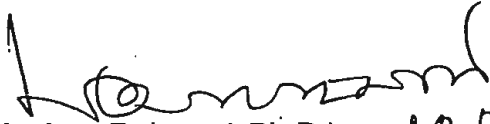
**January 2009**

*Dedicated to the Memory*  
*Of*  
*My Mother*

## Certificate

Certified that S.M. Akram Ullah has prepared the dissertation titled, "**Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)**" under my direct supervision. I have gone through the draft and final version of the work. The dissertation contains materials not previously published or written by anyone except by means of quotation and appropriate recognition. To the best of my knowledge, the study has not been previously submitted for any diploma/degree or fellowship to any other University/Institute.

I approve submission of the dissertation.




(Md. Aminur Rahman, Ph.D.) 20.01.09

Chairman  
and  
Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi  
&  
Supervisor.

## Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “**Democracy in Bangladesh: Role of Student Politics (1972-2002)**” submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, is an original work carried out by me under the supervision of Md. Aminur Rahman, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi. The dissertation contains materials not published elsewhere or written by anyone except by duly acknowledge citations. This has not been submitted in any form to any other University or Institution for any degree, diploma or for other similar purposes.

Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh  
January 2009

  
20.01.09  
(S.M. Akram Ullah)

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A huge number of colleagues of RU, IBS fellows and well wisher of mine, in particular, all of my teachers and colleagues of Political Science Department including Professor M. Sadequl Islam and Professor Golam Morshed, Mr. Abdullah Al-Mamun of the Department of English, M. Shahriar Zaman, Ph.D., Dr. Shahidul alam of Agronomy, Shib Shankar Roy of Marketing, Zakaria Habib Polash and A.S.M. Masudul Islam of English, Khandaker Muzahidul Haq and so on, have put enormous contribution to my research activities providing materials, deliberation in the seminars, informal discussions, suggestions and perse. I vividly acknowledge their contributions in gratitude.

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(S.M. Akram Ullah)

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(S.M. Akram Ullah)

## Acronyms

ABGSA	:	All Bengal Girls Students Association
ABSA	:	All Bengal Students' Association
AIMSF	:	All India Muslim Students Federation
AISF	:	All India Students Federation
AL	:	Awami League
APAC	:	All Party Action Committee
APSU	:	All Party Students Unity
BAKSAL	:	Bangladesh Krishak Shramik Awami League
BAU	:	Bangladesh Agricultural University
BCL	:	Bangladesh Chattra League
BDS	:	Bangladesh Debating Society
BNP	:	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BPC	:	Basic Principles Committee
BPSA	:	Bengal Provincial Student's Association
BPSF	:	Bengal Provincial Students Federation
CMLA	:	Chief Martial Law Administrator
COA	:	Combined Opposition Alliance
CPB	:	Communist Party of Bangladesh
CRM	:	Civil Rights Movements
CSP	:	Civil Service of Pakistan
CU	:	Chittagong University
DAC	:	Democratic Action Committee
DCMLA	:	Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator
DU	:	Dhaka University
DUCSU	:	Dhaka University Central Students Union
EC	:	Executive Council
EPSL	:	East Pakistan Students League
EPSU	:	East Pakistan Students Union
FF	:	Freedom Fighter
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GGEC	:	Governor General's Executive Council
HSF	:	Hindu Students Federation
ICS	:	Islami Chattra Shibir
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
INA	:	Indian National Army
IUS	:	International Students Union
JAGODAL	:	Jatiotabadi Gonotantrik Dal
JCD	:	Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal
JCL	:	Jatio Chattra League
JIB	:	Jamat-I-Islami Bangladesh
JP	:	Jatiya Party
JSD	:	Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal
JU	:	Jahangir Nagar University
KPP	:	Krishak Proja Party
KSP	:	Krishak Sramik Party
KU	:	Khulna University
LC	:	Legislative Council
M/C	:	Montagu-Chelmsford

ML	:	Marxist-Leninist
ML	:	Muslim League
NAP	:	National Awami Party
NBCS	:	Natun Bangla Chattra Samaj
NEPMSL	:	Nikkhil East Pakistan Muslim Students League
NFF	:	Naval Freedom Fighter
NLM	:	New Left Movement
PBBSU	:	Purbo Bangla Biplobi Students Union
PBCP	:	Purbo Bangla Communist Party
PBSC	:	Purbo Bangla Sammonoy Committee
PBSP	:	Purbo Bangla Sarbohara Party
PPCP	:	Purbo Pakistan Communist Party
PPR	:	Political Parties Regulation
RAW	:	Research and Analysis Wing
RIN	:	Royal Indian Navy
RU	:	Rajshahi University
SAC	:	Students Action Committee
SCJ	:	Sangrami Chattra Jote
SCP	:	Chattra Sangram Parishad
SDC	:	Students' Defence Committee
SDKCSP	:	Shadhin Bangla Kendrio Chattra Sangram Parishad
SF	:	Students Federation
SL	:	Students League (Chattra League)
SU	:	Students Union (Chattra Union)
SYC	:	Soviet Youth Committees
UF	:	United Front
UN	:	United Nations
USA	:	United States of America
USIS	:	United States Information Service
VYK	:	Visva Yuvak Kendra
WDYF	:	World Democratic Youth Federation
YBM	:	Young Bengal Movement

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores present state of student politics and its relationship with democracy. How students are getting involved in student politics? What impact they have upon democracy of the country? What are the problems and future of student politics in Bangladesh? This study demonstrates historical approaches to democracy and struggle for democracy over the past. Students played a significant role in bringing out qualitative change along with some negative roles, such as unrest on campuses, closure of institutions and session jam. Student's activities were catalyst, to some extent, to ensure Bangladesh to journey towards democracy.

This study has been incorporated with data from various newspapers and magazines along with respondent's opinions from the survey carried out. The study has employed primary and secondary sources of data. The data have been included on the basis of relevance. Comparative evaluation, logical argument, critical reasoning and rational judgment have been used in this dissertation.

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter encompasses introduction, discussion, definition of key terms, justification of the research, objectives of the study and methodology. A historical overview of democracy from British colonial rule to modern times (up to 2002) has been described in chapter 2. Chapter 3 encloses a historical sum-up of student politics in Bangladesh. Chapter 4 traces the causes of involvement of students in political activities with comparative analysis. Chapter-5 shows respondents' opinion concerning present trends of student politics. The concluding chapter 6 reinforces summary of the study, findings, offers recommendations for policy makers and some guidelines of future research in which future researches can be done.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Outline of the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.1.1 Ideal of Democracy in Bangladesh

Right after liberation through a bloody war in 1971 Bangladesh drafted a constitution in 1972 that stipulated four principles as the basis of her independent nationhood. Those were: (1) Nationalism, (2) Socialism, (3) Democracy and (4) Secularism. These principles were born out of the long struggle in the then East Pakistan for self-determination. One of the Chief Maladies of Pakistan was the crisis of democracy. Demand of democratic rights had always been a major issue in the struggle for self-determination. Thus, democracy naturally became one of the four pillars of the sovereign Bangladesh state.

#### 1.1.2 Student Politics and Democracy

University and college students played a very vital role throughout the struggle for self-determination in East Pakistan. They put all kinds of sacrifice for the establishment of a democratic state in Pakistan. It was naturally expected that the student community would not only remain a rampart of democracy in sovereign Bangladesh, but also do everything to promote the practice of democracy in the country. But the expectation has lately been disappointed as student politics degenerated into violent activities, mal-practices, and anti-academic preoccupations. Today student politics in Bangladesh is detrimental problem vitiating not <sup>only</sup> ~~also~~ the whole system of higher education but also practice of democracy in the country. The proposed research aims at unveiling the historical process that has determined the relation between student politics and democratic practices in Bangladesh since liberation. The investigation is also expected to yield some remedies for improvement of the dismal situation that prevails at present in the field of student politics.

### 1.2 Statement of the Topic

#### 1.2.1 Definition of Key Terms

Before guiding a description of the proposed topic, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of certain key terms in the title such as 'democracy' and 'student politics'.

### 1.2.2 Democracy

The concept of democracy is derived from the ancient Greek words *Demos* and *Kratos*. The former means 'people' while the latter means 'power' respectively. So democracy stands for power of the people. Democracy, which has been termed as the universal political system of 20th century, is an outcome of 18<sup>th</sup> century's French Revolution and 19<sup>th</sup> century's Industrial Revolution. It harmonies with industrial culture and secular values. After democracy came into being in the west, the Asian people followed this trend as viable political system. It is not abstract systems, but fluid and kaleidoscopic one. The patterns, nature, functions and working of democracy may vary from country to country. One country's democracy is not entirely identical with another country's. Nonetheless, democracy essentially requires some basic preconditions to ensure ruling authority's accountability to the people. Greek Philosopher Aristotle argued that democracy is at its best where the middle class is large.<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Toqveville has suggested three preconditions for democracy, (i) voluntary association as mediating institutions (ii) the divisions of power in a federal system and (iii) relative socio-economic equality that fostered political participation.<sup>2</sup> Arend Lij Phart has opined that social homogeneity and social consensus are indispensable factors to stable democracy.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he viewed that the deep social divisions and political differences in plural societies are responsible for instability and disintegration of democracy.<sup>4</sup> Lehbruch defined democracy as a tactic of conflict management by cooperation and majority decision.<sup>5</sup> But Kenneth A Bollen has differed with Lehbruch on this view and he pointed out that democracy is a halt where the political power of the elites is reduced and that of the non-elites increased.<sup>6</sup> S.M. Lipset has argued that basic requirements of a stable democracy are, (i) a value system allowing the peaceful play of power, otherwise democracy becomes chaotic, (ii) regular awarding of effective authority to one group, otherwise unstable and irrelevant standards rather than democracy will dominant, (iii) conditions for the existence of an effective

---

<sup>1</sup> Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries* (Colorado; Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), p.x.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Zagiul Haider, "Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh: From Crisis to Crisis", *Journal of Asiatic Society Bangladesh*, Vol. 42, No.1, June 1997, p.70.

<sup>3</sup> Arend Lij Phart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (Bombay; Popular Prakashan, 1989), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

opposition, otherwise the authority of the officials in power will steadily increase and popular influence on policy will be at a minimum.<sup>7</sup>

Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee have argued for political democracy to survive—there must be basic consensus to bind the contending parties together.<sup>8</sup> Rajni Kothari has stated that there should be a shared minimum of values that will affect social pluralities: a framework for freedom of expression and resolution of conflicts and an institutionalization of the larger rules of the game, which is indispensable for the survival of political system.<sup>9</sup> For Robert Dhal, Polyarchy is synonymous with democracy. He suggested that political democracy must have eight institutional guarantees: (1) freedom to join and form organizations, (2) suffrage, (3) freedom of expressions, (4) eligibility for public offices, (5) political leaders' right to compete for support and votes, (6) reliable and other native source of information, (7) free, fair and credible election and (8) institutions for making governmental policies dependent on votes and other expression of preferences.<sup>10</sup> But Anthony Downs argued that a democracy must have a regular election on the basis of majority rule with the criterion of one-person one vote.<sup>11</sup> While L.W. Pye has magnified democratic preconditions such as participation and systematic change for smooth political development.<sup>12</sup> Philip Cutright equated political development with democracy.

Lipset defined democracy in his final analysis as a political system which provides regular constitutional opportunities for changing government officials, permits the majority people to influence decisions by their right to choose suitable candidates for political office.<sup>13</sup> Howard J. Wiarda stated that the countries, which acquired greater literacy, become strongly mobilized and are prone to more political development, which turns those countries into more liberal and democratic one.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> S.M. Lipset, *Political Man* (New York; Doubleday, 1959), p.46.

<sup>8</sup> R.R. Berelson, P.E. Lazarsfeld and W.N. McPhee, *Voting*, Cited in Zaglul Haider, *op.cit.*, p.71.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Iftekharuzzaman and Mahbubur Rahman, "Transition to Democracy in Bangladesh: Issues and Outlook", *BISS Journal*, Vol.XII, No.1, 1991, p.97.

<sup>10</sup> Robert A. Dhal, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p.3.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York; Harper, 1957), pp.23-24.

<sup>12</sup> L.W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston; Little Brown and Com., 1966), p.33

<sup>13</sup> S.M. Lipset, "Some Social Pre-requisites of Democracy", *American Political Science Review*, No.53, 1959, p.71.

<sup>14</sup> Howard J. Wiarda (ed.), *New Direction in Comparative Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p.15.

Democracy is a Political System in which the people are sovereign in their state. The people rule themselves through their representatives who are chosen in free and fair elections. Freedom of thought, speech, belief, and the liberty to assemble, organize, and propagate are constitutionally established in a democratic state. According to a modern authority, democracy has the following characteristic features:

- In democratic system most adults can participate in the electoral process.
- Citizens' votes are secret and are not coerced.
- Representative are chosen in free elections, by contest between at least two viable candidates or political parties.
- Government bases its legitimacy on representing the desires of its citizens.
- Citizens, leaders and party officials enjoy basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly, religion, organization and so on.<sup>15</sup>

From the above theoretical, discussions, analyses, definitions we can suggest some characteristics of a democratic system which are:

- A legitimate ruling authority with popular mandate;
- Accountable to the people;
- Roles and functions in an environment of consensus;
- Skilful at conflict management;
- Ensure the maximum welfare of the people;
- Stability and systematic change of the government;
- Allow the majority of the population to make decisions;
- Elects leaders through a free, fair and credible election;
- Acknowledge the existence of opposition;
- Roles and functions where effective and independent political institutions exist.

### 1.2.3 Student Politics

Student politics is not a matter of social organization or academic association. "It is almost related with political purposes or political movement because all incidents and problems concerned with students are explained from the viewpoint as a result

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<sup>15</sup> Keneth Janda, Jefferly M. Berry and Jerry Goldman, *The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990), pp. 53-54.

of power structure.<sup>16</sup> They expressed their views organizationally.”<sup>17</sup> An Indian scholar says that students are the part and parcel of a great society and due to this reason, they will champion popular aspirations. Like many others he noted that “a back-to-the people spirit” inspires student politics.

Michiya Shimbori in her article “The Sociology of a Student Movement: A Japanese Case Study” mentioned that there are three distinct types student politics which take place in three distinct levels. They are-

- **Intra-mural**-it generally takes place within the campus of academic institutions, especially in the Universities.
- **National**-it is related with the whole nations; and
- **International**-it takes place in the international arena through international student organizations.<sup>18</sup>

The analysis of Shimbori is completely relevant with the scenario of Bangladesh student politics. According to the view of Shimbori, we can say that student politics within the premises of the academic institutions such as-Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Jahangir Nagar University etc. will be treated as an intra-mural politics, politics based on the whole nation will be national politics and the political activities of the students which goes out of the Bangladesh and leads to the student activism in other countries of the world will be called international.

Lewis A. Feuer in his book *The Conflict of Generations* defined student politics. According to Feuer, students politics is “a combination of students, inspired by aims which they try to explicate in a political ideology and moved by a political ideology and national rebellion in which there is always present a rejection of the values of the older generation; there over the members of a student movement have a conviction that their generation has a specific historical mission to fulfill where the older generation and other classes and elites have failed.”<sup>19</sup> Anirban Banerjee put some views regarding student politics. He said, that student politics might include varying degrees of other feelings. An anti-colonial feeling may develop during

<sup>16</sup> Michiya Shimbori, “The Sociology of A Student Movement: A Japanese Case Study”, in *Dadaelus*, Vol.97, No.1, p.210.

<sup>17</sup> Philip g. Altbach, “Student and Politics” in Philip G. Altbach (ed.), *The Student Revolution: A Global Analysis* (Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House, 1970), p.59.

<sup>18</sup> Shimbori, *op.cit.*, p.209.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis A. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p.11.

colonial period. When an authoritarian regime exists in a political system, students play vital role for democracy.<sup>20</sup> Feuer opines that student politics is the most irrational part in the history.<sup>21</sup> This view of Feuer regarding student politics is not correct because it must have specific and logical objectives. For achieving these goals students go ahead. On the basis of place and situation, these goals may differ from one country to another and from one historical situation to another.

There are many forces-social, political and historical, in a political system, which can impinge upon the student politics. Type of regime, political tradition of a country may contribute to the students to take part in the political activities in a political system. In case of Bangladesh, it is true that language, authoritative nature of the government, religion, region etc. are the vital causes, which put influence on students to take part in politics.

Feuer mentioned that students involve in politics for achieving some goals. For this reason they must ally their movement with a carrier movement of important component of the society, such as peasant, labour or national movement.<sup>22</sup>

Like many other groups, student community is the conscious part of a society. They can distinct between just and unjust, ethical and unethical. Thus, when a student community takes part in a movement, they try to fulfill the role of the conscience of society. Student politics is completely different from youth politics because it has the component of intellectualism.<sup>23</sup>

The above-mentioned causes of the involvement of students in politics give the student politics an ideological dimension. Anirban Banerjee opined that the ideology of student politics might be progressive or reactionary.<sup>24</sup>

- o **Progressive Movement:** Through progressive movements students generally try to unite people against their common enemy. The struggle for independent country against British colonial power and Pakistan ruling elite, the movement against dictatorial power of Ayub Khan in Pakistan and of General Zia and Ershad may be the best example of progressive ideological dimension of student politics.

<sup>20</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *Exploring Student Politics* (Kolkata; Balaka Prakashan, 1998), p.69.

<sup>21</sup> Feuer, *op.cit.*, p.11.

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.70.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71.

- **Reactionary Movement:** Reactionary movement divides people of a society by setting one section of the people against the other.

In the perspective of student politics, Philip G. Altbach divided student politics into two types. One is norm oriented and the second is value oriented. Altbach's distinction is also applied for the student politics of Bangladesh. It has both norm oriented and value oriented dimensions. According to him, "A norm-oriented movement is concerned with achieving specific goals whereas a value oriented movement is concerned ideological issues."<sup>25</sup> Thus it can be said that the national liberation movement of Bangladesh was a norm-oriented one and the *Naxalbari* Movement, *Sarbohara* Movement etc. were the value oriented.

It is clear from the above discussion that student politics is generally meant student's organized efforts or movement to protect their rights and interests in the institution and work for the welfare of the academy and for improvement of the learning environment. However, students being much more conscious compared to many other groups of citizens in a developing country, easily get concerned about national issues or socio-economic problems of the country and direct their movements towards those questions.

### 1.3. Discussion

According to Myron Weiner, in virtually all-underdeveloped areas, students have played an active role in politics.<sup>26</sup> In Bangladesh students have always been a significant pressure group and student politics in the past made important contribution to the democratic development of this region. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, student politics played an important role in the struggle for independence from British colonial rule. After creation of Pakistan in 1947, the student community in this part of that country emerged as the principal organ of protest against all sorts of oppression, repression and exploitation that marked the Pakistan rule. Students took up the cause of Bengali rights and interests and fought for the right to practice democracy in their hard-earned homeland. It was students who led the historic Language Movement of 1948-52. Later, students upheld the ideal of language-based Bengali nationalism most enthusiastically. 'Shahid Minar's

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.71

<sup>25</sup> Altbach, *op.cit.*, p.8.

<sup>26</sup> Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago; U. of Chicago Press, 1968), p.158.

were built mainly in educational institutions and students remained the vanguards in performance of the related rituals. Students played a very crucial role in the general elections of 1954 and 1970 when liberal and democratic political forces swept the results. The whole decade of the sixties was marked by student-led political movements against the military autocracy of Ayub Khan (1958-69). They fought for such issues as cultivation of Bangla language and literature, particularly Rabindranath Tagore's songs and writing as well as Bengali culture as a whole, which came under renewed attack from Ayub Khan and his supporters. Students also agitated for liberal, secular and scientific system of education, for adult franchise, for Bengali autonomy under Six-Point Programme (1966) of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975), and for his release from the *Agartala* Conspiracy Case (1967-69). It was students who were the main factors in organizing the mass uprising in 1969 that brought about the fall of Ayub Khan. Lastly, large number of students joined the Liberation War in 1971 in various capacities. Many student leaders of the fifties and sixties emerged as politicians in the 1970 elections and the Liberation War. Their glorious role in all liberal movements in erstwhile East Pakistan and their tremendous sacrifice for the people's rights and liberation made students heroes of independent Bangladesh. In the new country also student movement would play crucial role in throwing away autocratic government and restoring democracy in 1990.

Bangladesh was liberated on 16 December 1971 and Sheikh Mujib, the *Bangabandhu*, returned to the independent country on 10 January 1972. The *Sangbidhan* or Constitution was adopted on 4 November 1972. As pointed out earlier, the Constitution stipulated four basic principles on which the state of Bangladesh would rest and flourish. The first of these was democracy, the great issue for which students and others in erstwhile East Pakistan had fought so long and sacrificed so much. It was natural to expect that student politics in independent Bangladesh would follow a healthy course of development, achieve a lot for national education and for educational institutions, contribute significantly to the country's socio-economic, moral, cultural and intellectual progress, and above all promote the cause of democracy in a great way.

But the expectation was not marked out from before hand to be fulfilled. Soon violence overtook student politics in the Dhaka University, and other institutions



followed the same route. With crisis of democracy in the state system itself, and with ascendancy of coup politics and autocratic rule, the situation again degenerated student politics and also followed the similar route, in lieu of putting up resistance to autocracy and military rule. Back in 1981 Habiba Zaman observed that since liberation students political activities had continued to deteriorate and student indiscipline had increased beyond control. Large-scale disturbances had led to repeated closing down of several universities between 1974 and 1980. "The problem of student indiscipline has caused interruption of normal academic life and has become a major headache for guardians, educationists, university authorities and the government".<sup>27</sup>

Over two decades have passed since Ms. Zaman wrote. By this time the situation has further deteriorated beyond one's imagination. Present day student politics in Bangladesh can be at least partially compared to showdown of death blow violence, which threaten to destroy the foundation of the system of education in the country. Police camps at different points are a common sight on the campuses. General decline of the quality of politics in Bangladesh and constant deterioration of law and order had their impact on student politics. Student organizations in most cases turned into tailpiece of political parties whose leaders are hardly sincere democrats. Political leaders exploit the result of student movements for their own interest as they do use social vile wretch to serve same purpose. Thus student politics came to be employed as an instrument of implementing the depicted strategy of sly political leaders and their ill conducted politics.

In no time, student politics bartered into armed gangsterism. Many anti-socials including professional terrorists got the big hand on many campuses. Residential hall's turned into dwelling place of armed cadres, drug addicts and professional gangsters.

Armed attacks on students, teachers, administrators and visitors became increasingly frequent on the campuses. Fighting besmeared with blood between armed groups of many political parties leading to deaths, injuries, arson, and widespread damage of public and private properties. It caused long and repeated closures of universities and colleges, creating fearful session jams and spreading

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<sup>27</sup> Habiba Zaman, "Patterns of Student Leadership in Rajshahi University" *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies* Vol.5 (1981), 148-49.

despair in the core of the young learners. Such anarchy not only caused serious disruption to academic activities, but also destroyed the environment of democratic practices in academics and student politics. Elections and student bodies remained suspended for many years and democratic spirit went from sight from student organizations themselves. At present student politics, in appearance, is almost the very opposite of democracy in Bangladesh.

This harmful condition cannot have felt from the blue. It must have specific historical origin behind it and have passed through a process of evolution. One thing is too much clear from the previous discussion. And that is counter action must be found out as soon as to contain the unusual matters of today's fearful student politics in Bangladesh. If the nation is to survive along with its cherished values such as democracy, it is, therefore, necessary to search out deeply into the origins of the crisis and find precise unraveling.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

Due to the above-mentioned enigmatic condition of student politics, the study intends to examine the following research questions concerning role of student politics establishing democracy in Bangladesh before and after liberation.

- Why students involve in politics?
- What are the changes that mark off post liberation student politics from that of the Pakistani and British period?
- Which reasons worked behind the nature of the course of that changes?
- Did students play any role to the development of democracy in Bangladesh?
- What's wrong exists with student politics in contemporary Bangladesh?

The general objective of this study is to explore the role of post-liberation student politics in the democratic development of Bangladesh. The following are the specific objectives of the proposed research:

- To find out the causes that work behind the students' involvement in political activities in Bangladesh.
- To explore the historical background of student politics in Bangladesh.
- To explore the historical background of democracy in Bangladesh.

- To identify the change that marks of post liberation student politics from that of British and Pakistan period.
- To determine the nature and course of the changes that have taken place in student politics since liberation.
- To asses the negative and dysfunctional aspects of student politics in contemporary Bangladesh.
- To offer suggestions for the practice of a more healthy student politics in the country.

### 1.5. Justification of the Study

The study is a pioneer research work regarding the role of student politics in establishing democracy in Bangladesh. An attempt has been made in this study to explore the role of the students in the democratic development of the country in the past. At the same time, it seeks to investigate the positive and negative role of the students in the near past of Bangladesh politics. It seeks to find out the real picture of student politics in liberated Bangladesh. It has gone through to explore the history of democracy in Bangladesh. It has analyzed the causes of students' involvement in political activities. A detailed and comparative survey has been made to analysis the causes of students' involvement in political activities. Furthermore, the study enfolds classified and exclusive works on student politics and democracy in Bangladesh, along with many primary and secondary references. Besides, it has attempted for filling up the gap of the classics on student politics including the present day studies as well.

### 1.6. Review of Literature

To understand the practice of democracy in Bangladesh student politics and its role in the democratic process cannot be left uninvestigated. But not many systematic exposures of the subject are to be found in the academic world. However, a few books and articles about various aspects of student's life and activities have been published. Short reviews of these works are given below.

M. Abul Kashem prepared a Ph.D dissertation on the student in East Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> It is a very good account of the student politics and the struggle for self-determination in

<sup>28</sup> M. Abdul Kashem, "History of the Student Movement in East Bengal and East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh), 1947-1969: An Analytical Study." Ph.D thesis submitted to the Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India, 1992.

East Pakistan. However, since it does not cover the Bangladesh period, a complementary work is already overdue. The proposed study is supposed to serve this purpose and Kashem's study will serve as an important secondary source for the background part of the proposed research.

Kashem also published an article<sup>29</sup> on the historical background of the Bangladesh Student Union. He has thoroughly and ably uncovered the roots of the particular student organization. But the article is narrow in the sense that it deals with only one organization. However, it will serve as a secondary source of information regarding the Student Union.

M. Afsaruddin made a short study on student problems at the University of Dhaka in the fifties.<sup>30</sup> He reported that students at the University of Dhaka were more interested in leftist politics. He also drew comparison of DU students with those of the Universities of Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar (in the then West Pakistan) and concluded that students of those Universities were least politicized and least leftist. Period of the study is long past and it has nothing to say about student politics in Bangladesh period. The article will be utilized as a secondary source of information on the 1950s.

*Students and Politics in Developing Nations* edited by Donald K. Emerson<sup>31</sup> contains explorations of political attitudes and behavior of University students in ten countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Emerson emphasizes analysis of student bodies and organization, university structures, climates and impact of campus and national politics. He has given a comparative discussion in the concluding chapter of the book. Although this book included student politics of ten countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America but the politics of Bangladesh was not discussed. This work will be useful in the proposed research for developing a comparative view of student politics.

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<sup>29</sup> Abdul Kassem, "The Historical Background of the Bangladesh Student Union" (Bangladesh Chattra Union Protisthar Oitihāsik Patobhumi: Ekti Porjalochona), *Rajshahi University Studies*, Part A (Arts and Law), Vols.23-24 (1995-96).

<sup>30</sup> M. Afsaruddin, "Note on Research about Student Problem at the University of Dacca" in P. Bessignet (ed.) *Social Research in East Pakistan* (Dhaka; Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1960).

<sup>31</sup> Donald K. Emerson (ed.), *Students and Politics in Developing Nations* (New York; Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1968).

Golam Jilani discussed teacher student relation at the Dhaka University at the beginning of the 1960's.<sup>32</sup> He came to the conclusion that around seventy-five percent of the responding students lost their respects for their teachers. In another study<sup>33</sup> Jilani had observed that politicians used the students to serve their own interests. These studies are about the condition in the fifties and early sixties and therefore cannot have anything on the situation in the Bangladesh period. They may be useful to trace the background of the present theme.

Ellan Sttar made a study of the socio-economic background of Dhaka University student.<sup>34</sup> Her focus being only the socio-economic background of students, she has little to say about their political activities.

Shawkat Ara and Gul-E-Ferdous<sup>35</sup> have studied the attitudes towards student unrest in Bangladesh. They have discussed the matter in the context of *Ses and Sex* differentials. But this study is the outcome of psychological investigation and is silent about the wider range of factors that determine student's political ideas and activities. It may have some use as a secondary source.

Talukder conducted a survey on Rajshahi University Students' role in the Bangladesh liberation struggle.<sup>36</sup> In his report, he has discussed the socio-economic conditions of the students and the nature of their participation in the liberation war as well as the loss of life and property suffered by them. But the 1972 survey has nothing to say about student politics during the period to be covered by the proposed study. How its value as a background source cannot be denied.

Habiba Zaman's article<sup>37</sup> referred to above has exposed the socio-economic background of student leaders, their educational qualifications, annual income of their guardians, their politics and political ritualism, and their opinions about politics and national problems. The time frame of the study is the 1970's, but the present study proposes to cover at least two more decades.

<sup>32</sup> Golam Jilani, *Teacher-Student Relation at the Dacca University* (Dhaka; University of Dhaka, 1961).

<sup>33</sup> Golam Jilani, *An Inquiry into the Factors Influencing the Academic Atmosphere of the Dacca University* (Dhaka; Pakistan Institute of Human Relation, 1956).

<sup>34</sup> Ellen Sattar, *Socio-Economic Background of Dacca University Students* (Dhaka; University Grants Commission, 1975).

<sup>35</sup> Shawkat Ara and Gul-E-Perdous, "A Study on Attitudes Towards Student Unrest in Bangladesh as Related to Ses and Sex Differentials," *The Rajshahi University Studies*, Part-A (Arts, Social Science, Commerce & Law), Vol.XVII, 1989.

<sup>36</sup> A.H. Talukder, *Rajshahi University Students and the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle. A Survey Report*, (Rajshahi; Rajshahi University, 1972).

<sup>37</sup> Habiba Zaman, "Patterns of Student Leadership in Rajshahi University", *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol.5 (1981).

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that none of the publications renewed exclusively deal with student politics in Bangladesh and its impact on democratic practices in that country. An in-depth study of the political activities of the students at centers of higher learning in Bangladesh is therefore imperative in the context of democracy's hazardous journey through last three decades (1972-2002).

### **1.7. Feasibility**

In order to conduct the proposed research, it has been possible to collect required data and information from various sources such as books, journals, dissertation, newspapers, party manifestos of various student and political organizations, pamphlets and so on. It has also been possible to spend adequate time on this purpose. The research was quite feasible at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies. There was reason to believe that the research was quite feasible for the researcher working at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University. Sources were all available inside Bangladesh. Libraries at the IBS and the University of Rajshahi could provide considerable amount of materials. Some six-month's field trip to Dhaka has been enough to collect information related to the student politics and the researcher took some interviews of resource persons. A short visit to Kolkata has been enough to consult some academicians and newspapers. All these exercises have been conveniently conducted from the IBS. The time and finance available to this investigator were sufficient for him to complete the research.

### **1.8. Utility**

The study is expected to generate new knowledge about student politics and its relation with the practice of democracy in the country. The findings should be useful to policy makers in the government as well as in the academies. Politicians, student leaders, university authorities and others can derive benefit from the findings of the research. The academic value of the study cannot be overestimated. The investigation will certainly widen the horizon of existing literature in the area of Political Science and thus be useful to students and teachers of as writers and researchers on Bangladesh politics and institutional problems.

## **1.9. Estimate**

The foregoing discussion in this section proved that the research is fully justified in view of the lacuna existing in the present body of knowledge, the wide-ranging usefulness of the findings, and the feasibility of the undertaking.

## **1.10. Scope of the Study**

Only one institution, Rajshahi University and its surrounding areas, is included in the study. This institution is large in size and represents wide variety of students and elaborate administrative system. Information collected from this institution is expected to be comprehensive and representative of the whole of Bangladesh. However, it is clear from the selection that the study is concerned with students and institution engaged in Western style secular education.

## **1.11. Focus**

The study has concentrated on student politics and its relationship with democracy as practiced in the wider political system of Bangladesh. Contextually it has dealt into such issues as unrest on campuses, terrorist attacks in academics, closures of institutions and session jams. It has also taken note of the politics of groups on campus such as teachers, administrators, and general employees as far as those have any relevance to student politics. But the study has, in no way, dealt with other academic or institutional questions like curricula system of examination and evolution, administrative problems, privatization of education etc. This study has of necessity, examined the theory and practice of democracy at different levels of government in social and political organizations, as well as in institutional and professional associations. Then it has tried to see the interaction, if any, between student politics and the democratic culture in those bodies. The mainstream political development and democratic experiments in Bangladesh has received a schemed treatment in order to determine mutual influences that might have taken place between students politics and the cultivation of democracy in the larger milieu. Beyond these lines, the study has not gone for a general political history of the period, nor has it touched upon issues that are not related to the question of democracy or student politics.

## **1.12. Methodology**

Research method connotes logical principles guiding scientific investigation for acquirement of knowledge. It involves techniques of collection of data or information, ways of analysis of those data, mode of interpretation, and the art of writing the report or thesis. For collection of data the first thing to do is to identify the sources likely to yield information necessary for the proposed study.

### **1.12.1. Sources**

The sources of information for a research are usually of two kinds: primary and secondary. Primary sources are those that are directly or immediately associated with the subject of study. Sources, which are not directly and immediately related to the subject, but serve, as intermediate agents between the subject of study and the researcher are considered secondary. In terms of value, both kinds of sources are important as they are complementary to each other and together they produce the necessary data and supply clues of interpretation.

In the present study, primary sources have included original documents such as party constitutions, party manifestos, proceeding of party meetings, party press releases, propaganda materials like pamphlets, posters and advertisements. On the other hand the topic being concerned with recent and contemporary history, many people directly associated with the proposed subject of study are still alive and/or actively present on the scene. These included (former or present) student leaders, political figures, teacher, academic administrators, government officers concerned with higher education, as well as personnel and agencies engaged in maintenance of law and order on campuses. These special people also constituted a sort of primary source of information for this study. Books, journals, research reports, newspapers, thesis memoirs and other published and unpublished documents containing anything concerning the proposed topic have been considered as secondary sources. These are either later writings or writings by people not directly involved in the events and ideas stated in the documents.

### **1.12.2. Method of Research**

Both historical and empirical methods have been utilized to collect data from the sources and interpret them in true historical light. Information from written



documents, whether primary or secondary, have been picked up through the historical method that primarily constituted of taking various kinds of notes.

Empirical method, on the other hand, has included interviewing of resource persons and questionnaire survey among such people. Responses to oral interviews and answers to the questionnaires have been expected to yield quite a good deal of information.

After collecting data from primary and secondary sources, it has been duly evaluated and analyzed. Internal criticism has been employed to ensure accuracy and objectivity. Unbiased treatment of material has been strictly maintained throughout. Data have been arranged in tabular form after checking and editing. Statistical tables have been used wherever appropriate. Comparative evaluation, logical argument, critical reasoning and rational judgment along with statistical tools and tables, have ensured valid interpretation.

### **1.13. Expected Results**

After completion, the research is expected to give a clear picture of the past and present of student politics in Bangladesh and offer suggestions for a better policy of student politics in the country. It also revealed the relation between campus politics and the democratic practices in general. Experts, teachers, university authorities, politicians, guardians and the nation as a whole will find the research useful. Academically, the study is expected to produce a dissertation, which may help the researcher to earn a doctorate degree thus contributing to his career growth.

### **1.14. Chapter Scheme of the Study**

The result of the exercise has been presented in a dissertation written in English and following a structured design. The study consists of six chapters. The chapter scheme of the study is presented below.

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## Chapter 2

# Democracy in Bangladesh: A Historical Sum-up

### 2.1 Introduction

With the collapse of autocratic ruler General Ershad, Bangladesh entered into a new era. The country's people first enjoyed and exercised their citizen's rights after the fall of Ershad regime in 1990. Bangladesh has a very rich history of struggle for democracy in the past. The people of this country fought for democracy for almost twenty-four years in the Pakistan period (1947-1971). After the independence of the country in 1971, the country's people realized the true nature and benefit of democracy. People much wanted parliamentary system of democracy, was enshrined in the constitution of 1972 but it turn out to be a one party monolithic system within two years.<sup>1</sup> Later, Bangladesh saw the 'bureaucratic military' oligarchy by General Zia and General Ershad respectively.

Democracy, the last forms of government, has turn into a megatrend. Bangladesh accumulated momentums and aspirations towards democratization over the years. So, Bangladesh achieved democracy in a curvy way rather than a straightforward way. So democracy in Bangladesh can be termed as both 'Challenges' and 'opportunities'. This chapter seeks to explore the history of democracy in Bangladesh in brief.

#### 2.1.1 British Colonial Legacy

The British East India Company, the only successful aspirant and conspirator, conquered the greater Bengal both East and West through its first conflict with the Nawab of Bengal and the conflict resulted in the Battle of Plassey. East India Company began its rule in Bengal in 1765 when Robert Clive achieved the 'fir man' granting *Dewani* Right from the fugitive Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II for the Bengal Presidency to the East India Company. For guiding itself and administering the Bengal Presidency from 1765 to 1855, the company made some acts and charters. The British Company also settled its rights of trade in Bengal as one of the parts of India by acts and charters, which formed the first part of the constitutional development and the growth of democracy and democratic institutions in this part of

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<sup>1</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *Democracy and the Challenge of Development: A Study of Politics and Military Interventions in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1995), pp.5-10.

India. But after the great Rebellion of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British Government felt the necessity of taking over power on the administration of Bengal directly in its own hands. After passing the Government of India Act 1858, the administrative power was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown. Through this Act Bengal was governed by the British Crown till before the succession of the new states of India and Pakistan from the era of colonization. So it can be said that the period from 1858 to 1947 was a period of significant landmark in the history of constitutional development and the growth of Democracy and its institutions in Bengal.

The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, became a puppet in the hands of East India Company in 1765 after the Battle of Baxar which was held in 1764. During this time, Clive who received the "Dewani Right" of Bengal established 'Dual Government' in Bengal. This step of Clive brought in Bengal disastrous results. It completely ruined the administration of Bengal and the financial position of the company had been poor. In point of such a situation the company was obliged to seek an economic grant as loan from the British Government. The British Government became surprised because of this situation. None of British could imagine that the company was running under the financial loss.<sup>2</sup> To face this situation the Regulating Act, 1773 was made in the British Parliament.

The Regulating Act, 1773 is considered as the beginning of the constitutional development in the history of Bengal in British India although there were causing many shortcomings and defects. As P. Roberts calls it "a half measure disastrously vague in many points."<sup>3</sup> It did not make a good and smooth system, which could be more efficient and effective in the administration in Bengal. By this Act, the British Government made a field of parliamentary interference in the affairs of the Company once again. To eliminate and remove these shortcomings and defects of this Act, the British Government passed the "Amending Act of 1781" with some changes. But it did not work smoothly. Another famous bill on India was introduced to remove the defects of the Act of 1773 and 1781 in the British Parliament in 1784 named Pitt's India Act.

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<sup>2</sup> In that time it was seen the some servants of the East India Company who were returning to England loaded with gold and some other valuable goods. For this reason, it became surprising to the British.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Ganeswar Nayak, *A Study of Modern Indian History, 1757-1947* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Private Ltd., 2003), p.372.

Pitt's India Act brought two significant changes in the company's constitution. Firstly, the Company and Parliamentary Board introduced a dual system of Government. Secondly, it abetted the number of members from 4 to 3 in the Executive Council. The most significant provision of this act was to prohibit all aggressive wars in India, which were the marks of political compromise between Indians and British.

The Beginning of a parliamentary system in Bengal as in India was marked with the "legislation of the Charter Act" of 1853. The Act also pointed out that the company rule could not last long time in Indian sub-continent. Separation of Executive council from legislative council was the other prominent feature. It relieved Governor General of his Administrative duties. The Governor General was also devoted his whole time to work for the Government of India.

In the wake of sepoy mutiny, the British passed the Government of India Act in 1858 for the further development. It made the end of the company rule in India and transferred the administration of India to the British Crown of British Empire. This act was passed to establish the ministerial responsibility in governmental system and to abolish the company rule in India in point of the demands of the common people and the impact of liberalism. People insisted to adopt this principle both in India and England.

The Government of India Act 1858 opened a new chapter in the history of India which set the rule of British crown controlled by British parliament through a Secretary of State in India. The double system, established by the Pitt's India Act, was abolished. It enhanced the power of secretary of state for India and his council and discarded the policy of lapse and annexations. The expansion of the Governor General's Executive Council resulted in the evolving of the Legislative Council's. It happened immediately after the great political upheaval and revolution of 1857. In that time, a need of the representations of Indian opinion in the Governor General's Council (Legislative Council) was deeply felt. The statement of Sir Bartle Frere in the British Parliament in 1860 was highly valuable. He said:<sup>4</sup>

It is a great evil of the present system that 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 oppositions.

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<sup>4</sup> Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms 1918, p.38, Quoted in G.W. Chowdhury, *Democracy in Pakistan* (Canada: University of British Columbia, 1963), p.2.

It is easily understood from the opinion of Sir Bartle Frere that the feelings for the need of representation of Indian opinion in the Legislative Council were the demand of that time. Because of this reason, the Indian Council Act of 1861 was made in the British Parliament. It took an initiative to introduce an element of Indian opinion in the Council of Governor General. A provision was made in the council Act of 1861 for the enlargement of the Governor-General's Executive Councils (GGEC) to form a Legislative Council (L.C). It was important landmark in the constitutional history of India. G.W. Chowdhury described the enlargement of the GGEC to form L.C. as the genesis of the Legislative bodies in the Indian sub-continent.<sup>5</sup> Ganeshwar Nayak called it as 'Benevolent Despotism'.<sup>6</sup> Because most of the members of the council were officials and the groups of the minority members in the Council were the groups of nominated non-officials who only met for legislative purposes. It may be cleared from the Report of the Simon Commission. In this Report, as the commission made clear,

It would be a mistake to think of the Legislative Council' established under the Act of 1861 as miniature Parliaments or as containing the germ of responsible institutions. Their functions, indeed, were strictly limited to legislation, which was in practice initiated by the Executive, and they were expressly forbidden to transact any business except the consideration and enactment of legislative measures.<sup>7</sup>

In fact the Act failed of introducing the measures of knowing the wishes of the Indian people. Because, members of the council did not represent the Indian's opinion, mostly they were princes or big landlords. R Coupland Commented rightly. He remarked that, "these councils were akin to the durbars, which Indian rulers had traditionally held in order to sound their subject opinion."<sup>8</sup>

Virtually, there were no powers of Legislative Council regarding legislation or controlling the executives. Even it did not serve any useful purpose. But the only thing in favour of this Act was that the Act of 1861 made a beginning of the legislature in India both at the centre and the provinces.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> The word 'Benevolent' has been used because the Indians of that time were allowed to be associated with the administration of the country and 'Despotism' has been used because the Government in India remained irremovable as before. See-Nayak, *op.cit.*, p.374.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, 1930, Vol. I, p.115.*

<sup>8</sup> R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India* (London; Oxford University Press, 1944), p.21.

After the enactment of the Indian Council Act of 1861, an intensive feeling of Indian nationalism grew among the people. Indians became more conscious of their rights. They also became more cautious regarding the exploitation by the British through free trade. It made economic disparity and increased discontent in the sphere of socio-economic and politico-affairs in the country. In this time, the Congress Organization was founded in 1885. Indian people felt to make reformations in administration. They demanded representation in the governmental bodies. These demands gained momentum at that time. In point of people's demand Lord Dufferin sent a letter in 1884 to British Government in regard to make some reformations. The British Parliament passed the Indian Council Act of 1892 after a heavy and long debate in the parliamentary session. This was the further important development of the legislative bodies, which recognized Indian advice and criticism in the history of colonial democracy. During passing this law the British authorities told that, 'our laws have positively benefited by Indian advice and criticism, let us have more of it and if possible, let the people chose the men they send to advice us.'<sup>9</sup> This Act brought the element of election to the Indian Legislative Council into practice for the first time through a parliamentary way.

The act of 1892 extended the powers, functions and composition of the Legislative Councils in India. It increased the strength of the additional members in both Central and Provincial Legislative Council. In the sphere of Legislative Council of Bengal the maximum number of additional members was settled at 20. Two fifths of these additional members were non-official and they were partly nominated and partly elected.

It gave right to the member of the councils to debate on the annual financial statements under some restrictions. But the members could not get the opportunity to discuss the matters and they had no power of voting.<sup>10</sup> Lord Nathaniel Curzon (1899-1905), the Viceroy commented sharply on these provisions. He pointed out, "It is not contemplated to vote the budget in India item by item in manner in which we do it in this house (House of Commons). But it is proposed to give opportunities to the members of the council to indulge in a full, free and fair criticism of the new financial policy of the government".<sup>11</sup> President of the Council could disallow any

<sup>9</sup> *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918*, p.141; G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in G.W. Chowdhury, *ibid.*, pp.3-4.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Nayak, *op.cit.*, p.382.



question of the member on the matters of public interest without giving any reason. In the Councils an official majority was maintained and there was still no approach to a parliamentary system of government.

In the sphere of Bengal Provincial Council most of the non-official seats were fulfilled by the recommendations of the recommending bodies. For passing the Act the British Government illustrated intelligibly the importance of the provision about the representation. An authority of British Government stated that "where corporations have been established with definite powers upon a recognized administrative basis or where Associations have been formed upon a substantial community of legitimate interest, professional, commercial or territorial, the Governor-General and the local Governors might find it convenient and advantageous in consulting from time to time such bodies, and entertaining at their discretion and expression of their views and recommendations with regard to the selection of the members in whose qualifications they might be disposed to confide."<sup>12</sup>

The function of the nominating bodies was only recommendation. Direct election of the non-official members was avoided scrupulously. As one of the means of democracy, the word 'election' was never used in the statute of the Act. Election system provided under the Act was different from the usual election process. Regarding election it is said in the Act was that, "it will be possible for the Governor-General to make arrangements by which certain persons may be presented to him, having been chosen by election, if the Governor-General should find that such a system can properly be established."<sup>13</sup>

In fact, 'the Indian Council Act of 1892' was an effort to make a settlement between the official view of the council as 'pocket legislature' and the educated Indian view of them as 'embryo parliament.' It was definitely a great step to develop democratic institutions and more better than the Act of 1861. The Indian Council Act of 1892 could not pacify the Indian public opinion. In the case of this Act, it would be exact comment as Charles Aitchison pointed out, "As a mere arena of expose facto debate, councils were little else than mischievous."<sup>14</sup> The Indian public opinion became angry because of these reasons and of the decisions of the partition of

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in G.W. Chowdhury, *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> quoted in Nayak, *op.cit.*, p.383.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Bengal. At the same time, the rise of the extremism developed within the All India Congress, which led Indians for further struggle against the British rule. It ultimately resulted in the demand of Indians very soon for another constitutional reforms in this country.

The intervening seventeen years, from 1892 to 1909, British Government in India faced a number of problems which were responsible for passing the 'Indian Council Act of 1909. That was the time of a great political unrest. Intolerant 'Hinduism', sullen and wide spread dissatisfaction of the Indian people, discontent political situation, influences and activities of 'Extremist' were causing considerable worries and anxieties to the British authorities in India. According to Lord Minto, the viceroy, the political situation was "heavy and electric".<sup>15</sup> This widely disseminated political unrest resulted in a number of repressive measures. In fact, the authors of the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 were not merely concerned with repressive measures.<sup>16</sup> They were anxious to take steps for improving the political situation in India.<sup>17</sup> This desire of the authors to give recognition to the new awakening in India finally resulted in the Morely Minto Reforms of 1909 described as 'laying a foundation of Self-Government in India.' In case of making the Reforms of 1909, Lord Morely and Lord Minto hoped:

To blend the principle of autocracy derived from the Moghul emperors and the Hindu Kings with the principle of constitutionalism derived from the British Crown and Parliament; to create a constitutional autocracy which differing *toto coctu* from Asiatic despotism, should bind itself to govern by rule, should call to its Councils representatives of all interests which were Capable of being represented and should merely reserve to itself in the form of a narrow majority predominant and absolute power.<sup>18</sup>

So, it can be said that this was the logical argument and philosophy behind the Morley Minto Reforms of 1909. There were some salient features of the 1909 reforms. One of the most important provisions of the reforms was related with the enlargement of the representative elements in the Imperial Legislative Councils and

<sup>15</sup> G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> The repressive measures were-the Seditious Meeting Act of 1908, the Explosive Substance Act of 1908, the Newspaper (incitement to offences) Act and the Criminal Laws (amendment) Act. The British Government enacted these laws to face the political unrest and to suppress the Indian masses.

<sup>17</sup> G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.4.

<sup>18</sup> *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918*, p.48.

the extension of its power and functions. It increased the number of additional members from 16 to 60.

Among them not more than 28 were official and the remaining were not only non-officials but were also elected. Election process was partly direct and partly indirect.<sup>19</sup>

The Morley-Minto Reforms extended the functions and powers of the Imperial Legislative Council in the sphere of the discussion of budget. For the first time, a procedure was provided by which the members of council were enable to discuss the budget before the budget was finally settled. Provision related to budget excluded the political, provincial and military affairs as well as some other matters discussion. The budget was not submitted to the vote of the Council.<sup>20</sup>

The other most important subject of the Reforms was the enlargement of the representative's body in the Provincial Councils and the increase of its function. The provincial Legislative Councils consisted of official and non-official members as like as the Imperial Legislative Council. Non-official block could be sub-divided into elected members and non-official nominated members. In case of Provincial Council the official majority was given up.<sup>21</sup> Governor General could withhold any bill passed by Provincial Council. The Jurisdiction power of Provincial Legislative Councils was extremely limited. In the sphere of Bengal, the elected members had clear majority. Majority additional members were non-officials and elected by the group of local bodies, large landholders, trade associations, special interest and universities. This reform introduced the system of communal and class representations of various communities, classes and interests.

Another distinct feature of the Reforms of 1909 was matters related with public interest could be moved for discussion in the Legislative Council with numerous restrictions. In the Central Legislature, Governor General, the president of the Council, could disallow any resolution as inconsistent with public interest and the interest of good Government.

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<sup>19</sup> Muzaffar Ahmed Chaudhuri, *Government and Politics in Pakistan* (Dhaka; Puthigar Ltd., 1968), p.102.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>21</sup> In most of the cases of Provincial Legislative Councils, the official and nominated members could form a majority; G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.6.

The authors of the Reforms were absolutely emphatic to disclaim the idea of introducing British Parliamentary institutions in India. In December 1908 in the House of Lords. Lord Morley in a frequent passage said, "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it. Parliamentary system is not at all the goal to which I would for one moment aspire."<sup>22</sup> In fact, he wanted to transplant the 'spirit of English Institutions' in India but not its form. The supporters of the reforms announced that India was not yet qualified for a parliamentary system. But the 'spirit of English Institutions could not be separated from the form for a long time. Whatever it is, the Acts marked a distinctive sign and significant change in the evolution of representative institutions in our country. The authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report observed that the reforms of 1909 did constitute "a decided step forward on a road leading at no distant period to a stage at which questions of responsible government was bound to present itself."<sup>23</sup> The Morley-Minto Reforms unfolded a very important chapter in the history of British-India relations. It turned over a fresh leaf in the history of British responsibility to India."

Virtually, the reforms of 1909 began its journey with high hopes. But it failed to satisfy the Indians who were seek for self-government. The reforms were the ultimate results of the old conception of the Indian Council Act of 1861 which made the Government of India a benevolent despotism which might as it saw fit for purposes of enlightenment consult the wishes of its subjects.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Gokhale, one of the great Indian Leader, gave an account of the reforms as changing the form of the bureaucratic character of the Government and making elected representatives responsible association with the administration. The high hopes which the authors of the reform entertained and great Indian leaders like Gokhale were belied in a short time.<sup>25</sup> None of the reformers and Indian leaders could pacify the hunger for self-government. They also could not mitigate the political unrest in India. The reform of 1909 had spent its utility after nine years and the ultimate of the reforms was in the Montagu-Chelmsford report.

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Coupland, *op.cit.*, p.126.

<sup>23</sup> *Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Constitutional Reforms 1918*, p.58.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52

<sup>25</sup> G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.8.

The Indians soon expressed their dissatisfaction on the limited reforms of 1909, described as mere 'moon-shine'.<sup>26</sup> The reforms of 1909 could not pacify the moderate visions of self-rule as well as could not minimize the demand for self-government of nationalists. The demand for self-rule and self-government, the impact of First World War of 1914-1918, the two-fold policy of limited reforms and repression by British Government caused to develop another movement for self-government in India. This led the British Govt. to look at Indian problems from a new 'angle of vision'.<sup>27</sup> The British Government took a step for satisfying the Indian elements and increasing demand for the introduction of responsible-government in India recognized in many quarters within and outside the India at the end of second decade of twentieth centuries. Without these causes, the wages of First World War for making the world 'safe for democracy' raised new hopes in India for self-rule and self-government. In this time, the main political parties, Indian Congress and the Muslim League, advised British Government strongly for issuing a proclamation declaring that "the aim and intention of the British Government was to confer on India self-rule at an early date."<sup>28</sup> Montague made the long expected declaration which was one of the most important momentous ever made in the chequered history of India on 20 August 1917 in the House of Commons. He declared:

The policy of his Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians on every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.<sup>29</sup>

Soon after the declaration Montague came to India with an object of determining the steps for introducing responsible government. Montague and his colleague, Lord Chelmsford, jointly published their report on constitutional reforms in July 1918. It was the first comprehensive study, which had been made of the various problems of Indian Government. The Government of India Act, 1919, was mainly based on the M/C Report, 1918. The Act of 1919 provided a number of measures for introducing responsible government in India. It provided a measure of evolution of authority from

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in G.W. Chowdhury, *Ibid.*, p.11.

centre to the provinces in a precise and legal form for the implementation of the principles of responsible government.<sup>30</sup>

This Act 1919 replaced down the provincial government. It divided the provincial subjects into two halves reserved half and transferred half. The Governor and his Executive Council administered the reserved subjects but they had no responsibility to the legislature. The ministers in the provinces who were elected by the Governor were made responsible to the legislature. In the provincial executive, this dual government was known as 'Diarchy'.<sup>31</sup>

The India Act, 1919 enlarged the Provincial Legislative Councils. In Bengal, It increased the number of the members to 140. Among them not less than 70 percent were elected members and not more than 20 percent were official and the rest were of nominated non-official members. It also extended the franchise on the basis of lowering property qualification. It provided the system of separate electorates for the representation of minority communities or interests and representation of selected individuals.

This Act specified the functions and role of the Legislative Councils. The functions and role were to control and to make influence over the transferred reserved administration. In spite of the position of the Legislative Council the governor was enabled to secure needful legislation, was empowered to demand close discussion at any stage of any bill, clause or amendment. Last of all he was also empowered to dissolve the Legislature at any moment or he was enable to extend the legislature for one year.

Turning to the centre, this Act set up a provision of a bicameral legislature, consisting of two chambers, Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of States. With these two chambers, the Governor General was also the important part of the Indian Legislature. The Central Legislative Assembly consisted of 145 members. There was a provision of 105 elected and 40 nominated members. Nominated members were bifurcated into two halves, i.e. officials and nominated non-officials. Separate electorates elected representatives of the different communities.<sup>32</sup> The council of states consisted of 33 elected and 27 nominated members. The lifetime of

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<sup>30</sup> See details in Muzaffer Ahmed, Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p.104.

<sup>31</sup> Nayak, *op.cit.*, p.387.

<sup>32</sup> Communal electors were first set up in the case of Muslims in 1909 and them it was extended to different communities by the Act of 1919.

the Central Legislative Assembly was 3 years and the duration of the council of states was 2 years. Central Legislature could make laws for all persons, courts, places and things within the whole British India. But there were certain restrictions.<sup>33</sup>

In the subsequent parts of the effort, the British government attempted to introduce the principles of responsible government in India by expanding the legislative bodies both in Centre and in Provinces. With the gradual development of the Legislative Council, the British Government simultaneously took initiative to develop election system in India making the Act of 1919 and 1935. In the meantime, two political party-Congress and Muslim League were formed in 1885 and 1906 respectively. These political parties tried to accelerate the process of development of responsible institutions in India. For expanding the franchise, the property qualification was lowered down so that 10 percent of the total population could be enfranchised. But the real scenario was different. There were only 3 percent of the population was enfranchised under the Act of 1919.<sup>34</sup> Under this Act only four provincial elections were held. After enactment of the 1936 Act 14 percent population was enfranchised and two provincial elections were held under this Act. But it should be mentioned here that because of higher property qualification, the franchisement was "extremely limited" among the Muslims.<sup>35</sup>

Another remarkable development took place when the provincial elections of 1937 and 1946 were held in the country. In these provincial elections, franchise was extended and a few newly emerged political parties took part. In the 1937 provincial elections, Congress, Muslim League and Krishak Proja Party (KPP) participated and they obtained 50, 40 and 35 seats out of 228 seats respectively in the Legislative Council.<sup>36</sup> In the 1946 elections Muslim League swept 115 seats and Congress 84 seats out of 250.<sup>37</sup> By these elections, Muslim League became a winning force. Parties, individuals and groups got the opportunity in both the elections to contest for power. But the main problem was that the common people were not ultimate deciders in the process of contest because the franchise was, in fact, limited to a

<sup>33</sup> *Indian Act of 1919*, see. 65(2), (3).

<sup>34</sup> Talukder Moniruzzaman, *The Politics of Development: The Case of Pakistan (1947-1958)*, (Dhaka: Green Book House Limited, 1971), p.27

<sup>35</sup> Md. Abdul Mannan, *Elections and Democracy in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2005), p.25.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> S.K. Chakrabarti, *The Evolution of Politics in Bangladesh, 1947-1978* (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1978), p.18.

very selected few. For this reason, it can be said that absence of the participation of ordinary people based on political equality made the contest in the election quite meaningless.

From the study of parliamentary institutions in Indian Sub-continent it can be said along with the Indian Statutory Commission: 'The First essential for a correct understanding of the relations of the Central Government with the Central Legislature in India is to divest the mind of analogies drawn from the British Parliamentary System.'<sup>38</sup> Many free institutions, which were modeled, or either the British System or Dominion system were not functioning properly in India. The Government enacted by Executive Council rather than the laws and regulations. The Executive body called on additional members only to discuss and pass the proposed enactment.

After the Reforms Act of 1919, basic system of parliamentary government was introduced in the provinces, which was enlarged and extended under the Act of 1935. All these measures did not make a full-fledged responsible government. The Act of 1935 allowed the Governor-General to exert his power like that of General De Gaulle's-constitution. But the power of Governor-General or Governor differs from a constitutional figurehead in the parliamentary system. In fact, the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform observed, "They (special powers) represent a retention of power as substantial and as fully endorsed by the law as the vested by the Constitution of the United States in the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Army-but more extensive both in respect of their scope and in respect of the circumstances in which they can be brought into play."<sup>39</sup>

The validity of these facts cannot be doubted or challenged as the Simon Commission or the Joint Select Committee as a shield to grasp power in the peculiar circumstances in undivided India used those. In fact, the recent advancements in the parliamentary systems in the new Asian countries have proved some the observations and statements made by the authors of those valuable documents. But the concept of responsible government either by installments or a process of gradualism seemed to have been achieved opposite result by the recent developments in new democracies in Asia.

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<sup>38</sup> *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. II, p.235.

<sup>39</sup> *Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, 1934, p.12.



The Parliamentary Form of Government failed because our country was not so much accustomed to it. Furthermore, this form of Government arouses controversy over the suitability of the presidential system in Pakistan. The Pakistan constitution commission reached the same conclusion: "It is not correct to say that we have been used to the British type of Parliamentary form for a long time. Government of the Parliamentary pattern was introduced only when independence was gained."<sup>40</sup> On the contrary, the existing system before independence was based on the theory of a 'Strong Executive' rather than on any idea of Parliamentary. The system was perfect in its kind and might be regarded as 'Vice regal'.

## 2.2. Struggle for Democracy in Pakistan

Pakistan became an independent state in 1947. Pakistan followed Islamic ideology to establish "a fully democratic government".<sup>41</sup> Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan stated, "the new state would be a modern democratic state, with sovereignty resting in the people and the members of the new nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless their religion, caste or creed."<sup>42</sup> Following the British model Pakistan adopted the parliamentary system of government on the basis of universal suffrage. In order to insert democracy as basic principle, the Constituent Assembly was formed. Jinnah assumed the post of the Governor General instead of the Prime Minister, despite the system of the government was parliamentary. As Jinnah was Quaid-i-Azam (the great leader), the father of the nation. He "was much more than a constitutional head of the new state."<sup>43</sup> Jinnah "was Pakistan" until his death.<sup>44</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan was appointed as the Prime Minister of the state, but he proved himself as a figurehead. Jinnah concentrated all power in his head. Both these leaders were inexperienced in Administration of the newly born state. So it arrested the development of democracy.

Pakistan emerged as diverse country as it varied in social, linguistically and ethno-cultural, despite the fact that most of the inhabitants of this country were Muslims. The distance between East Bengal and West Pakistan was more than thousand

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in G.W. Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.29.

<sup>41</sup> Mustaq Ahmed, *Government and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1963), p.17.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.25.

<sup>43</sup> Mustaq Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.21.

<sup>44</sup> Khalid Bin Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan* (Dhaka: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.62.

miles. East Bengal was densely populated and culturally homogeneous. On the contrary, West Pakistan was sparsely populated and culturally heterogeneous.<sup>45</sup> The South Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures and heritages shaped East Bengal and West Pakistan value systems respectively. So there was always a huge gap between the two different populations.

The first clash arises between the Bengalis and the West Pakistan with the issue of the state language. 56.6% people of the total population of Pakistan spoke in Bangla, whereas only 7.4% spoke in Urdu. But West Pakistan's elite group tried to impose Urdu as a state language on Bengalis. Some students of Dhaka University protested against this and laid their lives in 1952, known as language movement. Mr. Jinnah wanted to establish an egalitarian society irrespective of castes and creeds. But Bengalis demanded Bangla as a state language. The language issue had a prolonged effect on the relationship between the two parts of Pakistan along with development of democratic institutions. Fazlul Hoque labeled Jinnah's ruling as "the autocracy of a single individual."<sup>46</sup>

West Pakistan exploited East Bengal in regards to economics and left Bengalis economically backward. West Pakistan elites made the gap between the two wings of Pakistan in many respects rather than bridge the gap.<sup>47</sup> They deprived Bengalis of the worthwhile posts and positions in the state. Cultural discrimination, economic exploitation and low representation in the military and civil services made the Bengalis rebellious. As a result, demand for regional autonomy arose. But the West Pakistani elites along with their East Pakistani allies were not sincere to create a democratic system which might thwart their coterie interests.

Pakistani ruling elites could not make a constitution for the country until 1956. But this constitution could not or was not allowed to function properly. The ruling power elites did not hold any general election until 1970. So, a scholar stated that it was a democracy without election.<sup>48</sup> The first provincial election was held on March 8, 1954 on the basis of universal suffrage. All political parties and individuals were allowed to participate and as many as 16 parties participated in the election. United Front, headed by some vernacular elites rallied against the hegemony of Muslim

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<sup>45</sup> Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.26.

<sup>46</sup> Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, p.17.

<sup>47</sup> See detailed picture of disparity between two wings of Pakistan in Appendix-3.

<sup>48</sup> Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.27.

League. The Front consisted of the Krishak Sramik Party (KSP), Awami League, Nizam-i-Islam and some small groups. The main demand of the front was the materialization of the 21-point programme including the autonomy of East Bengal, recognition of Bangla as a state language, abolition of the *zamindari* system, nationalization of Jute industry, etc.

The election was competitive and participation in it was also "fairly high" (65% voter turnout).<sup>49</sup> The United Front won as many as 223 seats. The election result was considered as the victory of the Bengalis against the West Pakistani non-democratic measures that the power elites employed since the inception of the country. The Pakistan elites allowed the Front government a few weeks to function and imposed the Governor General's rule in East Bengal on May 29, 1954. In the same year in October, Governor General Gulam Mohammad dismissed the constituent Assembly and declared the state of emergency throughout the country. By doing this, they nipped an elected body in the bud.

The traditional rulers in the subcontinent organized their administration on military line, but political involvement of the military was almost an uncommon trend. Pakistan Army followed the British tradition and remained indifferent to Politics until 1952. In 1953 when Punjab crisis arose, the Army was invited to maintain law and order of the country. It was the "first taste of power" for the Pakistan Army.<sup>50</sup> The appointment of General Ayub Khan, the then commander-in-chief, as the Minister of Defense and Major General Iskandar Mirza as the Interior Minister in 1954 may be termed as the beginning of military's political involvement.<sup>51</sup>

Amidst political turmoil, the first general election in Pakistan was scheduled for 1959. The Military anticipated Bengalis prospect of winning the election that would foil the change of Iskandar Mirza "to be re-elected as president."<sup>52</sup> Ayub Khan described the pre-1958 politics of Pakistan as "a free for all type of fighting."<sup>53</sup> But instead of holding the scheduled election Pakistan Army took power in 1958 and imposed martial law. Ayub Khan assumed power and followed his politically Iskandar Mirza's

<sup>49</sup> G.W. Chowdhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1974), p.131.

<sup>50</sup> Asgar Khan, *Generals in Politics: Pakistan 1958-1982* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1983), p.4.

<sup>51</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy, Participation and Opposition* (London: Yale University Press, 1971), p.3.

<sup>52</sup> Khan, *op.cit.*, p.6.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.30.

concept of democracy. Later on, he introduced a new type of democracy, which is known as Basic Democracy. It was four-fold administrative system in which the Union Councils (in rural areas), Town and Union Committees (in Urban Areas) played a vital role from the representation point of view. The people based on universal adult franchise elected the union council members. The elected members of the union councils would elect the president of the Pakistan and members of both the central and provincial legislatures. So in this process, the ordinary voter had nothing to do except choosing members of the Union Councils.

Ayub Khan attempted to give a constitutional shape in order to consolidate his power. He appointed Chief Justice Mr. Shahabuddin for this purpose in 1961 and a constitution was made in the following year. But a scholar as "constitutional autocracy" described the rule that was put forward in the 1962 constitution which is comparable to "the British vice regal system".<sup>54</sup> Ayub Khan, for his own sake capitalized on Islam and stated, "Without centralization, unity and solidarity no system can claim to be an Islamic System."<sup>55</sup> The President enjoyed and exercised enormous power and he became the constitutional dictator as far as the constitution is concerned.

Ayub Khan held negative views of politics. He firmly believed that political parties were responsible for pre-1958 political crisis. He was obstinate to revive the party politics that was banned in 1958. He reformed Pakistan Muslim League and became its president in 1963. The revival of the party politics cannot be granted as a step towards developing representative institution as the measure could neither promote the people to take part in politics nor could it ensure meaningful contestation for power. On the other hand, Ayub consolidated the prevailing repressive measures and introduced new ones to suppress the opposition.

Following the example of military leaders, Ayub first objective was to establish his personal legitimacy. For that purpose, he held a Referendum on the Presidency in January 1960. In the Referendum there were 75,084 numbers of "yes votes" and 2,827 "No votes" out of 77,911 valid votes.<sup>56</sup> In this way, General Ayub Khan became the first elected President of Pakistan. No campaign against such a step was allowed under martial law.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>55</sup> Sayeed. *op.cit.*, p.101.

<sup>56</sup> Chowdhuri, *op.cit.*, p.296.

In order to legitimize and consolidate his personal position as well as the regime, Ayub moved forward further elections. In this manner, the first general election under the Basic Democracy system was held in 1964-1965 in three stages: first, electoral college election; second, Presidential election and third; legislative election. In order to elect the Electoral College, the election to the union councils was held on non-party basis. It was remarkably significant although it was a local election as the Electoral College for the Presidential and legislative elections was elected through this process. Elections of all levels were held under the Martial Law of Ayub Khan in which all political parties were banned except in National Assembly Election. Result of the elections went in favour of Ayub and his regime. In fact the elections' results reflected as Chowdhury writes, "a big gap between the verdict of the people and actual results of the election."<sup>57</sup>

It is true to say that there were shortcomings of Ayub's much-vaunted institutional innovation, "Basic Democracies" which was being designed primarily as device for depoliticizing the people. Ayub's innovation failed to develop legitimate political institutions and that could not ensure the meaningful participation of the people in the political process. For this reason, his system resulted in a mass upsurge and finally that led to the disruption of his regime and the country.<sup>58</sup>

Ayub Khan assumed state power in 1958 and continued his rule till to the last of 70's. During this period Sheikh Mujibur Rahman raised his voice on the basis of six-point demand to radicalize Bengali politics. It strengthened the support base of Awami League in East Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> Through raising six-point demand Mujib developed an autonomy movement of East Pakistan and intended to form a confederation rather than a federation.<sup>60</sup> Ayub regime took suppressive measures to stop the autonomy movement. In point of the suppressive measures of Ayub regime, an all parties Students Action Committee (SAC) was formed and it adopted an eleven-point program, which enhanced the support of all type of people of East

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<sup>57</sup> G.W. Chowdhury, *The Last Days*, op.cit., p.107.

<sup>58</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Military Withdrawal from Politics: A Comparative Study* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1988), p.4.

<sup>59</sup> Golam Morshed, "East Bengal Provincial Elections of March 1954 Origin of Separatist Movement in East Pakistan", in S.R. Chakrabarty and Virendra Narain (eds.), *Bangladesh History and Culture*, South Asia Studies Series 12 (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1968), p.139.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.168.

Pakistan.<sup>61</sup> The suppressive policy taken by Ayub regime led to the spontaneous mass upsurge of 1968-69 and that also led to disintegration of Pakistan state. After Ayub regime, General Yahya assumed power and he held a general election in 1970. In this election Awami League swept the polls and won a landslide victory in East Pakistan<sup>62</sup> but the Pakistani ruling elites did not transfer power to the Awami League, which worked as the principal cause of civil unrest in East Pakistan. In this situation Yahya regime devised a military solution, which was implemented against the people of East Pakistan on March 25, 1971.<sup>63</sup> It led to the decay and disintegration of Pakistan and to the liberation war of Bangladesh. After a nine month long bloody struggle Bangladesh liberated on December 16, 1971.

## 2.3 Democracy in Bangladesh

### 2.3.1. Mujib Regime

Bangladesh got its independence through an extraordinary process in December 1971. After independence, Shiekh Mujibur Rahman, hailed as *Bangabandhu* (friend of Bengal), returned from Pakistan to Bangladesh triumphantly on January 10, 1972 as being freed from Pakistani Prison. The very next day of his return, Sheikh Mujib became the President of Bangladesh and took charge of the government. One of the major challenges Sheikh Mujib was to establish an effective government immediately. With this end in view he promulgated a provisional Constitutional Order providing a parliamentary and unitary form of government in Bangladesh. It also stipulated a Constituent Assembly, and guarantee of fundamental rights with certain qualifications.<sup>64</sup> Within two days of his triumphant return. Mujib stepped down from the post of the President and became Prime Minister of the Government. He grasped the reins of power. In this situation, Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury swore in the post of President.

<sup>61</sup> Farach Deeba Chowdhury, "Problems of Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study", an unpublished thesis, Halifax, NS, Mount Saint Vincent University, 2004, p.41; Md. Anwarul Islam, "1970 Saler Sadhran Nirbachan O Bangladesher Ovuddya", *IBS Journal*, 1404:5, (Rajshahi: IBS, Rajshahi University, 1998), p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Robert Laporte, Jr., "Pakistan in 1971: The Disintegration of A Nation", *Asian Survey*, 12:2, 1972, p.101.

<sup>64</sup> Through this Provisional Order, Mujib attributed restrictions on some political parties and people who collaborated with Pakistan. See Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance*, (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2000), p.10.

Sheikh Mujib during first year of his regime ruled the country under the provisional constitution. Within this time, he acted in full swing to facilitate the framing of a formal constitution for Bangladesh. Within the first year of Awami League regime and only seven months later of the promulgation of the Presidential Order 22 the first constitution of Bangladesh was framed.<sup>65</sup>

The constitution came to be effective from 16 December 1972. The constitution guaranteed all fundamental rights, freedom of press and equality before law. It provided for a unitary parliamentary governmental system, multiparty system and independence of Judiciary. The constitution also incorporated four fundamental principles of state policy: nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism. To flourish the ideals of democracy, it was said in the constitution that the government would be elected by the people under the principles of universal adult franchise and would be responsible to the Jatiya Sangsad as practiced in West Minister system.

From the above discussion it is evident that the new Awami League government led by the founding father of Bangladesh wanted to establish democracy for the people who fought for and struggle in Pakistan. Moudud Ahamed rightly opined that the political leaders honored the commitments, which moved forward with the promise of democracy during Pakistan period to institutionalize democratic values through a written constitution.<sup>66</sup>

The constitutional experts acclaimed the constitution of '72 from many quarters because it was a very fine workable document. But two years after the enactment of the constitution the ruling party Awami League over the true deshaped and disfigured the constitution through imposing several punches. Conceiving Fourth Amendment of the constitution, the Awami League led by *Bangabandhu* first jolted the constitution in the first month of 1975. The Fourth Amendment changed the structure and character of the fundamental law, and incorporated a one party democratic centralism, which was "considered to be the very essence lying in the inner sanctum of democracy."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> For details regarding constitution making in Bangladesh see Abul Fazal Huq, "Constitution-Making in Bangladesh", *Pacific Affairs*, 46:1 (1973), pp.59-76; Talukder Moniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1988), p.155.

<sup>66</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *Democracy and the Challenge of Development*, *op.cit.*, p.366.

<sup>67</sup> Enayetur Rahim, "Bangladesh: Historical Ledger", in A.M. Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam, *Bangladesh on the Threshold of the Twenty First Century* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2002), p.41.

At the very outset after independence *Bangabandhu* ruled the country on the basis of the mandate of 1970. In view of continuing the democratic process and renewing the mandate from the people Mujib government called for the first parliamentary election of Bangladesh on March 7, 1973 after 14 months of his sworn in power.<sup>68</sup> In this election, 1075 candidates of 14 political parties contested for the 300 seats. Bangladesh Awami League won 291 seats through receiving 73 percent of the votes cast by 56 percent of the voters.<sup>69</sup> In fact, this overwhelming victory of Awami League led by Mujib killed the opposition rendering the Jatiya Sangsad into a one party theatre.<sup>70</sup> The election result was in favor of Awami League government and it was a mandate of the people to legitimize Awami League's rule. But the total election system was not unquestioned. There were some allegations of the opposition against ruling party in the election. According to the opposition's view some zealous Awami League candidates and their supporters rigged the election in some constituencies by creating violence and terror hijacking and looting ballot papers and boxes.<sup>71</sup> Marcus Franda depicted the election rigging in 1973 as "blatantly and unnecessary".<sup>72</sup> A Scholar on Bangladesh politics wrote about the election through quoting a foreign journalist. He quoted, "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would have won handsomely even if the election had been conducted by the United Nations and supervised by the Red Cross."<sup>73</sup>

In fact, there were a few shortcomings in the election of 1973. But it did not put any serious impact on election results. Despite the shortcomings and allegations the election result was the verdict of the people in favour of Awami League government. On the basis of the people's verdict Awami League continued its rule till to the death of *Bangabandhu*.

In the economic sector Mujib regime successfully faced the large-scale famine and completed the task of rehabilitation in its initial year. Jahan opined that the regime's performance was successful in this sphere due to massive international aid from

<sup>68</sup> Enayetur Rahim, "Electoral Politics in Bangladesh 1975-88", in Rafiuddin Ahmed, *Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1990), p.105.

<sup>69</sup> For details, see, *The Bangladesh Election Commission Report, 1973*.

<sup>70</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics", *Asian Survey*, Vol.XIV, No.2, February 1974, p.127.

<sup>71</sup> Abdul Mannan, *op.cit*, p.51.

<sup>72</sup> Marcus Farnda, *Bangladesh: The First Decade* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1982), p.54.

<sup>73</sup> Talukdar Muniruzzaman, *Group Interest and Political Changes: Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1982), p.35.



U.N. and its agencies.<sup>74</sup> The regime emphasized on a socialist economy. In order to be successful, it took a long and short term economic planning. For this reason, the regime nationalized all basic industries, banking and insurance.<sup>75</sup> It also strengthened the planning machinery, set up a Planning Commission and took the first five-year economic plan of the country.

Although Awami League's regime showed impressive performance in the economic sector in its initial year, there were also some poor performance and glaring failures. The regime failed to achieve economic goal of bringing production back to the level of 1969-70. The cost of living jumped from taka 208 in January to taka 297 in October 1972. The increasing trend of the cost of living was nearly 50%.<sup>76</sup>

Trade volume and production volume became lower than 1969-70. Revenue surplus of the regime was nominal. The G.D.P. registered a growth of 2 percent in 1974-75. On the contrary the population growth rate was nearly 3 percent. It shows that there was a negative trend in per-capita growth rate.<sup>77</sup> This negative tendency of the then economy was due to inefficient management i.e., lack of coordination, labor-management problems, the creation of multiple middlemen in the market, low production, excessive money supply and deficit financing.<sup>78</sup>

The performance of the AI regime in the economic sector was not satisfactorily. Similar condition was also existed in the Civil and Military administration and in the politics in Bangladesh. There was no well-organized administrative political structure to provide stable and enlightened leadership in pre independent and post independent Bangladesh.

Nevertheless after taking over power, Sheikh Mujib established parliamentary system of government in Bangladesh, which was most expected at that time. So, under this system, Mujib, his followers and his party assumed a more significant role in politics vis-à-vis the civil bureaucracy and the armed forces.

<sup>74</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*, (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1980), p.73.

<sup>75</sup> *The Bangladesh Observer*, March 27, 1972.

<sup>76</sup> See-*Bangladesh Planning Commission Report of '72-73*. See also-Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, p.74.

<sup>77</sup> *The Bangladesh Observer*, July 12, 1975.

<sup>78</sup> See *Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Annual Plan 1973-74*, pp.1-10. See also-Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, pp.80, 130.

In Pakistan, the civil-military Bureaucratic elite were the key factors in the decision making process. But in liberated Bangladesh, they became the subservient of the politicians and accepted loss of status partially. Along with this matter, these two organs during Awami League were factionalized and weak. At the same time, they had no position to challenge to authority of Awami League regime. Factions in Civil bureaucracy led to make them rivalry to each other and they were always jockeying for position. Thus the negative trend of factional feuds undermined the coherence, unity and efficiency of the services. The morale of the civil bureaucrats was also low because of job insecurity.

Not unlike the civil bureaucracy, the armed forces were also faction prone. Conflicts between the armed forces were also high. The armed forces were divided into various factions. Conflict between the former two factions was very acute and intensive. This faction prone condition of armed forces was not conducive to the development of democracy during Mujib regime.

Virtually Mujib preferred his party to the civil bureaucracy and armed forces. He did it on the basis of his past political experience. After independence, Mujib was not only the head of his party but also the head of the government. During his regime, Mujib acted more as party chief than as head of government.<sup>79</sup>

From the very inception, Awami League was also fractionalized. It under went two major factions. Immediately after the independence of Bangladesh, two front organizations such as student and labor organization both had open division. To mitigate these bitter factional feuds, Sheikh Mujib often intervened in the party activities.<sup>80</sup>

In fact, it was seen that there were factional feuds among three major institutions i.e. bureaucracy, army and political party. This tendency weakened and demoralized these three organs. It also created a vicious circle. These organizations were almost dependent on the Mujib's personal charisma. Often, he mediated and interfered in all factional disputes through breaking the institutional chains of command. Thus the institutionalization of the organization became very difficult. In most of the cases the system was operated on ad hoc personal basis. Although Mujib wanted to establish

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<sup>79</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, p.133.

<sup>80</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics", *Asian Survey*, February 1974, p.127.

parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh, the three and half years of Mujib's regime were essentially a period of personal rule.<sup>81</sup>

The success of a political system more or less depends on the balanced relation between the government, Legislature and the party machinery. Mujib regime started its journey in Bangladesh with a parliamentary system. In the parliamentary system of democracy, the legislature is considered as the supreme organ of the state. Thus the Jatio Sangsad (the Legislature of Bangladesh) was reckoned to be supreme during Mujib regime. But this expectation of people was disappeared in the air because the single dominant party system and the constitutional provisions related to party discipline lowered the real power of the Jatiya Sangsad. So, the Jatiya Sangsad became more or less a rubber stamp of the wishes of the then ruling party (Awami League). The first Jatiya Sangsad during its term did not work as a check or government and as the mirror of public opinion. Most of the sessions of Jatiya Sangsad were monotonous affairs.

Because there were scanty representations of the opposition parties in the first Jatiya Sangsad. The oppositions could not secure sufficient representation in the Jatiya Sangsad through the parliamentary election of 1973. Thus Sheikh Mujib declared that the opposition political parties failed to collect sufficient seats in the Jatiya Sangsad for their own selves. For this reasons, they could not be declared as an official opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad.<sup>82</sup> This view point of Sheikh Mujib regarding opposition's representation in the Jatiya Sangsad was not corroborative to the democratic ideals in the real sense. Hasanuzzaman opined that Mujib's refusal to recognize the existence of an official opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad was not compatible with democratic customs.<sup>83</sup>

Although there was a marginal presence of the oppositions in the Jatiya Sangsad, a few opposition members organized themselves and resorted to common devices and mechanisms of the Jatiya Sangsad for placing their alternative viewpoints in the house.<sup>84</sup> They raised different issues, questions and objections through parliamentary devices such as question hour activity, adjournment motion, attention

<sup>81</sup> Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, p.134.

<sup>82</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretive Study* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1992), p.96.

<sup>83</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1998), p.50.

<sup>84</sup> Abul Fazl Huq, "Constitution-Making in Bangladesh" in Emajuddin Ahmed (ed.), *Bangladesh Politics* (Dhaka: CSS, 1980), pp.6-10.

to matter of urgent public importance etc. under the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad.<sup>85</sup>

In fact, the performance of the first Jatiya Sangsad was not conducive to the democratic ideals because of the single party domination and the scanty representation of the opposition members. In the first Jatiya Sangsad, the opposition members could not make any challenge to the governments. On the other hand, the ruling party did not take the opposition views seriously. Even the amendments passed by first Jatiya Sangsad replaced totalitarian semblance in the constitution instead of democratic principles.

In the initial year of Mujib's rule, the state apparatus was weak. Although it was weak, Mujib government had to grasp the nettle in the war-ravaged country. Among many massive problems, Mujib had to establish law and order in the country. For establishing the law and order, Mujib disarmed civilian freedom fighters. Different groups of *Mukti Bahini* surrendered a significant number of arms. But a huge number of arms holder were out of the control of the administration.

From the middle of 1973 Mujib and his authority was seriously threatened by armed attack from radical leftist political parties. At that time, these leftist parties increasingly attacked on local law and order enforcing agencies in the countryside. Attack on police stations, looting arms and market, dacoit and assassination were the common matters during this regime. In these cases, the districts of Dhaka, Barisal, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Khulna were badly affected.<sup>86</sup> Mujib and his regime branded the actors of these incidences as the 'Ultra Leftists' and Naxalities and finally they were branded as "miscreants".<sup>87</sup> In September 1973 the regime passed the second amendment to the constitution through parliament due to the worst causes affecting the law and order situation in the country. This amendment empowered the president to declare a state of emergency if; "a grave emergency exists in which the security or economic life of Bangladesh... is threatened by war or external aggression or internal disturbances."<sup>88</sup> The Awami

<sup>85</sup> Hsanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, pp.50-57.

<sup>86</sup> For details information see: Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: The Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman* (Dhaka: UPL, 1994), p.114; Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1980), p.88.

<sup>87</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *ibid.*, pp.88-89.

<sup>88</sup> Badruddin Umar, "The Political Significance of the Emergency Provision", *Holiday*, September 23, 1973; Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics", *Asian Survey*, 14:2, 1974, p.127.

League government headed by Mujib also tried to control the press. In these cases, the regime harassed some journalists and editors. Two journalists of government managed newspapers lost their jobs; the editor and newsmen of *Desh Bangla* were imprisoned. The editor of *Holiday* was also harassed. The Awami League government took some measures to close down the newspapers and weeklies of opposition political parties-*Ganakantha*, *Holiday*, *Wave* and *Desh Bangla*.<sup>89</sup>

In fact there were some causes, which made crises during Mujib's regime. To face the whole situation, Mujib took decision to amend the constitution suggested by the young militants and his nephew Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni. In January 1975, he amended the constitution through the Awami League dominated parliament to provide for a one party presidential form of government instead of multiparty parliamentary system government incorporating the term Second Revolution in the constitution to ensure the rights of the *Sarboharas(have nots)*.<sup>90</sup>

A month of the amendment, Mujib launched his single party called Bangladesh Krishak Shramik Awami League (BAKSAL) and urged people of all corners to join BAKSAL. But before implementation of the new courses of the concept of second revolution Mujib was assassinated by a disgruntled small coterie group of junior military officers on August 15, 1975 with many of his family members. It is alleged that some external actors were involved in the brutal killings of August 15 coup.<sup>91</sup>

Through the coup of 15 August the country was thrown into military regimes for 15 years and an unauthorized ruler, Khondkar Mustaque Ahmed, occupied state power with the help of coup makers. After assuming state power, Mushtaque gave shelter to the coup makers and formed a cabinet.<sup>92</sup>

Mushtaque' new government promulgated martial law in the whole country. It banned all political parties and their activities. Mushtaque did not suspend the constitution and dissolve the parliament. But both the constitution and Jatiya

<sup>89</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Ibid.*, p.133; Farah Deeba Chowdhury, *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>90</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, op.cit.*, pp.118-125; Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution, op.cit.*, pp.178-182.

<sup>91</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "Political Development" in M.A. Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam, *Bangladesh: On the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (ed.) (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2002), p.47; Abul Fazl Huq, "Constitutional Development in Bangladesh (1972-82)", *The Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. VI, (Rajshahi: The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1982-83), p.93.

<sup>92</sup> Among 19 ministers 11 were full ministers out of 19 and 8 were state ministers out of 9. There were no military men in the Mushtaque's cabinet.

Sangsad were not in action. In fact he made these two things inoperative. The new government headed by Mushtaque directed a military government giving civilian color.<sup>93</sup> Although Mushtaque and his cohorts assumed state power assassinating Mujib and his extended family members. They could not establish their control over the state vindictly. Even Mushtaque's government did not last three months. His government was ousted by counter coup staged on 3 November 1975. Major General Khaled Musharraf and some senior military officers who staged the first counter coup make Chief Justice A.M. Sayem President and Chief Martial Law administrator of the country. But their coup was too short lived. Because Mosharraf and his accomplices were killed on 7 November by another counter coup of rebellious soldiers of JSD persuasion. This group headed by Colonel Abu Taher freed Zia from home imprisonment and installed him in state power.

### 2.3.2 The Setback: Military Autocracy

#### 2.3.2.1. Zia Regime

Major General Ziaur Rahman, a soldier turned politician, became military strongman through a coups and counter coups in Bangladesh Politics. After his installment in Power, Zia imposed Martial Law, dissolved Parliament, and banned political parties, restricted civil and political rights. During the first year of his regime, Zia ruled the country as the *de facto* leader. From November 7, 1975 he acted as a DCMLA (Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator) under the President Justice Sayem. On November 30, 1976, Zia occupied the post of CMLA (Chief Martial Law Administration). Through this installation Justice Sayem became a figure headed president and Zia became the real leader of the country. After five months of his installation as CMLA. Zia cased out President Justice Sayem from his post and he declared himself as the President of the country on 21 April 1977. There was a controversy among the people regarding the resignation of President Sayem. Controversy among the people was not baseless. Infact Zia ousted President Sayem forcefully. This fact can be understood from the last phase of Sayem at *Bangabhaban*. By his last phase Justice Sayem stated that Zia desired eagerly for the position of President and it led him to leave the position without arising any controversy and conflict.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.64.

<sup>94</sup> A S M Sayem, *At Bangabhaban: Last Phase* (Dhaka: Hakkani Publishers, 1988), p.39; Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.65.

Sayem's opinion regarding the aspiration of Zia proves that Zia put pressure on Sayem to take over power. Though there was a lacking of formal legal popular consent behind Zia, he became an all-powerful President of the country assuming the Presidency. On the very next day addressing the nation Zia pledged, " I and my government believe in full democracy and are determined to restore the government of the elected representative of the people in due time."<sup>95</sup>

After assuming the Presidency, Zia tried to consolidate his power and perpetuate his rule in the country. For the consolidation of his power Zia took stern action against the leaders and workers of opposition parties, especially of the AL and the JSD. He arrested many of the opposition members and put them in prison on the charges of anti-state activities. Even Zia arrested Colonel Abu Taher who made Zia the king of the country and was his one time cohort at arms, and put him into custody. Later Taher was sentenced to death and many of his party leaders were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for life time or for many years by a secret military court on 21 July 1976.<sup>96</sup> By implementing the process of arrest and imprisonment of opposition Leaders, Zia's government increased it's atrocity and became intolerant to the opposition members. Against such coercive measures of Zia, JSD called for a general strike as a protest on 31 July 1976 for arising people sentiment in its favor as well as against Zia's government.<sup>97</sup> Even Zia took some measures against a great many opposition workers including JSD. He had made various hurdles such as ban on processions, night curfew in capital city, manipulation of administrative machineries and media and imprisonment, for oppositions. According to an estimate principal opposition, Awami League, only during the time of presidential election, there were as many as "five thousand AL workers and activists in prison without trial."<sup>98</sup>

Like many other developing countries of the world where military has taken over power, a coalition regime of the military personal and civil servants was made in Bangladesh with the demise of Mujib regime. After the coup of 1975, civil bureaucrats who had the domination over politicians during Pakistan period and who

<sup>95</sup> *Bangladesh Observer*, April 23, 1977; Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, pp.65-66.

<sup>96</sup> For detailed information see-Lawrence Lifschultz, "Abu Taher's Last Testament, Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, August 1977; Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, *op.cit.*,p.3; Talukder Mainiruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution op.cit.*, pp.203-204.

<sup>97</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition*, *op.cit.*, p.70.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.

put through their sub-ordination to the political authority during Mujib regime in Bangladesh, occupied most of the policy making and administrative positions. From the very initial period of Zia, the domination of the civilian-military bureaucracy over the political system in Bangladesh revived.

Through nullifying the president's order number 9 of 1972, which had been provided for dismissal of officials during Mujib regime. For this reason, it can be said that the state initiated by Zia was an "administrative state" and the ultimate gainer was the civil servant.<sup>99</sup> Zia installed officers of the former Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) in all of the top positions in the nerve center of the administration. He made an advisory council on November 26, 1975 to assist his military government. It was the highest decision making authority of Zia government and it was consisted of the three Chief's of the armed forces and some former CSP officer. One of them was exception.<sup>100</sup> At the next, Zia increased the number of the members of the council but its nature was no exception. The council made by Zia continued its activities till to the first quarter of 1979. After second Jatiya Sangsad election it was replaced by the council of ministers. Most of the members of the Council of Ministers were civil-military bureaucratic elites and they worked under a centralized system of authority.<sup>101</sup> In fact Zia wanted to give democratic flavor to his government through bureaucratization process which was not maintained in accordance with the norms and ideals of Democracy Z.R. Khan opined that Zia's militarization and bureaucratization process was "much more subtle and sophisticated than Ayub's."<sup>102</sup>

Like many other military Rulers Zia, through electoral politics, tried to legitimize himself as the ruler of Bangladesh and to legitimize his government. For this reason, Zia took initiative for holding a series of elections. A local level election in 1977, a national referendum in 1977, a presidential election in 1978 and the second Jatiya Sangsad election of 1979 were held during Zia regime. Although Zia promised for establishing full democracy in the country and determined to restore the government of the elected representatives of the people in due time but the elections were not conducive to democracy.

<sup>99</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, *Bangladesh: State and Economic Strategy* (Dhaka: UPL, 1988), p.119.

<sup>100</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution, op.cit.*, pp.209-210.

<sup>101</sup> Veena Kukreza, *Civil-Military Relations in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), pp.155-156.

<sup>102</sup> Z.R. Khan, "Politicization of the Bangladesh Military: A Response to Perceived Shortcoming of Civilian Government", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXI, No.5, May 1981, p.561.



Some causes absence of democratic atmosphere and continuation of Martial Law, imprisonment of oppositions' leaders and workers, use of government officials by Zia, restrictions on and control over mass media communication, exploitation of government properties, facilities and patronage by Zia, manipulation of the figures of election results and so on, were responsible for the weaknesses of the elections.<sup>103</sup>

Because of the above mentioned causes the elections that were held during Zia regime did not get institutional shape and were not conducive for the development of Democracy. These accusations were, more or less, true. Almost all political parties brought charges against all elections, specially the referendum, presidential election and parliamentary election. Independent foreign observers also corroborated the charges of opposition parties. A scholar of Bangladesh politics stated that a number of foreign observers also reported on the malpractices in the election but their views were not like those of the opposition parties in the country.<sup>104</sup>

As a matter of fact, Zia, the first military ruler in Bangladesh, used elections that were held during his period as means of legitimating his regime. All elections were defective in nature, which virtually, contributed to an erosion public faith in the sanctity of the electoral system and damaged to democracy. At the same time the elections, which were held during Zia regime, were not conducive for establishing democracy in our political system.

In a democratic polity, the existence of political parties is must. But, after the demise of Sheikh Mujib, Zia during first year of his regime imposed ban on political parties and their activities. Zia's regime allowed party politics in a limited scale from July 1976 giving license to 23 political parties to do politics under the provision of political parties regulations (PPR). During Zia's regime, faction-ridden politics were clearly visible among the political parties.<sup>105</sup> Sharpened factionalism, political squabbles; splits, indecision, ideological difference and leadership crisis were the common characteristics of the political parties. Moreover, Zia tried to make factional feuds among the contending political parties implementing the device of PPR. Zia's innovation of PPR was, infect, peculiar and was only for his own interest. Jahan opined that Zia's government intelligently implemented the device of PPR and parlor politics in encouraging factional feuds among the faction ridden political parties in

<sup>103</sup> See details in Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, pp.70-78.

<sup>104</sup> Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.78.

<sup>105</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.99.

order to gain the support of the most political parties and groups.<sup>106</sup> It is true to say that Zia, in one hand tried to destroy the political parties encouraging factional feuds. On the other hand he formed his own political party BNP that was composed of people with diverse beliefs and interests<sup>107</sup> and went through various incarnations.<sup>108</sup> It should be mentioned here that the attempt of building BNP was shakily start. At first *Jatiyatabadi Gonotantrik Dal* (JAGODAL) was formed in February 1978, then it incarnated into a Nationalist Front and at last it came to be know as Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in September 1978. There were also factional feuds among the civil military bureaucrats and technocrats. In fact, the Bangladesh society was divided into various groups, such as, bureaucratic elites vs. politicians, socialists vs. non-socialists, secularists vs. islamists, freedom fighters vs. non-freedom fighters etc.<sup>109</sup>

Zia's amendment to the constitution revealed his political ideology and sources of support. He changed the concept of socialism only to mean "economic and social justice" and he eliminated the provision of acquisition of property "without compensation". These steps revealed that he would follow a capitalist path. He started Islamization of the state and brought the country closer to Islamic bloc countries. This can be prove by the amendments dropping of "secularism" as a state principle and substituting it with "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah". Again he said that the "state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity". By this amendment the citizens of the country came to be known as "Bangladeshi" instead of "Bangalee" in order to play down the ethnic linguistic identity.<sup>110</sup> Through the amendment Zia started a revisionist process on the identity question and the liberation movement. After four years of his installment in power, Zia lifted Martial Law finally through convening the parliament that passed a constitutional amendment validating all martial law orders and action.

<sup>106</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, op.cit.*, p.208.

<sup>107</sup> Azizul Haque, "Bangladesh 1979: Cry for a Sovereignty Parliament", *Asian Survey*, 20:2, 1980, p.224.

<sup>108</sup> Farah Deeba Chwodhury, *op.cit.*, p.51.

<sup>109</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.99; Azizul Haque, "Bangladesh in 1980: Strains and Stresses-Opposition in the Doldrums", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXI, No.2, February 1981, p.189.

<sup>110</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "Political Development"; in M.A. Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.49.

Zia restored the law and order situation in the country by his four years martial law. The Military only held the key position while day-to-day administration was left with the civil bureaucracy. Zia employed a populist style of leadership to meet the demand for change of society. He kept different groups of people busy with dialogues and initiated co-operative activities such as canal digging. He consolidated *Gram Sarkar* (village government). The regime saw the disinvestments in the public sector and actively sought foreign aid. NGO received impetus as they started to obtain increasing volume of foreign assistance. But they were confined to render their services only to the poor. However, the civilianized regime of Zia lasted for only two years. Zia was assassinated on May 30, 1981 by a group of army officers.<sup>111</sup>

No one took the power after Zia's assassination. Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammad Ershad, the army chief staff, declared his loyalty to the BNP government. Abdus Sattar, the civilian vice-president of Zia, became President and ordered a new election that he won. But the division within BNP and Sattar's old age made the government unstable. General Ershad demanded an institutionalized role for the military in governing the country. Sattar initially turned down this offer but agreed later on. However, his steps and activities did not satisfy the military. Ershad declared martial on March 24, 1982 and suspended the constitution, dismissed Sattar and his cabinet, dissolved parliament and became the Chief Martial Law Administrator with the Navy and Air Chiefs as his deputy.<sup>112</sup>

### 2.3.2.2. Ershad Regime

During President Abdus Sattar regime, it was expected that the people of Bangladesh would be able to sustain the transition to a democratic system. But the nation was unlucky, because Lt. General Ershad took over power through a bloodless coup in March 1982. Justifying country's policymaking process, which changed the political scenario and rooted the authoritarian rule for long period.<sup>113</sup> Like many other military dictators of the Third World countries, Ershad banned free

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>113</sup> Ataur Rahman, "Democratization in South Asia: Bangladesh Perspective", This keynote paper was presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Bangladesh Political Science Association held at the BISS Auditorium, Dhaka, February 26, 2000, p.23.

politics and political activities promulgated Martial Law, dissolved parliament etc., for his smooth political journey in the country.

Ershad's rule could not produce a record of good governance in Bangladesh. Although he promised that he would return state power to civilian authority, establish law and order in the society and implement basic reforms in the country. But all these promises were remained unfulfilled. Instead of the implementation of his promises, Ershad's authoritarian regime produced a strong executive gaining support from the same power elite groups as like as of Zia. He elected people from the civil and military bureaucracy for his advisors council. Ershad's regime also produced rubber stamp parliaments and a compliant bureaucracy.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, he used governmental forces to control over the political system of his regime. He Charged politician for misrule, sent them for long liberation, imprisoned political leaders and workers and brought charges of corruption against them. Although he brought charges against BNP and it's leaders, he adopted the same techniques and policies of BNP regime. He started Islamization like Zia and in 1988 he amended the constitution to make Islam the state religion.<sup>115</sup>

Following in Zia's footsteps Ershad built up his own political party. Like Zia, Ershad floated his party twice, First as *Jana Dal* in 1983 and later as Jatiya Party (JP) in 1986. Jatiya Party comprised military and civil service officials. The series of elections held under the Ershad included local government elections in 1984, a national referendum in 1985, a parliamentary and a presidential election in 1986 and another parliamentary election in 1988. But the elections failed to achieve autoeroticism and credibility.<sup>116</sup> Ershad faced strong opposition, not only from the BNP headed by Ziaur Rahman's widow, Khaleda Zia, but also the Awami League, held by Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina. Awami League and BNP worked in unison to topple Ershad regime and for the restoration of democracy. The two parties staged mass demonstrations against Ershad. BNP refused to participate in

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> M. G. Kabir, "Post-1971 Nationalism in Bangladesh: Search for A New Identity", in M. Abdul Hafiz and Abdur Rob Khan (eds.), *Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 1968), p.57.

<sup>116</sup> Farah Deeba Chowdhury, *Ibid.*, p.54; *Bichitra* Year Book, January 2, 1987; Mohammad Solaiman, "Rajnoitik Kathamor Obboykhyaya O Boidhatar Sankat: Ershader Shashankal", *The Journal of Political Science Association* (Chittagong: Bangladesh Political Science Association, 1993), p.36.

any election held under the regime. The Awami League participated in the 1986 parliamentary election but boycotted the other polls.

Ershad consolidated his support in rural area. He dismantled Zia's Gram Sarkar (village government) and replaced it with Upazillas (Sub-districts). This regime faced severe criticisms regarding privatization of industries. Furthermore, professional and cultural organizations demanded restoration of civil and political rights. The power and privileges enjoyed by the military incurred anger among people. There was allegation of rampant corruption against the Ershad regime.<sup>117</sup>

### 2.3.3. Restoration of Democracy in 1990

The movement against Ershad started in 1983 and received impetus in 1990 with the active participation by two students' wing of Awami League and BNP respectively. Civil society groups, especially the professional associations spontaneously joined the movement for the restoration of democracy. International donor community predicted the ensuing turmoil situation and they stop their donation and support for the regime.<sup>118</sup> Ershad tried to salvage his position by declaring a state of emergency one more time but senior leaders were reluctant to do so. So Ershad had no option but to resign. Ershad resigned on December 4, 1990 promising to the political opposition. The opposition party picked up Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as the acting president to conduct a free, fair and credible election. It was milestone in the history of Bangladesh as a regime was born through citizens' movement not by a bullet.

Ershad resignation in the face of almost eight years constant political movement against military rule marked a watershed in Bangladesh's political history. It was considered as a triumph of democracy as well as constitutional rule. The transition to democratic rule was triggered by dialogue and agreement among contending political parties and they drew basic outlines of democratic governance. There was a popular belief that a democratic set up would not use assassinations and state controlled elections, two ways of gaining and manipulating state power during military rule.

<sup>117</sup> Enayetur Rahman, "Bangladesh: A Historical Ledger", in A.M. Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam (eds.), *Bangladesh: On the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2002), p.36.

<sup>118</sup> Dennis Wright, "Islam and Bangladesh Polity", *South Asia*, (10) 2, 1987, p.21.

Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad's major challenge was to organize a free and fair election. Political freedoms were restored and intimidations on the press were lifted. To prove them neutral was the immediate goal for this caretaker government. So the key mission of this government was to supervise an effective election. Shahabuddin Ahmad's neutral caretaker government was able to organize a parliamentary election, which was declared by all local observers as well as foreign to be the most free and fair election ever to be held in Bangladesh. The BNP led by Khaleda Zia emerged as the winner with 140 seats, followed the Awami League with 88 sets, Jatiya Party with 35 seats and the Jammat-i-Islami 18 sets. BNP formed a coalition government with the support of the Jammat.<sup>119</sup>

#### 2.3.4. Hazards of the Nineties

Khaleda Zia preferred Presidential form of government to parliamentary form of government even before the election. On the other hand, Awami League was in favor of parliamentary form of government. But Khaleda changed her mind after the election. Awami League and BNP worked together in the parliament to make a constitutional amendment for parliamentary form of government.<sup>120</sup>

Khaleda's biggest challenge was to fulfill the promise of democratic governance. The initial amiable relationship between Awami League and the BNP went downhill within two years of Khaleda's rule. The major contested issue was free and fair elections. The two parties were at each other's throats over several municipal and parliamentary by-elections. Awami League refused to accept the result of by-election in Magura, which was fraud by the BNP. The Awami League demanded resignation of the government and a fresh national election to be held under a neutral caretaker government to avoid election rigging by the party in power. The BNP did not accept the proposal arguing that there was no constitutional provision for such a measure. Awami League engaged themselves in various form of street demonstrations outside parliament as they boycotted parliament. Jatiya Party and Jamaat-i-Islam extended their support for Awami League in Parliament. The Country was repeatedly shut down by strikes called by the Awami League. The opposition parties led by Awami League resigned en masse from parliament in December 1994.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.118.

<sup>120</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Political Development, op.cit.*, p.52.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p.53.

Civil Society groups and the international donor community came forward to break the deadlock between the two major political parties. They urged both the party to bury their hatchet through dialogue and constitutional means. But this effort failed, because of both parties stubbornness. Khaleda dissolved the parliament in December 1995 and announced fresh parliamentary election date to be held under BNP rule despite the combined oppositions' boycott of such an election.

The political turmoil situation reached at its height with the voterless election of February 1996. The government attempt to manipulate election results confirmed Awami League's claim that the BNP could not be trusted to supervise a fair election. At this point civil society groups and some members of civil bureaucracy came out in favor of an election. The new parliament, dubiously elected in the February 1996 election, met only once to pass a constitutional amendment providing for future parliamentary elections under a neutral caretaker government. The parliament was dissolved again. Chief Justice Habibur Rahman became head of the caretaker government, following the resignation of Khaleda Zia.

The caretaker government was able to hold a fresh election to parliament within ninety days in spite of an unsuccessful coup attempt. Once again, the election was welcomed as free and fair in the country as well abroad.<sup>122</sup>

Awami League won the election of 1996 under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Awami League had to win back trust from the ruling class, i.e. the civil bureaucracy, the military and business community. Awami League distanced themselves from the dominant groups in their brief rule (1972-75), so the dominant group extended their support for the military rule and the BNP. Awami League discarded their old policies and images to win back the support from ruling class. The party changed their socialist standpoint to a free market economy. The civil bureaucracy and the military were ensured institutional autonomy. Several retired officers from the military and civil bureaucracy and prominent businessmen contest and won in the 1996 election as Awami League candidates. Sheikh Hasina also made some symbolic gestures to hint her loyalty to Islam.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Md. Abdul Mannan, *op.cit.*, p.156.

<sup>123</sup> Amirul Islam Chowdhury & Fakrul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.54.

Sheikh Hasina gave emphasis on national consensus, rule of law, accountability and transparency. She invited all political parties including the BNP to join a national consensus government. BNP refused but two other parties Jatiya Party and the JSD joined the government. She gave priority to good governance and constituted several commissions with government and non-government membership to monitor several sectors including education, local government health and civil administration to suggest reform measures. A four-fold local government structure was proposed and elections to Union Parishad were held. The civil bureaucracy was given autonomy to run the country smoothly. The economic approaches encouraged foreign private investment, especially in the energy sector. The constitutional indemnity shielding the killers of Mujib and other Awami League leaders were repealed and judicial inquiry and trials were started against the killers. Two remarkable achievements of Hasina's tenure were the settlement of two long-standing disputes through successful negotiations. In 1996, a thirty-year Ganges water sharing treaty was signed with India, and 1997 a peace treaty was signed with the rebels of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.<sup>124</sup>

Consolidation to democracy remained a far cry. BNP boycotted parliamentary sessions on the ground that government is suppressing its workers and they engaged in street demonstrations and shut down the country with repealed strikes. It remained dogmatically opposed to the Ganges water sharing treaty and Chittagong Hill Tracts accord promising their revoke if BNP was voted back to power. The two parties could not reach a common ground to bury their hatchet. Both parties nourished and indulged armed cadres. Rule of law was impossibility.

BNP also refused to participate in parliamentary by-elections in the same manner as Awami League and demanded of all local bodies elections under a neutral caretaker government. They demanded the resignation of the Awami League government. At the dawn of new millennium, anarchy loosed upon the ground of Bangladesh as two major parties failed to settle their differences through dialogue and negotiation.

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<sup>124</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.227.



## Chapter 3

# Student Politics in Bangladesh: A Historical Overview

### 3.1. Introduction

Student politics in Bangladesh has an affluent history. It has been evolved as a reaction to the colonial exploitation of the British colonial power. In course of its growth and development, some important changes have taken place in the history. With these changes, students emerged as a mighty force in our society. In this research study, it is tried to give an emphasis to discuss the important trends and landmarks, in brief, which have taken place in the history of student politics. This study is completely based on a comprehensive survey of literatures on the subject of student politics that covers books, journals, papers, news reports, newspapers, magazine articles and literatures related to student politics. In the following pages the history of student politics in Bangladesh will be discussed in brief.

### 3.2. Pre-1947 Background

The British colonial power began its rule in India as in Bengal in 1765 through achieving the 'fir man' granting '*Dewani* Right' from the fugitive Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. For guiding itself and administering the Bengal Presidency, it brought many changes in social, political and cultural areas that had a great impact on our society. The development and growth of organized student politics in Bangladesh is very much related with the process of changes that have taken place in this country. The British colonial power expanded and consolidated its rule in Bengal as in India developing a capitalist path. It had a great impact on our society, which contributed to create new social classes in Bengal. The people of the new social classes developed violent resistant struggle to the colonial power from different sections of Indian sub-continent. It should be mentioned here that the people of the Bengal became first to feel the impact of the new policies made by the British. The Bengal Renaissance, which brought consciousness among people, was associated with the rise of new social classes in Bengal. Susobhan Sarker rightly expressed his opinion regarding Bengal Renaissance. He stated, "Bengal's consciousness of the changing world was more developed and ahead than the rest of India."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Susobhan Sarker, *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Kolkata; Papyrus, 2002), p.11.

A remarkable efflorescence in different spheres of life, such as social, political, religious, literary and artistic, had taken place due to the Bengal Renaissance. The first youthful expression of this cultural awakening was the development of the Young Bengal Movement (YBM).<sup>2</sup>

Some students of Hindu College formed an Academic Association in 1817. Most probably, this Academic Association was the first student organization in Bengal and it became to be known as Young Bengal. Members of the Young Bengal debated the most general kinds of subjects, as like as, free will, fate, truth, virtue and the hollowness of idolatry. They revolted against orthodoxy and critically analyzed their society. They felt shame and degradation of contemporary society and strove in their different ways to uplift the people and restore their pristine greatness. Their heroes were the philosophers, and Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" was their handbook.<sup>3</sup> Members of the Young Bengal were centered on their youthful teacher Henry Louis Vivian Derozio<sup>4</sup> (1809-31) and David Hare<sup>5</sup>. Both Derozio and Hare were lively and unconventional teachers of Hindu College. To the students Derozio was an *alter ego*, their friend, philosopher and guide. Their teachers inspired members of the Young Bengal.

Young Bengal politics lived on ivory towers. Members of this organization were against superstition and conservatism. They defined the rights of man and demanded free and compulsory education for all. Necessity of female education, mother tongue as the medium of education, *Sotidaho Pratha*, and widow marriage were discussed among the members of Young Bengal. In that time, more sober Bengalis began to shape local politics concentrating on specific grievances and

<sup>2</sup> Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.196.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Derozio was Eurasian of mixed patronage born in 1809. He imbibed radical-rationalistic ideas from his Scottish teacher, David Drummond, at his Dharmatola Academy. Derozio had an unflinching faith in the French Revolution and the rationalist philosophies of Voltaire, Hume, Bacon, Locke and Tom Paine. In 1826 he joined the Hindu College as the teacher of Literature and History. His performance was excellent. One of his biographers writes about his performance in the College, "Neither before, nor since his day, has any teacher, within the walls of any educational establishment in India, ever exercised such an influence over his pupils." Peary Chad Mitra, one of his students, writes that Derozio impressed upon his pupils the sacred duty of thinking for them, to live and die for truth, to cultivate and practice all the virtues and shunning vice in every shape. Derozio was ready to communicate with his students and gave them extra readings after college hours and in the intervals of prescribed teaching.

<sup>5</sup> David Hare was the main associate of Rammohan to establish the new educational system in Bengal. He was one of the founders of Hindu College and was the principal organizer of school Book Society. (See *Muktir Sangrame Bharat*, West Bengal Academy, 1996, p.18).

remedies. After the death of Derozio, his students and members of Academic Association circulated the speech of revolution in the whole society. They issued a magazine called *Parthenon* in 1830 under Derozio's direction. The *Parthenon* (athaenum) was declared as an illegal paper by the conservative Lords of the society and the English government. After issuing one volume, the publication of the magazine was stopped by H. H. Wilson, the visitor of the Hindu College.<sup>6</sup>

In 1830, members of the Young Bengal gave free play to their spirit of internationalism by celebrating the July Revolution in France (1830). On December 10, 200 persons attended the July Revolution celebration programme in the Town Hall of Kolkata. On 25<sup>th</sup> of the same month some unknown pupils of Derozio hoisted the tri-colored flag of the French Revolution on the *Octorloni* Monument with the removal of Union Jack. Rumor spread that some college boys would repeat lines from Homer's '*Iliad*' instead of *mantras*.<sup>7</sup> The then orthodox society was deeply alarmed by these irreligious activities and radical ideas of Derozians. At the same time, the British were also afraid of that situation. They thought Hindu College was the breeding ground of that incident and its students were renouncing the revolution against the British. In fact, the removal of Union Jack was the milestone in the history of student politics in Bangladesh.

Students of Derozio came to be collectively known as *Young Bengal*. In 1830, Krishnamohan Banerjee, one of the Derozians, inaugurated a periodical called *Enquirer*<sup>8</sup> for fighting against obscurantism. At the same time, Rashik Krishna Mullick published *Gyananneshun*.<sup>9</sup> The main objective of this periodical was to instruct the people about the science of government and jurisprudence.

The Young Bengal had both of healthy and unhealthy trends. The progressive outlook and rationalism was their healthy trends. Rammohan's strenuous campaign against *Sati* and his criticism against colonial rule had a great impact on the

<sup>6</sup> Suranjan Chatterjee and Siddhartha Guha Ray, *History of Modern India 1707-1857* (Kolkata; Progressive Publishers, 1997), p.209.

<sup>7</sup> The members of the Young Bengal were influenced by western culture. They believed in patriotism, nationalism, ethnocentrism, humanism and individualism. They recited the '*Iliad*' in lieu of their *mantras*. They met at Derozio's house to eat beef and drink beer. One of the students won notoriety by greeting an image of the goddess *Kali*, not with the customary bow, but with 'Good morning', 'Madam'.

<sup>8</sup> *Enquirer* was an English organ. Through this periodical, the Derozians tried to uplift the people and restore their prestige greatness.

<sup>9</sup> *Gyananneshun* was a Bengali Organ. It also pleaded for women's education and emancipation.

Derozians.<sup>10</sup> The Derozians not only criticized the vices of the then society but also critically analyzed the colonial rule. In fact the Derozians had superiority over the elders that made generational conflict of an unparalleled intensity. Virtually they were patriots *par excellence* as like as their unconventional teacher, Deorio. Deorio, in his poems like "To India – My Native Land", shown the depth and intensity of his patriotic feelings.<sup>11</sup> After the unexpected death of Deorio, some of his student like- Rashik Krishna Mullick, Ramgopal Ghosh took side against colonialism. As for example, Rashik Krishna Mullick took stand against police corruptions, tried to draw attention of the people against the negative aspects of the permanent settlement and raised his voice to abolish the political power of the East Indian Company.<sup>12</sup> Ramgopal Ghosh, another Derozian called as the 'Indian Demosthenes', through his remarks defended the so called "black bills."<sup>13</sup> The main objective of these bills was to abolish the judicial impunities of Europeans in India, which caused an outcry among Europeans.

Although the *Young Bengal Movement* had some positive trends, there were also some negative trends. They denounced their heritage, became addicted to forbidden food and drink, embraced Christianity and demonstrated against Hinduism, due to their zeal for rationality. The name of Madhab Chandra Mullick and Krishnamohan Banerjee should be mentioned here for best example. Madhab Chandra Mullick in his remarks in the Hindu College magazine said, "If there is anything that we hate from the bottom of the heart, it is Hinduism."<sup>14</sup>

This remark of Madhab Chandra Mullick proves that there were negative trends among the Derozians, which gave an upper hand to the contemporary orthodoxy to stand against the Derozians. For these negative factors, members of the Young Bengal failed to develop a political movement with a definite ideology. In spite of these negative trends, they had greatly contributed to the cultural life of Bengal. They became as a sign of noble and good. Regarding this Haramohan Chatterjee rightly opined saying by, "They were all considered men of truth. Indeed, the College boy was a synonym of truth."<sup>15</sup> The most remarkable aspects of Derozians were as

<sup>10</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *Exploring Student Politics* (Kolkata; Balaka Prakashan, 1998), p.75.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

an Indian scholar, Susobhan Sarkar, rightly observed, "A fearless rationalism and a candid appreciation of the liberating thought from the west."<sup>16</sup> After Derozio's death, the Young Bengal Movement was a little wayward because it clipped of leadership and lacked in any cohesive program. In spite of these problems, members of the Young Bengal Movement were faithful to the memory of their master and close-knit to each other by the bonds of affection and friendship. They galvanized Bengal in general in the late 1820s flaunting their renunciation of Orthodox Hindu Society.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a great major trend in the development of some student organizations in Bengal. In 1833, some students of Hindu College set up an organization—"Sorbotottodipica Sava".<sup>17</sup> Its main aspect was to discuss the development of society as well as country. In 1838, some radical students of Hindu College formed the 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge'<sup>18</sup>, which worked as a quasi-political body. Its main function was to discuss various problems of the then society regularly. Members of this student organization produced more than six journals and magazines.

Another student organization, '*Deshahitaishenee Sabha*'<sup>19</sup> was inaugurated at a meeting attended by 2000 Derozians. It was a full-fledged political organization. During inauguration ceremony, Sarda Prasad Ghosh in his keynote speech accused the British rulers. He said that the British rulers deprived the Indians in the sphere of political liberty. He also said that the cause of our misery and degradation was the deprivation. In true sense, a new and vigorous spirit was present among the conscious part of the students of Bengal. Gautom Chatterjee rightly said, "There was no specific thought in the mind of Bengali educated class regarding independence. But they felt the suppressive situation by the colonial power. The student community felt it severely".<sup>20</sup>

The first sign of a new movement was noticed in the formation of provincial organization of educated Bengalis. In 1848 Dadabhai Naoroji and Mandeik had

<sup>16</sup> Susobhan Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p.111.

<sup>17</sup> The main patrons of this organization were-Roma Prasad Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Nabin Madhab Dey, Darkanath Mitra, Horgopal Basu and some other students of Hindu College.

<sup>18</sup> It had 200 members. Among the members of this association-Ramtonu Lahiry, Bidhya Sagar, Michael Modhusudan Dutta, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitra and Debendranath Tagore were the pioneers.

<sup>19</sup> The members of the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge later formed *Deshahitaishenee Sabha* in 1841.

<sup>20</sup> Gautom Chattapadhyay (ed.), *Shadhinata Sangrame Bangler Chattrra Samaj* (Kolkata; Charu Prakash, 1980), p.191.

founded *The Students Literary and Scientific Society*.<sup>21</sup> It became the center of academic, educational and cultural movements. In 1850s and 1860s, student's organizations like *The Bethune Society* (1851) and *The Bengal Social Science Association*<sup>22</sup> (1867) were formed and they worked to develop a scientific manner among the people.

Later when Ananda Mohan Bose returned from England, an attempt was seriously made to organize the students as a strong force dedicated to national regeneration. The Brahmo radicals organized the *Calcutta Student's Association* in 1875.<sup>23</sup> Surendranath Banerjee launched himself in public life through this association enthraling its members by his eloquence. This association later gave birth to *Indian Association* in 1876. These early associations were the nuclei out of which the structure of Indian National Congress was built. The student associations and their agitation over issues concerning academic equality among Indians and British were the precursors of the mighty organization that was to arise and the elemental uprisings that were to follow. The most important feature of this first activity of Indians was in the close association, almost alliance between the new leadership and the student masses. They heralded the dawn of a new era and their actions shaped the character of that era. They did the pioneer work. In fact, the then students had given the first manifestation of this undying spirit. The first student agitation in India was also the first national agitation.

In the same year of the establishment of Indian Association, another student organization the *Samadarshi Goshti* was formed. Members of this organization moved for autonomy, denied the caste system and did not believe in private property. It may be clear from the oath of its members in which they pledged, "To us self-government is the best form of government. No man should marry before he is 21, no woman before she is 16. We shall try to educate the masses. We do not believe in private property, but we shall work for national welfare with co-operative society as our goal".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> P.M. Joshi, *Students Revolts in India: Story of Pro-independence Youth Movement* (Mumbai; n.p., 1972), p.5.

<sup>22</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.79.

<sup>23</sup> Joshi, *op.cit.*, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Gautom Chattapadhyay, *op.cit.*, p.5.

In 1882-83, the *European and Anglo-Indian Defense Association*, formed in order to conduct the agitation against the *Ilbert Bill*, demonstrated the racism of the Europeans. During this time, Surendra Nath was tried for contempt of court, convicted and sent to jail for two months, on May 5, 1883. The student community of Bengal was greatly agitated and they protested *en masse*. In protest, they went on a strike under the leadership of Ashutosh Mukherjee on the day Surendra Nath was tried in court. Thus, the student movement took a new turn. Duncan rightly pointed out, "It was not till after the political and racial excitement (in connection with the *Ilbert Bill*) had spread throughout India that the youth attending schools and colleges showed signs of turbulence and insubordination".<sup>25</sup> The country therefore can be said to have dragged students out of the morass of slavery and demoralization and by their own example inspired the young minds with patriotic fervor.

In the cultural arena, three giant figures—Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore shaped Indian nationalism through their soul-stirring patriotic novel, hymn, poems, songs and their active participation in national politics. Bankim's *Anandamath*, *Anusilantatwa* and hymn *Vandematram*, Vivekananda's fiery nationalism and Tagore's poems and songs encouraged the students of Bengal to participate in national politics. These had enormous impact on the students of that time because of their patriotic fervor. The three giants and their works made a deep impression upon the students and influenced the students to participate in national movement.<sup>26</sup>

The political climate was hitting up, when Lord Curzon had announced a New University Act in 1904 to officialized all Indian universities and brought them under more strict control of the colonial bureaucracy and to restrict the growth and development as well as the freedom of the universities.<sup>27</sup> It was deeply resented by all and especially by the students. Thus it made Curzon very unpopular and drew nationalist's criticism. For this reason, students of Bengal became more turbulent and intolerant, and developed a mass movement against Curzon's education policy. At this juncture, Curzon's decision to partition Bengal on communal lines created a strong discontentment among the students of Bengal. Students took the Curzon's

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Joshi, *op.cit.*, pp.9-11.

<sup>26</sup> S.K. Ghosh, *The Student Challenge Round the World* (Kolkata; Eastern Law House, 1969), p.35.

<sup>27</sup> K.M. Samsul Alam, *Student Politics of Bangladesh* (Dhaka; Biswabidyalaya Shikkha and Sahitya Parishad, 1991), p.16.

policy as a conspiracy to divide the Hindu and the Muslim community and break up the spirit of Bengali Nationalism, language and traditions. They became inimical to Curzon's policy because it set ablaze the tinderbox of Bengali Nationalism and developed a united mass upheaval against the partition of Bengal. By this, the country the students learned their first lessons in practical patriotism. They fought for their country and freedom through boycotting their schools and colleges, organizing mammoth processions and facing the suppressive measures of British government with their historic *lathi*.<sup>28</sup>

The repeal of the Partition of Bengal became the main agenda of Bengali Nationalism wherever *Swadeshi Movement* was one of the weapons of new nationalism.<sup>29</sup> It took a major leap forward with the start of *Swadeshi Movement* at the turn of the twentieth century. Students of Bengal spontaneously participated in the *Swadeshi Movement*. The beginning of the student movement in an organized way in Bengal can be dated from this time. Like the students of many other colonial or semi colonial countries, students of Bengal became aware of the evil effects of British colonialism which led them to develop anti-colonial movements.

The first institutionalized outburst came in response to the Carlyle's circular, which was published on 22 October 1905 prohibiting student political activities. The Bengal students set up the Anti-circular Society, the first mass student organization that was born in November 4, 1905 in Calcutta under the leadership of Sachindranath Prasad Basu and Romakanto Roy. On November 11, 1905 a meeting was held at Calcutta under the presidentship of Ashutosh Choudhury in which speakers like Harendra Nath Datta, Bipin Chandra Pal, Monoranjan Guhathakurta and others appealed to the students to boycott educational institutions. In response to this call, bands of young students boycotted their schools and colleges and dissociated themselves from the education of Calcutta University that came to be described under the sobriquet of *GOLAM KHANA*.<sup>30</sup> During this movement, the student community played an important role and put up a glorious resistance to the British rule. They set up National schools at Rangpur, Khulna, Noakhali and Barishal to accommodate students who were expelled and rusticated from the schools and colleges for

<sup>28</sup> Joshi, *op.cit.*, p.10.

<sup>29</sup> Gautom Chattopadhyay, *Bengal Electoral Politics and Freedom Struggle 1862-1947* (New Delhi; Indian Council of Historical Research, 1984), p.40.

<sup>30</sup> Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.30; Rajat Kanta Roy, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal 1875-1927* (Delhi; Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.154-156.



political activities. They enthusiastically responded to the clarion-call of militant nationalism and participated in the campaigns for *Swadeshi* and boycott programs. To curb the spirit of the students and to control the *Swadeshi movement*, the British ruler came down with a heavy hand of severe repressive measures. In spite of the government's repressive measures, numerous protest meetings were held in *mofussil* towns – Dhaka, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Jessore, Pabna, Tangail, Birbhum and Barisal in response to the call of the famous trio Lal-Bal-Pal's<sup>31</sup> four planks of program, which was enthusiastically acclaimed by the people. In fact, a wave of Bengali nationalism swept over the land. Foreign clothes were rejected, foreign goods became untouchable and freedom had become the supreme matter for all.

On boycott day, August 7, 1906, the students presented Surendranath Banerjee with a specimen of Indian's national flag. It was really a historic act of students in our history that showed that the students of Bengal were politically more advanced and conscious than the other sections of the Nation. Regarding the role of students, Anirban Banerjee said, "It is evident that the students took a more radical stance than their leaders. They thought of independence even before their leaders."<sup>32</sup>

In February 1906, a communal riot broke out at Jessore in which students played a remarkable role to maintain the communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. Sachindra Nath Prasad Basu and other students, who set up Anti-Circular Society, rushed to that place and restored the communal amity, which made a great example of personal heroism and self-sacrifice.<sup>33</sup>

The next phase of student politics started in Bengal began to flow into two streams. One was mainstream and the other was revolutionary who opted for underground terrorist movement. There were two main revolutionary groups, *Anushilan Samity* and *Yugantar*, along with other small sister organizations.<sup>34</sup> A section of the youths of Bengal, mostly students, who were dissatisfied with the program of Indian National Congress were aspirants of achieving independence through revolution. They joined the revolutionary organizations and believed into the power of gun and the bomb in overthrowing the British colonialism. Margaret Elizabeth Noble known

<sup>31</sup> Lal-Bal-Pal means-Lala Lajpatrai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. The four planks of the program were-Swadesh Boycott, National Education, Freedom and Swaraj.

<sup>32</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.83.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.29.

as Sister Nivedita, Barindra Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose, P. Mitra were the main patrons in these organizations. They took a keen interest to train the youths in revolutionary tactics. Some of the youths were trained to manufacture bombs in the research laboratories of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and Acharya P.C. Roy in Calcutta. The student community was the vanguard of the terrorist movement and many of who were boys of tender age. They exploded the first bomb on April 30, 1908 in the district town of Muzaffarpur. Revolutionary outrages in Bengal numbered 210 and attempts at committing such outrages amounted to 101 between 1906-1918. It is also found that there were 68 students out of 184 persons who were convicted in Bengal for revolutionary activities.<sup>35</sup> Gautam Chattopadhyay rightly pointed out, "almost all the cadres of the revolutionary movement in Bengal, including the martyrs Khudiram, Kanailal etc. were mostly teenaged students."<sup>36</sup>

By the time of Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 students of Bengal revolutionary parties became active and they were violating the law and order situations frequently. It is found that a group of revolutionaries raided on the armory at Chittagong in April 1930 in which most of the participants were students. S.K.Ghose mentioned that, "More than 90% of the active workers of the revolutionary parties were students. Many of them courted death as a result of wide spread repressive measures."<sup>37</sup>

In the aftermath of successful *Swadeshi Movement*, the British government legalized the repression through passing the Rowlatt Act, described as the 'Black Bill' in March 1919 and launched an unparalleled state terrorism for breaking the nationalist movement that reached in the climax of *Jallianwalabagh Massacre* (4 April, 1919).<sup>38</sup> This act of barbarism was strongly opposed by the students who became the main striking force of the national movement. In September 1920, when Mahatma Gandhi sponsored Non-cooperation Movement. It is found that more than 90000 students left schools and colleges and joined more than 800 schools and colleges that had sprung up the whole country. They triggered off a province-wide strike to force the managements of their institutions to disaffiliate themselves from the government. They also took part in the picketing as well as in the *hartal* program

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>36</sup> Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6.

<sup>37</sup> Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.35.

<sup>38</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.84.

massively. On January 20, 1921 students observed a complete strike in all schools and colleges while they declared, "We shall not go back to our classes until *Swaraj* is won".<sup>39</sup> Another dramatic event was occurred in November 1921 when the Prince of Wales visited Calcutta. Students of Bengal greeted him with thousands of black flags. Thus, we can say that Bengal's students directed themselves in the Non-cooperation Movement with full vigor to make it success. The first mass movement was going to be reached at the door of success. But a dramatic turn took place in the early of 1922 when Mahatma Gandhi called off the Non-cooperation Movement because of its ugly turn throughout the country after the Chauri Chaura outrage. This decision of Gandhi saved the day for British colonial power. Altbach mentioned that the articulate and militant nationalism of the Congress inspired the student's community to take part in the dramatic political action for speedy independence of India.<sup>40</sup>

It was in Bengal that a major step took place in 1928 when the first student's association, *All-Bengal Student's Association (ABSA)* was formed with an effective organization, by which students tried to develop ideological politics to local and provincial levels.<sup>41</sup> The ABSA took a leading part in the anti-Simon demonstration on January 12 and 19 of 1929. A split was developed in ABSA in the same year, which helped the dissidents to form a new organization—the *Bengal Presidency Students Association (BPSA)* at the Mymensingh Annual Conference. The split among the members of ABSA was in fact, unfortunate and it crippled the ABSA for the time being. The rift between two student organizations was abolished during the civil disobedience movement, when the ABSA and BPSA worked jointly to lead this movement.<sup>42</sup>

In the 1930s students to the call of Gandhi, participated in the Civil Disobedience movement on a massive scale. This movement marked a critically important stage in the progress of the struggle against the colonial power. Students of Bengal were more active and they played the most prominent part in this struggle. On 12<sup>th</sup> March 1930, students hoisted the national flag at the Asutosh College with a slogan saying,

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Philip G. Altbach (ed.), *The Student Revolution: A Global Analysis* (Bombay; n.p.1970), pp.142-143.

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>42</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.86.

"Up up national flag, down down Union jack"<sup>43</sup> and they appealed to the students to boycott classes of that day. The students of Bengal boycotted the schools and colleges. They demonstrated against the British cloths and liquor and took a program to popularize the indigenous goods and boycott the foreign goods. Students resonated with massive protests and sporadic incidents against the activities of police and government's dictatorial attitudes. During this time, many of the students were sentenced for short jail for their part in the struggle and thousands of students left educational institutions to work on the education and social service projects of Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru put the right comment on student's participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement and on the brutal terror taken by the British Government. He said, "Bengal presented the most extra-ordinary spectacle. Government treated the whole population, as hostile large areas seemed to be in a continuous state of siege... India went through this fierce fire of repression, but the ... Bengal suffered most".<sup>44</sup> A huge number of students of the educational institutions of Bengal like Bethune College, Presidency College, Scottish Church College and Dhaka University etc. participated in picketing and had to suffer various form of molestation. During Civil Disobedience Movement, the journal of ABSA, *India Tomorrow*, tried to carry continuous sustained campaign of *Civil Disobedience Movement* with clandestine literature. At the same time, students of Bengal were emotionally and intellectually prepared by Bankim Chandra's book *Anandamath*, *Anushilantotta and hymn. Vandemataram*, the songs of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, the synthetic philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and the speeches and writings of many renowned figures of India.<sup>45</sup> With the calling off the *Civil Disobedience Movement* by Gandhi in 1933 the militant students became angry at the timidity of the Gandhian leadership.

The aftermath of the calling off the *Civil Disobedience Movement* witnessed the development of socialist ideas. Influence of Marxism was increasing day by day. Under these circumstances, students took decision to form an *All-India student's organization*. As a result, the *All-India Student's Federation (AISF)* was born in August 1936. Although the AISF came into existence with the influence of communists, people from all walks of life could join it. The AISF in its first meeting

<sup>43</sup> Susnata Das, "Swadhinata Sangrame Banglar Chattri Samaj", in Barun Dey (ed.), *Bengal's Student Community in Freedom Struggle* (Kolkata; Teachers Concern, 1992), p.52.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.87.

<sup>45</sup> For details, see Ghosh, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36.

spelt out 26 proposals as objectives and demands covering many educational and political issues.<sup>46</sup> The AISF was a historic achievement. Student politics got institutional shape at all India level through this organization. It worked as an umbrella organization for many years. AISF provided a radical point of view on many socio-political issues<sup>47</sup> through its journal, "The Student".<sup>48</sup>

With the development of AISF, some other communal student organizations such as *All India Muslim Student's Federation (AIMSF)* and *The Hindu Students Federation (HSF)* were born in that time. Thus it is true to say that the then student politics was more or less influenced by communalism, but the communal tendency was not harmful to the mainstream nationalist movement.<sup>49</sup> With the passage of time, a vertical split within the AISF was opened in 1940 due to the problems of the growing ideological sophistication of the student movement. In spite of this problem, students largely took *Quit India Movement* in the call of the national leaders. In Bengal, they started a spontaneous and widest possible movement through observing *hartal*, participating in almost daily demonstrations, taking part in the sabotage campaigns and disrupting the administrative machinery. When the national leaders were arrested, students often assumed leadership and provided a key role as liaison men between the underground leaders and the movement. They braved police and military that armed themselves with draconian measures. In Bengal, they observed a complete province-wide general strike in all schools and colleges despite the draconian measures and wanton repression taken by British police. At least five students laid down their lives in Bengal. The participation of the student community of Bengal in the *Quit India Movement* was remarkable and not seen in the past and this movement was more intensive than the *Satyagrahan Andolon* and of the *Civil Disobedience Movement*.<sup>50</sup>

The year 1943 and its aftermath were also marked by heroic actions of the students. It is found that when a dreadful and terrible famine made the whole Bengal overcast with darkness in 1943, the student community of Bengal flared up against the famine. They started '*Bangla Bachao Andolon*' (save the Bengal) and went to the famine hit people of Bengal with a great amount of succor. Hundreds and thousands

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>48</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op.cit.*, p.89.

<sup>49</sup> Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.36; Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Gautom Chattopadhyay, *Sadhinata Sangrame*, *op.cit.*, p.36.

members of BPSF, AISF, *Kissore Bahini*, *All Bengal Girl Students Association (ABGSA)* etc. moved in the towns and villages of Bengal to distribute food, drinking water and other succors among the starving people.<sup>51</sup> Later the students fought against the British shoulder to shoulder with peasant and the working class on the issues like- the *Royal Indian Navy (RIN)* Mutiny, release of INA (*Indian National Army*) prisoners, postal employee's movement, *Tebhaga Andolon* etc. In February 1946, students of Bengal became clamorous for the release of INA officer Captain Rashid Ali. During this movement, they observed *hartal*, brought out processions and made barricades in many places of Bengal. It is found that more than 150 people including students were killed and many of the participants were injured in the whole Bengal in course of the release movement of Captain Rashid Ali.<sup>52</sup>

The nationalist sentiment reached a crescendo when INA trial was started on 21 November 1945. Students and ratings began this movement to challenge the British authority that ended in repression. During this movement, processions retaliated with stones and brickbats upon a *lathi* charge of police in which two persons died and 52 were injured and many were arrested in defiance of law.<sup>53</sup> On February 18, 1946, another movement was started when the *Royal Indian Navy (RIN)* went on strike. This movement was characterized by a display of solidarity of the Bengal student community. As a part of this movement, students of Bengal boycotted classes, observed *hartals* and organized processions against the official repression. The status of the RIN Mutiny was really heroic in our history because of the involvement of the students and common people in this struggle. It jerked the British imperialism vehemently. Bipin Chandra said, "The RIN revolt was seen as an event which marked the end of the British rule almost as finally as Independence Day, 1947."<sup>54</sup>

From 16 August 1946 to April 1947, student community of Bengal put a significant contribution on another issue when a dreadful communal riot and holocaust broke out in the whole Bengal, which made horrendous, inclement in the life of Bengali nation. They became bewildered and stunned by the facts of the riot and took part in

<sup>51</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947* (New Delhi; Macmillan India Limited, 2002), p.406.

<sup>52</sup> Bipin Chandra, *et. al.*, *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi; Penguin Books, 1989), p.479.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Ganeshwar Nayak, *A Study of Modern Indian History* (New Delhi; Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2003), pp. 292-293; Sumit Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p.423.

the anti-riot activities by degrees and worked whole-heartedly to patch up the Hindu–Muslim communal animosities.<sup>55</sup>

Lastly, students of Bengal demonstrated their last of all emotions and grievances on the eve of the independence of Indian Sub-continent against the tragic partition of Bengal which was the unfortunate consequence of the age old Hindu–Muslim conflict. Students of both East and West Bengal moved for a united Bengal. They bestowed their abhorrence upon the decision of the partition of Bengal and appealed to keep a united Bengal in Indian Sub-continent.<sup>56</sup> The anti-partition movement was the last part of student's movement in which they played a heroic role.

### 3.3. Student Politics in Pakistan

#### 3.3.1. Pakistan Period 1: (1947-58)

Student politics in the British period was the result of reaction of the students to the autocratic rule of the British colonial power. But when Pakistan liberated as an independent state from the British colonial power, it was expected that the newborn Pakistan state headed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, would give a new direction to the student movement. This expectation was destroyed soon after the independence of Pakistan when the west Pakistani leaders played the same role as like as of the British. The post independence phase of student movement was started when the first conflict between the East and West Pakistan was grown up on the issue of constitution making for new state. Bengalis organized themselves on this political issue and out right they rejected the *Basic Principles Committee (BPC)* for the first time. People all walks of life, including students, were agitating for a full provincial autonomy of East Pakistan. They launched a movement against the BPC recommendations with intensive measure that was more organized than expectations. A Dhaka the then English daily named, *The Pakistan Observer* summed up the reaction of the protesters as follows:

The citizens of Dhaka, mostly East Bengalis, were rudely shocked when local dailies carried to them, the full text of the Basic Principles Committee Report with regard to the future constitution of Pakistan. It came from all walks of life, high officials, professors, teachers, lawyers, students, medical men, police personnel, etc. Their first reaction was that of bewilderment.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Gautom Chottapahyay, *Sadhinata Sangrame*, *op.cit.*, p.83.

<sup>56</sup> Bipan Chandra, *et. at.*, *op.cit.*, pp.487-488.

<sup>57</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *Constitutional Development in Pakistan* (London; Longman, n.d),, p.72.

In fact, the agitation against the BPC recommendations was unprecedented. In East Pakistan, students of almost all schools, colleges, university and *madrassas*<sup>58</sup> observed strike on 12 November 1950 and held protest meetings in which *Nikkhil East Pakistan Muslim Students' League (NEPMSL)* and *Students Federation (SF)* took the leading role in absence of the Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other leading members.<sup>59</sup> In point of such a strong adverse reaction, all over the country, the central government had taken decision to postpone the BPC Report on November 21, 1950. It was a great achievement on the part of the students and of the whole Bengali nation.

The colonized feeling of Bengalis was heightened when West Pakistani Muslim League leaders began to suggest that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan and added insult to injury Bengalis by attempting cultural subjugation. Not only Noon but also M.A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Ayub Khan, Khawaja Nazimuddin and Bengali and non-Bengali collaborators of west Pakistani threw same views through their irresponsible and malicious campaign. But these insulting comments of west Pakistanis did not go unchallenged and unanswered.<sup>60</sup>

On February 23, 1948 after six months of liberated Pakistan, the then Prime minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, in the first session of constituent Assembly vindictively announced. "Pakistan is a Muslim State and must have as its Lingua franca, the language of a Muslim nation. It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu and no other language."<sup>61</sup> After two days, Jinnah made almost same statement. He said, "Pakistan being a Muslim state, Urdu will be its state language."<sup>62</sup> This pro- Pakistani statement was rejected with a large-scale protest, which was registered by observing a strike on March 11, 1948 and that achieved a spontaneous success. A series of demonstrations, meetings and processions took place in Dhaka and other towns of East Pakistan organized mainly by the students. Students were mobilizing public opinion throughout the East Pakistan for the recognition of Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan

<sup>58</sup> 'Madrassa' means religious institution of Muslim Community.

<sup>59</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1991), p.25.

<sup>60</sup> Rafiqul Islam B.U., *A Tale of Millions: Bangladesh Liberation War 1971* (Dhaka; Ananna Prokashan, 1986), p.42.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Abul Fazl Huq, *Bangladesh Politics: Conflict and Change 1971-1991* (Rajshahi; Rajshahi University Text Book Board, 1994), p.21.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Moudud Ahmed, *Constitutional Quest*, *op.cit.*, p.27.



that marked the beginning of the historic language Movement. It brought out an explosion of public resentment in the form of strikes demonstrations and processions all over the East Pakistan. On January 30, 1952 Dhaka University students held a meeting and all educational institutions of Dhaka city were on strike that was followed by a mammoth procession at the campus the day ended.<sup>63</sup>

In the very earliest of 1952, students could gear up the movement and they formed an *All-Party Action Committee (APAC)*. With the decision of APAC, students of East Pakistan observed a province wide strike and held a mass demonstration in Dhaka on 21 February for the recognition of Bengali as a state language. They violated section 144 of the criminal procedure code on that day. Agitation, violent protests and demonstrations of students were continued up to February 23. To suppress the demand of the people of East Pakistan police fired in discriminately on the demonstrators. At least five persons were killed and many were injured in the three days of violent protests. The streets of Dhaka were besmeared with the blood of martyrs.<sup>64</sup> After this incidence, the Language Movement gained momentum and spread through out the East Pakistan. At last the government was compelled to recognize Bengali as a state language of Pakistan on 7 May 1954. The Pakistani Government also incorporated a provision regarding Bengali as a state language besides Urdu in the constitution of 1956 to that effect.<sup>65</sup>

In fact the language Movement led to an open struggle between the Bengali nationalists and the central ruling class of Pakistan. The nationalist forces started to consolidate people's unity and that was achieved more than ever before. The flowers of Bengali Nationalism blossomed through the demand for recognition of Bengali as one of the state language of Pakistan. This movement not only brought a solid sense of identity among the people irrespective of class, color and creed on the language issue but also generated a deep sense of pride among the people after its logical and rational conclusion.<sup>66</sup> At the same time it paved the way of the disintegration of Pakistan, which occurred in 1971.

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

<sup>64</sup> Rafiqul Islam, *op.cit.*, pp.43-44.

<sup>65</sup> Abul Fazl Huq, *Government and Politics of Bangladesh* (Rangpur, Bangladesh; Town Stores, 2000), p.56.

<sup>66</sup> Abul Fazl Huq, *Bangladesh Politics*, *op.cit.*, p.23.

During the period of general elections of the East Pakistan provincial Assembly, students aimed to crush the Muslim League through publicity and propaganda against them. For this reason, the students' community put major pressure on the nationalist forces to make an electoral alliance against the ruling Muslim League. As a result, an alliance was formed in 1954 by the nationalist forces in the name of *United Front*. It adopted a famous 21-point Programme covering many political, economical, cultural and educational issues which had a far-reaching political impact in Pakistan and that became to the people of East Pakistan as a very important political charter in their struggle for equal treatment. In this election, the 'United Front' won 228 seats out of 237 Muslim seats.<sup>67</sup> It had been possible only because of the combined effort of the students and United Front, which marked the great victory of the Bengalis against the Pakistani ruling elites.

### 3.3.2. Pakistan Period 2: 1958-69

The end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 60s saw a wide spread resentment of the students in East Pakistan when President Iskander Mira relinquished the Presidency and Field Marshal Ayub Khan assumed the power of Pakistan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator later President. There was a widespread resentment against Ayub Khan.

The Bengali students took the leading part in challenging the Martial Law and Ayub's dictatorial government in East Pakistan. They called a protest strike on February 1, 1962 and that was followed by a series of strikes and demonstrations. Scores of students and other people were injured and over 200 were arrested in the ensuing clashes with the police.<sup>68</sup> It did not deter the students and their movement against Ayub Khan, spread to other parts of East Pakistan. For being exemption from students' agitation, Ayub's government closed down all educational institutions of East Pakistan on February 5. Students started their movement again with a renewed vigor when the educational institutions were reopened in March 1962. During this period, Ayub's government arrested a huge number of students and their leaders to suppress the students' movement. In April and May of 1962, Ayub's government held indirect elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies under

<sup>67</sup> Mohammed Hannan, *History of Student Movement in Bangladesh 1830-1971* (Dhaka; Agamme Prakashani, 2000), pp.189-197.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.237.

a new, unpopular and undemocratic constitution. Students soon took the elections as another issue for anti-Ayub movement that was continued up to August 1962.<sup>69</sup>

Students launched a movement against Ayub Khan for the sinister design in the education policy by Sharif Commission in 1962. They observed a total strike in the whole Eastern wing on August 15, 1962 that was followed by a number of protest meetings and demonstrations. Students from schools, colleges and universities joined the movement and they succeeded in gaining public support. Serious clashes took place between the students and the government forces in the subsequent anti-government action programmes in which government used brutal force against the agitators. The repressive action of Ayub's dictatorial government compelled the students to organize effective resistances. They countered action of the government with organized strikes and demonstrations. And it transformed the students' movement into a volatile political movement engulfing the whole of East Pakistan.<sup>70</sup> In these clashes, there was leaving some dead, scores injured and many were arrested. For this reason, students' community observed three days of mourning in the whole East Pakistan in regard to the martyrs of September 17, followed by a series of strikes and demonstrations.<sup>71</sup>

Later student movement turned into a people's movement against the Ayub government. To prevent such intensity and any further escalation of the movement, Ayub's government took decision not to implement the recommendations of the Shari commission that marked a partial victory on the part of the students of East Pakistan.<sup>72</sup>

The political movement continued throughout 1963 and 1964. Ayub resorted to various crimes to subvert the gathering momentum of the movement in East Pakistan with his reliable stooge Monem Khan who fomented anti-Hindu communal passions to divert the Bengalis attention from the political issue and tried to sabotage the movement through criminal activities by his patronized political and student cadres. In 1964, from 7 to 17 January, Hindu-Muslim (later Bengali-Bahari) communal riots erupted in certain parts of East Pakistan that affected the lives of

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<sup>69</sup> Rafiqul Islam, *op.cit.*, p.49.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.50-51.

<sup>71</sup> *Pakistan Observer*, 18 September 1962.

<sup>72</sup> Rafiqul Islam, *op.cit.*, p.51.

hundreds of innocent people. In this students did not participate but protected all minorities of East Pakistan.<sup>73</sup>

After a few days of riots, a new incident triggered fresh anti-Ayub movement in East Pakistan when Monem Khan, as an Ex-officio Chancellor of the University and distribute the certificates among the students on March 22, 1964. Centering this issue, clashes between the governmental forces, composed of police National Student Front (NSF) and hired gangsters, and continued throughout the day of the convocation. A huge number of students were injured and scores arrested. University authority rusticated many students' leaders. Universities resident halls, more than 50 colleges, and hundreds of high schools were closed down throughout the country. In spite of the closing down of the educational institutions, students continued their protest strikes and demonstrations. They put forward with a 22-point demand.<sup>74</sup> Most of the demands were related to access to higher education for all and the removal of the disparity between the two wings.

In order to pacify the students and to reduce the intensity of the students' movement, Ayub's Government appointed a new Education Commission headed by Justice Hamoodur Rahman in December 1964 which worked almost two years and it made an education report. But before the commission's report could be published in 1966, all students of Eastern wing of Pakistan rejected it. In January and September 1965, some other significant events changed the entire political scenario of the East Pakistan that had profound impact on the students' movement.<sup>75</sup>

In June 1962 when President Ayub incorporated some undemocratic provisions in the constitution of 1962 massive students agitations took place all over the East Pakistan and students months raised various demand at different stages as a reaction to the enactment of the constitution. They demonstrated for the repeal of the constitution and the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. In course of the demonstrations, Bengali students burned several hundred copies of the constitution.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>74</sup> *Report of the Commission on Student Problem and Welfare*, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education, Karachi, 1966, pp.228-234; Hannan, *op.cit.*, pp.283-291.

<sup>75</sup> Rafiqul Islam, *op.cit.*, p.54.

<sup>76</sup> *Pakistan Observer*, Dhaka, 17 February 1966.

In the same year, some left oriented students who were studying in England came forward to advocate for an independent East Pakistan. They formed several organizations in England under the umbrella of the 'East Pakistan House'. It soon made an impact both at home and abroad. They published their first booklets entitled 'Unhappy East Pakistan' by the end of 1962 in London, preparatory to the formation of this organization without any of the initiators' names on it.<sup>77</sup> In 1963, the members of this organization urged the people for developing a unified movement for an independent East Pakistan by a series of meetings and discussions.

In 1966, students became more active in the political activities when Sheikh Mujib submitted a 'Six Point Formula' in front of the nation with an explanatory note subtitled 'our right to live'.<sup>78</sup> In course of the Six-point based movement, Ayub threatened the people of East Pakistan with the language of arms and arrested Sheikh Mujib and several thousands of Awami Leaguers. In protest of these arrests, students observed a province wide strike on June 7, violating the government prohibition where 41 were killed due to police firing and about 1000 were arrested.<sup>79</sup>

After two years of six point based autonomy movement, a major step in the whole East Pakistan of student movement took place on 18 January 1968, when the Pakistani ruling elite weaved a net of conspiracy case and issued the Agartala conspiracy case against Sheikh Mujib and other Bengalis for crushing and eliminating the autonomy movement once for all. Addition of the name of Sheikh Mujib to the list of 35 accused persons changed the character of the proposed trial. The Bengali autonomists, specially the students community, treated this charges as an alibi and farcical trial designed by Ayub Khan. It aggravated the mental state of the conspicuous difference, distrust and aversion between the people of East and West wings. The trial became counter productive and helped the students to develop an anti-Ayub mass movement in East Pakistan.<sup>80</sup>

Towards the end of 1968, students' began a movement against Ayub Khan for restoration of democracy in Pakistan. Now the anti-Ayub movement led by *East Pakistan Students League (EPSL)* and *East Pakistan students Union (EPSU)*, enhanced in full swing in the whole East Pakistan. In course of the movement,

<sup>77</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.70.

<sup>78</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-90; K.M. Shamsul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.24.

<sup>80</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.101.

students formed *Chattra Sangram Parishad (Students Action Committee-SAC)* headed by Tofael Ahmed, which became the driving force of the students' movement. On 5 January 1969, this organization declared an 11 points program<sup>81</sup> including the regional autonomy in light of six points program and the demand for fundamental rights of the people of East Pakistan. Due to this reason, people all walks of life from the highest to the lowest responded at large to this movement. In effect, the movement turned into a vehement mass-upsurge.<sup>82</sup>

Ayub Government took every initiative to suppress this mass movement. But the revolutionary mental state of students and common people of East Pakistan became much more strong in proportionate to the repressive measures taken. Strikes, processions, demonstrations curfews and police firings became permanent and occasional factors that made a horrible anarchy and fearful situation in the whole East Pakistan. In point of such a situation, Ayub began to kneel down to the power of the students and common people gradually and he withdrew the restriction on the Daily Ittefaq, proposed a round table meeting for discussing constitutional matters, and declared that he would not compete in the next election.<sup>83</sup> But it could not pacify the students and the agitated people. At last, he was compelled to fulfill the demands of students and gave deliverance to all accused persons of *Agartala Conspiracy Case* on 22 February without any condition that marked a great success on the part of the Bengalis in the political history of Bangladesh.

Some incidents such as the shot dead of Asaduzzaman Asad, Matiur, Rustom, Babul, Anwar, the death of Sergeant Zahoorul Haque and Prof. Samsuzzoha and finally the collaborating act of DAC leaders helped creating further momentum to the 11 points movement of the students and eventually it turned into a mass upsurge. The student movement during these days provided a tremendous energy for the nationalist forces. In fact, the SAC Leadership was not limited to the students. It also spread all over the workers, peasants and the multitudes.

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<sup>81</sup> Although Tofael Ahmed headed the SAC and declared the 11-point program, but the key person behind the formation of SAC and declaration of 11-point program was Sirajul Alam Khan. The 11-point program was formally amended on January 17, 1969; For details of 11-points see Appendix 5.

<sup>82</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.129.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.136.

The death of the sons of Bengalis sparked off over the East Pakistan as like as wild fire.<sup>84</sup> The public emotion rose to its height. Students, teachers of all Universities, Colleges and Schools and the people of this region came out in processions protesting the killings. Each and every incident aggravated the situation further more. The cause of Bengali nationalism gained much more public support due to these incidences which arouse the public emotional ferment and helped to bring unity and integration among the people. It is true to say that for these reasons, the people of East Pakistan got unprecedented source of energy for Bengali nationalist movement.

In many programmes, students chanted slogans, such as- "Jay Bangla"; "Tomar Amar Thikana, Padma Meghna Jamuna", "Dhaka Na Pindi, Dhaka Dhaka," "Punjab Na Bangla, Bangla Bangla," "Amar Desh Tomar Desh, Bangladesh Bangladesh," "Jeler Tala Bhangboo, Sheikh Mujib Ke Anboo," and carried banners.<sup>85</sup> These were the most popular slogans, which inspired hundreds and thousands of people and introduced Bengalis in this movement. Student leaders gave out all directions that were followed by the students and the common people and government officials.

In course of the Mass Upsurge, the political dynamics also took a very radical turn. The movement based on Mujib's 6 points and students' 11- points Programme, now turned into a movement for *Swadhikar* and *Krishak Sramik Raj*,<sup>86</sup> led only by the students and workers, ultimately freed Mujib. A massive influx of rural background younger elements came into the forefront and they applied their force to the main strength of the movement. Most of them were from the lower middle class low-income groups, farmers and industrial workers.

Soon after the release of Sheikh Mujib, students and workers organized and controlled the largest meeting held at Dhaka Race Course in which they conferred him the titles *Banga Shardul* and *Bangabandhu*<sup>87</sup> on February 23, 1969 at Dhaka Race Course Maidan.

<sup>84</sup> Mohammed Hannan, *History of Student Movement in Bangladesh Part II-1953-1969* (Dhaka; Agamee Prakashani, 1994), pp.210-219.

<sup>85</sup> For details, see-Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp.148-149.

<sup>86</sup> *Swadhikar* means right to self-rule and *Krishak Sramik Raj* means rule of peasants and workers.

<sup>87</sup> *Bangla Shardul* means Tiger of Bengal and *Banga Bandhu* means Friend of Bengal. Mujib preferred the later. For this reason it became more popular in Bangladesh.

Afterwards the release of Mujib and the fall of Ayub Khan, Pakistan went under the military rule headed by Yahya Khan on March 25, 1969. During his tenure, he held general elections in Pakistan in between December 7, 1970 to January 17, 1971. In these elections Awami League headed by Mujib swept the polls and won a landslide victory. Despite the victory of Awami League, the ruling elites of Pakistan were reluctant to handover power to the winning force and hatched a conspiracy not to hand over power. This undemocratic manner of the Pakistani ruling elites led the country towards disintegration of Pakistan and civil war. As a result, students staged demonstrations on the streets and chanted slogans for the independence of Bangladesh. At the same time, they whole-heartedly tried to resist the subversive activities of the Pakistani ruling elites in the last days of Pakistan.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.3.3. Student and the Liberation War 1969-71

In March 1971, the political situation became tensed due to the reluctant and undemocratic manner of the Pakistan ruling elites. From the very beginning of March, students along with people staged massive demonstrations and observed a huge anti Pakistani programs to liberate their country. They observed province wide strike on March 2,3,4,5,6 and gathered at Race Course Maidan on March 7 where Mujib addressed, "Ebarer Sangram Swadhinatar Sangram, Ebarer Sangram Mujktir Sangram."<sup>89</sup> Students cordially accepted this speech of Mujib and gave vehement support behind him.

In the summons of Mujib, students observed strike on March 2 and held a huge rally at the Dhaka University Arts' Faculty building on March 2 led by A.S.M.A Rab and Shahjahan Seraj in which they passed a resolution for the independence of East Pakistan and Rab hoisted the flag of Bangladesh.<sup>90</sup> On this rally police indiscriminately fired upon the students that caused the death of three persons and aggravated the situation further more.

On March 3, students observed strike in the whole East Pakistan. On the same day, the students' leader Shahjahan Seraj read out a program of independence drafted by Sirajul Alam Khan at a mass rally held at Paltan Maidan. In this rally, student leaders declared that there would be an independent and sovereign state in the name of Bangladesh. They adopted some objectives to organize the independence

<sup>88</sup> K.M. Shamsul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.25.

<sup>89</sup> M.A. Bari, *Memoirs of A Blood Birth* (Dhaka; Banimahal Prokashani, n.d.), p.64.

<sup>90</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1988), p.80.



movement and stated some guidelines. They also declared that Sheikh Mujib would be the Commander-in-Chief of the independent Bangladesh.<sup>91</sup>

During the course of this movement, students blockade the Hotel Purbani, burnt the national flag of Pakistan and the photograph of Jinnah. In fact they did not want to have anything with Punjabis. They also played patriotic and revolutionary Bengali song-Amar Sonar Bangla (My Golden Bengal). The Central Students' Action Committee already declared it as the national anthem of Bangladesh. They chanted slogans such as "Amar Desh Tomar Desh, Bangladesh Bangladesh"; "Ebarer Sangram, Swadhinatar Sangram"; Joy Bangla". These were in each and every lip.<sup>92</sup>

When Sheikh Mujib declared that he would go for a non-violent and non-cooperation movement against the army regime. They formed the "Shadhin Bangla Kendrio Chattra Sangram Parishad" and mobilized the Bengalis for the cause of independence. Students and the whole Bengalis became united on the issue of safeguarding the rights of the Bengalis and they came out with the resolutions in favor of independence of Bangladesh. During the course of non-violent non-cooperation movement, students followed the directives and instructions of their great leader *Banga Bandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib's non-violent and non-cooperation movement, which was launched in this country, was all most successful and more effective. Moudud Ahmed, a leading lawyer of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, stated regarding the non-violent and non-cooperation movement of Mujib saying:

This was one of the most successful non-cooperation movements ever launched in this country and was possibly more effective than the one Mahatma Gandhi launched against the British Raj in India. For all practical purposes the forces led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ran the Government.<sup>93</sup>

Before the Army crackdown, students and the common masses massively took part in the movement. They formed Action Committees in the rural areas to fight against the ruling elites of West Pakistan for the independence of Bangladesh. Students conducted a series of demonstrations, processions, meetings, street corner assemblies raising slogans for the independent Bangladesh in all most. On March 23, the *Central Students Action Committee* called for *Protirodh Dibash*. They

<sup>91</sup> Rafiqul Islam, *Liberation Struggle in Bangladesh* (Dhaka; Nourose Kitabistan, 1974), p.484.

<sup>92</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution, op.cit.*, p.80.

<sup>93</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.212.

observed this day spontaneously and instructed to the Bengalis that all people should hoist the flag of Bangladesh instead of Pakistani flag. People, all over the country, observed the day meticulously. Not a single Pakistani flag was on any public or private building. They hoisted the flag of Bangladesh all over the country in response to the call of Central Students Action Committee. On the same day, A huge number procession of the students passed by Mujib's residence to remind him of their aspirations and at the end when the largest procession of the students led by A.S.M.A. Rab came in front of his Dhanmondi residence. There was no alternative before Mujib but to hoist the flag of Bangladesh himself amidst thunderous cheers and nationalistic slogans.<sup>94</sup>

In the early of the evening on March 24, students along with common people became furious and the atmosphere became hitting up when they saw all most all the West Pakistani Leaders had left Dhaka for West Pakistan. It appeared to be an ominous sign to the students and masses.

On March 25, when Pakistani Army threw the country into a civil war, started shooting launched a virtual slaughter on Bengalis without any interruption from midnight of that day, a spontaneous resistant war of students and people of all walks of life grew overnight in the whole East Pakistan. They plunged into a war to liberate their territory from the West Pakistani military junta to the summons of Mujib.

Sheikh Mujib, before his arrest, asked to come people for making resistance struggle against the Pakistani occupancy. He said:

This may be my last message. From today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh whatever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the Army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation Army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and victory is achieved.<sup>95</sup>

In response to the summons of *Banga Bandhu*, the students came forward and they made an intensive resistance movement against the Army of occupation to free their country. In fact the response of the students and other groups of people was unprecedented. They played a comprehensive role in the liberation war of 1971 against Pakistani occupancy. It was really a surprise for the whole nation that these

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.226.

<sup>95</sup> Hasan Hafizur Rahman (ed.), *Swadhinatar Dalil* [Document of Liberation], Part-III (Dhaka; Information Ministry of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982), p.1.

brave sons of Bengalis came forward gallantly to lead the people to fight the enemies.<sup>96</sup> The role of the students in the liberation war is discussed below with some best examples.

At first, students made a resistance struggle at Dhaka University area, especially at Jagannath and Iqbal Hall at the midnight of March 25, 1971, when the Pakistan Military attacked on them. In point of a massive attack of Pakistan Military, students made a counter attack against the Pakistan military with a few 303 rifles in the Dhaka University area.<sup>97</sup>

On March 27, a group of people including 350 students made *Mukti Bahini* led by Lt. Anwar Hossain and they threw them into the liberation war against the Pakistan Military at Tejgaon area of Dhaka city. In this time, they killed more than 126 Pakistani soldiers. This group of freedom fighters ran an all out effort against the Pakistani soldiers' up to 1<sup>st</sup> April 1971.<sup>98</sup>

After two months of military crackdown, when the Bangladesh Government-in-exile began to build up the *Mukti Bahini*, the guerrilla force, on the basis of *Teliapara Document* and with the help of Indian Army from May 15, hundreds and thousands of school, college and University students who were a favorite target of Pakistan Military and were living in the border areas, crossed into India and reported their names to the camps to be the member of *Mukti Bahini*. They took training in the training centers located in India for five weeks. Persons, who were to act as guerrilla force, took special training for six weeks at Chakulia of Bihar. A well-known political scientist of Bangladesh politics, Talukder Moniruzzaman, wrote in his book that more than 250000 volunteers reported their names to the camps for training. After took training, some 100000 guerrillas got back in Bangladesh for fighting against the Pakistani soldiers within the end of November. At the same time, another 100000 were still being trained in several Indian camps. A big portion of guerrillas was student. Moniruzzaman said, "The vast majority of the guerrillas recruited to the *Mukti Bahini* were students, drawn primarily from lower middle class and middle class families."<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op.cit.*, p.228.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Mohammed Hannan, *History of Student Movement, op.cit.*, p.678.

<sup>99</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution, op.cit.*, p.114.

Former students' leader and Finance Minister A.M.A. Muhit gave a list of *Mukti Bahini* in which 80000 were of *Gano Bahini*, 8000 of *Mujib Bahini*, 5000 of *Kader Bahini*, 1000 of *Hamaet Bahini* and 30000 were of other guerrilla groups.<sup>100</sup> Moniruzzaman gave a different information regarding *Kader Bahini*. He mentioned that the regular members of *Kader Bahini* were 17000 and they were from schools and colleges. The age group of these students was 14 to 24. The number of the members of supporting volunteers of this *Mukti Bahini* within the country was 72500 and all of them were the school students who were drawn from cultivator families.<sup>101</sup>

Another force *Mujib Bahini* was formed during liberation war under the leadership of students' leader and four close confidants of Sheikh Mujib. A huge number of college and university students who were belonging to the *Students League* reported their names to the youth reception camps throughout 1971 to be recruited in the *Mujib Bahini*. They took training under the supervision of Indian Army at Chakrata, Dehradun, Uttar Pradesh and at Haplong, Assam of India. General Ovan, a retired Indian Army officer, and the *Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)* played key role in the training programs. The member of *Mujib Bahini* were given political course on Mujibism and trained in guerrilla warfare. After training period, they fought against the Pakistan Army in many places.<sup>102</sup>

A part from this, a huge number student of the leftist organizations such as-the *Students Union*, supporters of *National Awami Party (NAP)*, *Purbo Bangla Sarbohara Party*, revolutionaries of *Purbo Bangla Sammonoy Committee* led by Kazi Zafor, Rano, Menon, *Purbo Bangla Communist Party* led by Deben Sikder, and *Purbo Bangla Biplobi Students Union* took training within Bangladesh and in India and then they launched a guerrilla war against Pakistan Military. Hassanuzzaman mentioned that almost 20,000 guerrillas fought against the Pakistani Bahini in many war fields of Dhaka and Comilla. Respectively 10,000, 15,000 and 1,000 guerrillas of the then *Purbo Pakistan Communist Party (ML)*, *Purbo Bangla Communist Party* and *Purbo Bangla Sarbohara Party* were involved in the guerrilla war.<sup>103</sup> In the weekly *Mukti Zuddha*, which was published in the wartime, it is stated that-

<sup>100</sup> Hasanuzzaman, *Military and the Socio-Economic Reality and Politics of Bangladesh* (Dhaka; Dana Publishers, 1986), pp.48-49.

<sup>101</sup> Talukdar Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Politics*, op.cit., p.118.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.116.

<sup>103</sup> Hasanuzzaman, *Military and the Socio-Economic Reality*, op.cit., p.49.

Students Community has played a glorious role in all democratic movement of Bangladesh and still they are playing this role in the armed freedom struggle. Among that students' community, communists is a distinctive power.<sup>104</sup>

Another group of students led by Nurul Islam Nahid, the then President of Students Union, acted in wartime and they tried to get support of students, youths and all progressive forces of all countries the rough international campaign. They approached the course of all events of war in front of the nations by a large press conference held in Delhi in the first week of May. Here, they made an appeal to the international students and youth organizations. After that, students and youths of various countries started supporting. World Democratic Youth Federation (WDYE), International Students Union (IUS), Soviet Youth Committees (SYC) and many other international and national organizations lent their support and expressed solidarity to the liberation war of Bangladesh that provided extra power to the state of mind of the students in particular and the Bengalis in general.<sup>105</sup> In view of making a unified and integrated relation among the students' community, the students' leaders made a joint statement. In this statement, they said, "There is nothing in the world more glorious than sacrificing our lives in the struggle for liberating our motherland".<sup>106</sup> This statement of the students' leaders made a new hope and increased moral courage among students during liberation was.

On the other hand, a group of students, consisting of 300 students, took training as *Naval Freedom Fighter (NFF)* that showed their amazing performance. They launched their movement from August to November. During this time, they plunged ships of 50800 ton into the water, destroyed 66040-ton strips and occupied a number of vessels of Pakistan, which added a terror-stricken situation between the Pakistan military and enhanced the moral courage of the Bengalis. Regarding the performance of NFF, Maidul Hassan rightly opined that the perfectly right selection, proper training, sufficient arms and accurate plan worked behind the unique success of the NFF. They played a tremendous role in the history of our liberation war.<sup>107</sup>

From the above-mentioned facts and documents it proved that the students community of Bangladesh put a positive role in the liberation war. But there was a

<sup>104</sup> *Weekly Mukti Zuddha*, 18 July 1971.

<sup>105</sup> Hasan Hafizur Rahman (ed.), *Document of Liberation, Part-IV* (Dhaka; Ministry of Information of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, 1982), p.502.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.300.

<sup>107</sup> Maidul Hasan, *Muldhara'71* (Dhaka; n.p., n.d.), pp.81-82.

painful chapter in the history of liberation war in which the supporters of *Jammat-i-Islami*, *Islami Chattra sangha*, *Muslim League* and *PDP* etc. played a negative role through their assistance to the Pakistani occupancy. In course of the liberation war, they formed several organizations, such as *Razakar*, *Al-Badar*, *Al-Shams* and *Peace Committee*, which were led, in most of the cases, by the members of *Islami Chattra Sangha* who unhesitatingly helped the Pakistani occupancy to kill the Bengalis, destroy the public and private property, loot the wealth of Bengalis and rape the Bengali women through their support, direct participation and assistance. They not only helped the Pakistani Army in these spheres but also took part directly in these cases that made a black chapter in the history of our freedom struggle.<sup>108</sup>

Although a little portion of the students' community of Bangladesh played negative role and made a black chapter in the history of our freedom struggle, there was a glorious chapter in which students played vital role through their active participation in the liberation struggle to achieve an independent Bangladesh. The patriotic students came into being as the fear factors to the Pakistani occupancy and also to the collaborators of the Pakistani Army. They, along with the people of all walks of life, made resistance against the infernal and their collaborators, all over the Bangladesh under the pressure of self-protection and patriotism. Regarding the role of the students in the liberation war Yatindra Bhatnagar said, "the students have always been in the fore front in any struggle anywhere and Bangladesh is no exception."<sup>109</sup> In fact, the combative tradition, gallantry and self-sacrifice of the students in the liberation war of Bangladesh was a rare event in the whole world that helped the Bengalis to liberate the motherland successfully after a nine months war. An eminent writer sharply commented on the role and sacrifice of the students of Bangladesh by saying, "Every day many students were arrested and driven to cantonments. At first they were asked different questions about the local *Mukti Bahini* and their supporters."<sup>110</sup>

<sup>108</sup> For details, see-Mohammed Hannan, *History of Student Movement 1830-1971*, op.cit., pp.775-809.

<sup>109</sup> Yatindra Bhatnagar, *Bangladesh: Birth of a Nation* (Delhi; Indian School Supply Depot., 1971), p.133.

<sup>110</sup> D.K. Dhar, "The role of the Student Community in the War of Liberation", *Bangladesh Observer*, 16 December 1972.

### 3.4. Post Liberation Student Politics

#### 3.4.1. The Mujib Regime

Student politics was initiated with positive role in independent Bangladesh. Banghabandhu was released from Pakistan prison on 10 January 1972 and returned to independent Bangladesh. Student those took part in the liberation war surrendered their arms to Banghabandhu who urged students on to save the spirit of liberation even at the cost of life.<sup>111</sup> The attended student community applauded Bangabandhu's appeal. In fact, positive student politics was launched with this incident. But within one and a half month of liberation jobless student staged demonstration in Dhaka. On this day, they urged the government to recruit passed students against vacant posts in the government.<sup>112</sup> After the liberation, student community longed for mass education system. They urged the government to take steps to draw up education policy demanding, "There must be representative from the student community in the education policy commission."<sup>113</sup>

Socialism evokes in young people in the aftermath of liberation war. It is true to say that after liberation when the elections of student councils of Dhaka and Rajshahi University and many colleges of the country were held, *Bangladesh Chattra Union* won in most of the elections. It strived up the national politics and it became common trend for the communist student organization to win the elections of schools, colleges and universities across the country.<sup>114</sup>

The first year of Mujib regime saw the beginning of downfall of *Chattra League* of AL. This student organization was divided into two fold over the candidature issue for the *Dhaka University Central Students' Union*. Sheikh Fazlul Moni blessed one faction while other faction was the supporter of Sirajul Alam Khan.<sup>115</sup> The first group declared *Mujibbad*<sup>116</sup> as their motto. On the other hand, supporters of Sirajul Alam Khan opted for 'scientific socialism' as their model.<sup>117</sup> At the initial stage, break up

<sup>111</sup> Mohammed Hannan, *Bangladesher Chattra Andoloner Itihas: Bangabandhur Somoykal [The History of the Student's Movement of Bangladesh: Mujib Regime]* (Dhaka; Agami Prokashani, 2000), p.18; *Daily Sangbad*, 1 February 1972.

<sup>112</sup> *Daily Sangbad*, 3 February 1972.

<sup>113</sup> *Daily Ittefaq*, 5 February 1972.

<sup>114</sup> Hannan, *op.cit.*, p.21.

<sup>115</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1988), p.165.

<sup>116</sup> *Mujibbad* stands for the four Principles: Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism and Secularism.

<sup>117</sup> Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1980), p.70; Ranganal Sen, *Political Elites in Bangladesh* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1986), p.291.

of *Chattra League* was not due to morality, In fact, it hastens for the fight for leadership.<sup>118</sup>

With this *Chattra League* saw its first disintegration in the independent Bangladesh. Moni group called upon to build an exploitation free society based on four principle of the state, which are Nationalism, Secularism, Democracy and Socialism. Main slogan of the students of this group was "We have gained independent we will bring Mujibbad."<sup>119</sup> On the contrary another faction of *Chattra League* rejected *Mujibbad* all of a sudden and replaced it with 'scientific socialism.'<sup>120</sup> Many untoward incidents occurred in Dhaka due to two factions counter-councils. In the face-to-face confrontation between the two faction two former *Chattra League* leader ASM Abdur Rab and Abdur Razzak were wounded.<sup>121</sup> Unexpected disintegration of pro-liberation student community was labeled as poison-tree, which had far-reaching effect on national politics.

In late 72, political situation of Bangladesh became unsteady over the issue of Vietnam. Bangladesh *Chattra Union* staged demonstration on 22 December at USIS and burnt the effigy of President Nixon in protest against the bombing in North Vietnam. In sequence, it hold mass demonstration at USIS situated at Topkhana road on 1 January 1973 and demanded the removal of USIS and urged the government to acknowledge revolutionary government of Vietnam.<sup>122</sup> Two *Chattra Union's* leader Matiul Islam and Mirza Kader were killed and seven students were wounded severely on that day due to police fire. In an instant, this incident changed the total scenario of Dhaka city and situation became violent and tensed. *Chattra Union* brought out procession Paltan and declared to cancel the lifetime membership of Banghabandhu from DUCSU. With this decision, political scenario took a new turn. On 2 February, *Chattra Union* observed strike all over the country.<sup>123</sup>

In response to the movement of *Chattra Union*, *Chattra League* launched an attack on the NAP (Mujjaffor) and *Chattra Union* and burnt the NAP office. It continued to

<sup>118</sup> Hannan, *op.cit.*, p.23; *Daily Ittefaq* and *Daily Sangbad*, 22 July 1972.

<sup>119</sup> Hannan, *ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Daily Ittefaq* and *Daily Sangbad*, 22 July 1972.

<sup>121</sup> Hannan, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33.

<sup>122</sup> Joydhani, *Mouthpiece of Bangladesh Chattra Union*, 4 January 1973; Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1983), p.224.

<sup>123</sup> Hannan, *op.cit.*, p.34.



spread all over the country with constant conflicts between *Chattra Union* and *Chattra League*. This conflict lasted all the year round. At last, this feud ended on 11 November 1973 when Banghabandhu inaugurated *Chattra Union* 14<sup>th</sup> national council and it bridged the gap between government students wing and *Chattra Union*.<sup>124</sup>

Snatching away the ballot box in DUCSU election was much talked subject of the last part of 1973. In fear of the rapid popularity of *Chattra League (JSD)*, *Chattra League (AL)* predicted that JSD-*Chattra League* is going to win DUCSU election. Anxious at this, a group of students with arms snatched away ballot box from Shahidullah hall and other halls. By hijacking the ballot box they turned the situation more tensed. The nation was stunned at this incident and student politics headed towards a new crisis. For this incident, experts on student politics opined that this episode of DUCSU election couldn't be erased from the history of student politics.<sup>125</sup>

Murder clash, conflict and keeping arms became common trends during Mujib regime. This trend was started after September of 1973. Conflict among existing student organizations, intra-party feud, and desire for power in the leaders of government's student wing were responsible for this political unrest. All the murders that occurred in various educational institutions between 1972 and 1975 are the out come of *Chattra League* intra-party feud. Some incidents are given below to illustrate the scenario of student politics.

Four students were killed and one was wounded on 6 September 1973 at Dhaka University campus because of intra party feud of *Bangladesh Chattra League*. On 4 April 1974 seven students were killed at Dhaka University for the intra-party feud of *Chattra League*. The then *Chattra League* leader Sofiul Alam Pradhan was directly involved in this brutality. Police arrested him on 7 April for his involvement in seven murders. For this reason, police raided various halls of Dhaka University on 11 June and they hauled dangerous weapons including two lacs round bullets.<sup>126</sup> All these incidents proved that, the then student politics was heading towards unhealthy trend instead of healthy politics and it marred the glorious role of student politics.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.

<sup>126</sup> Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics, op.cit.*, p.87.

Among all student organizations, *Chattra League* (JSD) with its parent organization became as a strong opposition force and challenger of the regime. In March 1974 it launched a forceful and violent political action to gherao the offices and residences of cabinet members and many policy formulating and implementing organizations of Mujib's government as the instruments of continual corruption and exploitation. Thus it was severely treated with many of its workers being killed and its offices and newspaper were closed.<sup>127</sup> This student organization continued its anti-government mobilization and movement for establishing socialist system in the country.<sup>128</sup> In point of such an action the regime took coercive measures against this organization but could not stop the organization and its activities in Bangladesh.

Underground politics of some left radical parties took place in the Mujib regime was one of the most significant part of the then student politics. They developed their own political armed cadres through training and started violent actions at various places by adopting guerrilla tactics. This movement relied heavily on youth power to sustain it. The leaders of the underground politics were very much influenced by the thought of Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. They made expansive use of student and youth power for their front paw. They formed their own revolutionary student fronts and opened operation cells in a number of districts. They were able to attract university-educated sections to their organizations and propagate their ideas through party literature.<sup>129</sup> Inspired by the vigor of another revolution they launched their struggle with efficient revolutionary cadres to unseat the Mujib government and demolish the exploiters. For conducting impetuous activities the armed cadres of the under-ground parties adopted following strategies: 1) started killing of the leaders belonging to the Awami League; 2) attack the houses of big farmers and loot their good grains; and 3) targeted the governmental agencies engaged in maintaining law and order in the country side.<sup>130</sup>

Report on the violent operations occurred by the radicals at various police outposts, rural markets and on the communication system was the common matter of the then newspapers. Hasanuzzaman reported that during the second half of the 1973, the

<sup>127</sup> Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution, op.cit.*, p.167.

<sup>128</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics* (Dhaka; The University Press Limited, 1998), p.58.

<sup>129</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, "Polity and Politics During Mujib Era", in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), *Society and Politics in Bangladesh* (Dhaka; Academic Publishers, 1989), p.72.

<sup>130</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.59.

radical miscreants attacked fifty-two police stations.<sup>131</sup> Mascarenhas stated that radical groups murdered four thousand Awami Leaguers including five MPs by the end of 1974. In point of such terrorist activities, the law and order system of the country was paralyzed and Mujib government was really threatened.<sup>132</sup> It should be mentioned here that most of the radical parties had factional feuds and ideological or tactical differences. In spite of these shortcomings, they all agreed to complete the so-called 'unfinished revolution' of Bangladesh through their revolutionary and violent activities.

In order to cope with the worsening condition in the country Mujib regime declared a state of emergency all over the Bangladesh on December 28, 1974. After few weeks, the constitution of Bangladesh was amended to replace the parliamentary system with one party presidential rule by which all other political parties were invalidated.<sup>133</sup> In August 1975, Mujib regime came to an end with the overthrow of AL government through a violent bloody coup by some alienated junior officers. With this incidence, student politics of Bangladesh was plunged into the black hole sine die.

### 3.4.2. Student Politics under Military Autocracy

General Zia took over state power through coups and counter coups in November 1975. After his assumption in power, the political scenery had been changed and a great political violent irruption had taken place in the political arena, especially in the educational institutions of Bangladesh. The student community took a stand and launched agitation activities against Zia's dictatorial activities and militarization of politics. Students recasted their actions on to the streets and launched their anti-government movements for the withdrawal of martial law and emergency powers, introduction of parliamentary democracy, release of all political prisoners and restoration of freedom of press etc. organizing strikes, street agitations and the like, to dislodge the Zia regime from power.<sup>134</sup> Opposition to the regime first came from

<sup>131</sup> A. Mascarenhas, *Bangladesh: A Legacy of Blood* (London; Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), p.44.

<sup>132</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *Democracy and the Challenge of Development: A Study of Politics and Military Interventions in Bangladesh* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1995), p.13.

<sup>133</sup> S.R. Chakravarty, *Bangladesh: The Nineteen Seventy-Nine Elections* (New Delhi; South Asian Publishers, 1988), p.10.

<sup>134</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.70.

the party workers of JSD who were mostly students. They branded Zia as anti-revolutionary and mounted criticism against him for being in favor of the sympathizers of the west and rightist elements. They made a strong agitation against Zia but it soon retaliated due to a tough action adopted by the Zia regime. As a protest they observed a general strike on 31 July 1976.<sup>135</sup>

Zia regime adopted a measure of allowing limited party activity from July 1976 and issued a military decree saying , "Political Party means an association or body of individuals which pursues, or is engaged in, any activity with political purpose including propagation of any political opinion and includes any affiliated, associated or front organization, such as student, labor cultural, peasant and youth organization, of such association or body."<sup>136</sup> This military decree soon became to be known as *Political Parties Regulation (PPR)* by which various parties were permitted to operate "indoors" from July 30, 1976.<sup>137</sup> As an effect of PPR, various student organizations got approval to do politics in the country and they became to be known on the part of their respective parties. Thus, the *Chattra League* stood for *Awami League*, *Chattra Union* for CPB, *Chattra League (Scientific Socialism)* for JSD, *Islami Chattra Shibir* for *Jamat-i-Islami Bangladesh* and at the last, *Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal* for BNP. It is true to say that every parent organization and their student body became intermingled in the political sphere as well as in the educational institutions. They kept up their existence in the academic institutions with the presence of their student bodies that acted as the proxy organization and launched their activities in the educational institutions to save the interests of their parent organizations instead of serving the interests of the nation.<sup>138</sup> In fact, the student organizations began to loss their quality from that time onwards.

Zia regime saw a great resentment in May 1976 when Zia repealed Article 12 from the constitution and with drew the restrictions on communal and religion based Islam *pasand* right wing parties who were debarred from politics during Awami League

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in Ziaur Rahman and S.A. Faisal Md. Murad, "Student Politics: For the Students". This paper was presented at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) Young Scholars' Seminar on "Student Politics: Alternative Visions", Organized by the BISS in Dhaka on 10 August 1999.

<sup>136</sup> Rounaq Jahan (ed.), *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 2000), p.16.

<sup>137</sup> Rahman and Murad, *op.cit.*, p.71.

<sup>138</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.71.

rule. Zia, through an official order, gave the communal parties a great chance to be revived and rehabilitated in the politics with old and new nomenclature under PPR.<sup>139</sup> As a result, students of pro Liberation forces branded Zia as with anti-liberation forces and mounted criticism against Zia for playing role on the part of communal and religion-based political parties. At the same time, they took their stand against *Jamat-Shibir* on this issue. Due to this reason, a number of clashes had taken place between pro-liberation forces of Students community and *Islami Chattra Shibir* in many educational institutions of Bangladesh that perturbed the whole educational system and made our society more strife prone. It should be mentioned here that about thirty clashes had taken place in the whole country, especially in the educational institutions between *Islami Chattra Shibir* and the pro-liberation student organizations. During Zia regime around five hundred students were injured and four were died down due to this reason.<sup>140</sup>

Zia's regime witnessed another student's resentment in 1977 when he held referendum in order to legitimize his rule and consolidate his power. A group of students under the banner of JSD stood up against and tried to resist the referendum. They mounted criticism through posturing in the country. Maniruzzaman remarked that young JSD cadres, especially students through their party posters vehemently criticized the referendum and they treated the referendum as nothing but a 'political bluff' of the Zia regime.<sup>141</sup>

Political situation further deteriorated when Zia tried in order to building a student organization, *Jaitotabadi Chattra Dal*, applying the policy of divide and rule and distribution of patronages and benefits. In this sphere he picked up the members, those who were not at all concerned regarding party ideology and programs. Instead of they were simply busy to get government patronages and power. He formed his student front through using coercion and violence against political opposition.<sup>142</sup> As a result, a number of frequent clashes and violence had taken place between *Jaitotabadi Chattra Dal* and opposition's student organizations for which the

<sup>139</sup> See details in *Preroner Misil: 25 Years Purti-Sharak*, Bangladesh Islamic Chattra Shibir, December 2002, pp.356-561.

<sup>140</sup> Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution*, op.cit., p.216.

<sup>141</sup> Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, op.cit., p.215.

<sup>142</sup> *The Holiday* (Dhaka), 10 February 1980; Mohammed Habibur Rahman, *Bangladesher Tarikh* (Dhaka; Mowla Brothers, 1998), pp.103-149.

congenial atmosphere of the educational institutions became paralyzed in particular and of the whole country in general. In making such a violent situation in the country, the *Sarkari* student organization became champion in most of the cases. It is true to say that during Zia regime, more than thirty three clashes took place in the educational institutions between *Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal* and oppositions student organizations in which five were killed, around 500 hundred were injured and many educational institutions especially the universities and colleges, were closed down sine die.<sup>143</sup> Such a situation became intolerable and alarming and threatened the Bengali nation as a whole.

Apart from this, Zia's regime faced another movement in 1980 when the opposition political parties launched their anti-government movement on to the streets to dislodge the regime from power in order to get rid of the controlled democracy of Zia. Under the banner of a ten-party political alliance, student supporters of opposition parties took part in this movement and they raised their voice and mounted criticism against Zia for changing the nationality from *Bangalee* to *Bangladeshi*, returning to Islamic ideology from a secular position, giving advantages and patronages to the collaborators to be revived etc. They also made criticism that Zia ruled the country through an authoritarian system under the garb of presidential democracy like Ayub Khan of Pakistan.<sup>144</sup> Besides raising voice and mounting criticism, students became forceful against government with launching the violent political programs, like hartals, street agitations etc. during Zia regime.<sup>145</sup>

Lt. General Hossain Mohammed Ershad took over state power on March 24, 1982 and ruled the country till to the last of 1990. During his regime, he faced a number of movements. The first serious challenge to his regime came from the student community. In September 1982, when Ershad tried to impose a new education policy, the student community became united and initiated movement against the new education policy of Ershad under the umbrella of 14 student organizations. They termed the new education policy as regressive and 'reactionary-ideological'. In

<sup>143</sup> Kirsten Westergaard, *State and Rural Society in Bangladesh* (New Delhi; Select Book Service Ltd., 1986), p.98.

<sup>144</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.98.

<sup>145</sup> *Dainik Ittefaq*, 4 August, 12, 18 December 1982; *Sangbad*, 15 January 1983.

fact, it had some negative and regressive features that may be proved from Ershad's speech. At a *Seerat* Conference in December 1982. Ershad said,

I want children to read the Quran in Arabic, remember Allah when they converse. We want Islamic education every-where through giving Islam a place in the constitution.... I want to introduce such an education system so that students are not brought up as revolutionaries, rebels.<sup>146</sup>

Through such speeches Ershad, in fact, expressed his regressive ideological overtone to the new education policy. The secular, non-communal and influential student community and their organizations mounted criticism against such an approach and 14 student organizations observed the *Shikkha Divas* on September 17, 1980, although all types of political activities were outlawed in the country. At last, the 14 student organizations formed an alliance that moved against the anti education policy and Ershad's autocratic rule throughout the 1980s.

It expedited for a signature collection program against the new education policy and collected 2 lacs signatures from all over the country.<sup>147</sup>

Students' activities got further momentum due to repression policy on the processions that brought out in the Dhaka University on November 07, 1982 in which many were wounded and arrested. It worked as a catalyst and an accelerator for the further development of the students' movement and helped the alliance to be transformed into *Students' Action Committee (SAC)* on November 21, 1982.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, *Chattra Dal* and other rightist student organizations formed *Sangrami Chattra Jote (SCJ)*. In making a strong movement against Ershad's autocratic rule, both the student alliances tried to maintain liaison and they took the same action programs in the anti autocratic movement.<sup>149</sup>

Under the banner of SAC and SCJ, students took an oath to create a strong movement and termed the new education policy as of "the self-styled government not based on the will of the people"<sup>150</sup> that would cripple the nation. At the same time, they demanded a "people-oriented, scientific and non-communal education policy" in lieu of a rotten education policy. They demanded for revoking the new

<sup>146</sup> Bhuiyan Md. Monoar Kabir, *Politics of Military Rule and the Dilemmas of Democratization in Bangladesh* (New Delhi; South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1999), p.76.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> It should be mentioned her that Islami Chattra Shibir, the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami was never a part of SAC and SCJ.

<sup>149</sup> Quoted in Monoar Kabir, *op.cit.*, p.77.

<sup>150</sup> *Forum*, June-July 1983, p.5

education policy, withdrawal of Martial Law, release of student leaders and creation of a congenial democratic atmosphere in the campuses and in the country.<sup>151</sup> Beside this student community expressed their full support to the demands of other professionals' organizations on the basis of 5-point charter.<sup>152</sup>

When Ershad adopting a two-fold carrot and stick policy, proposed student leaders to talk with him on the issues of the movements students and their leaders rejected his proposal and continued their programs and they declared that they would *gherao* the *Shikkha Bhawan* on January 11, 1983. In this situation, Ershad took a hard line approach and threatened the students' community saying he would resist the proposed *gherao* program by any means. Despite Ershad's threat, students marched towards the *Shikkha Bhawan* (Ministry of Education) on January 11, 1983 with a mammoth procession, which made the movemental students very much strong and confident to be successful in the future movement. It also helped the students to become united and established the leadership of SAC leaders to control over the movement.<sup>153</sup> Students' under the umbrella of SAC observed a *gherao* program and staged grand agitation on February 14, 1983. On that day many students were died down including Zafar, Joinal and scores injured due to police brutal atrocity. In the next day, they staged protest against the brutality and observed *hartal* spontaneously in the whole country. After looking the prevalence and spontaneity of the students' involvement, Ershad declared closing down many educational institutions including Dhaka University sine die. But attempt of Ershad could not stop the movemental students. They continued their programmes one after another and declared a 10-point programme<sup>154</sup> on March 10, 1983. In this way, the issue based student movement turned into a point based movement that put a great impact on national politics to develop an anti-Ershad movement in forming a 15 party alliance and a 7 party alliance. On February 28, 1984 students led by SAC brought out an anti-Ershad procession in Dhaka in which student leaders of Chattra League (AL), Ibrahim Selim and Kazi Delwar Hossain, were died down. For this incidence, students observed a countrywide protest strike on March 1, 1984, that introduced a mass-movement in the country.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>151</sup> *Dainik Ittefaq*, 14 December 1982.

<sup>152</sup> *Sangbad*, 12 January 1983; Monoar Kabir, *op.cit.*, pp.79-80.

<sup>153</sup> See details in Monoar Kabir, *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.

<sup>154</sup> K.M. Samsul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.33.

<sup>155</sup> Mohammed Khushbu, *History of the Student Movement in Bangladesh: Era of Ershad* (Dhaka; Student Wage, 1991), p.37.



During the Upazilla election in 1985, students all over the country launched an extensive protest movement, which enhanced the anti-Ershad students' movement day by day. In this time, students of Dhaka University brought out a procession on February 13, on which students of the *Natun Bangla Chattra Samaj* (NBCS) backed by Ershad indiscriminately fired on the procession. In effect, Raofun Basunna of *Jatio Chattra League (JCL)* was shot dead. In point of such a situation, student community developed the anti-Ershad movement severely and diffused the movement in the whole country.

On November 10, 1987, student community opened a new chapter in the history of students' movement. They demonstrated against Ershad's government and observed Dhaka seizure program demanding the resignation of Ershad. On that day, a demonstrator, named Nur Hossain, died down due to indiscriminate shooting of police who wrote, "Soirachar Nipat Jak, Gonotontro Mukti Pak"<sup>156</sup> in his chest and back. Since that day, people all walks of life observe November 10, every year as the day of *Gonotontro Mukti Divas*.

In 1988 and 1989, students continued their glorious and valorous role in making an irresistible political movement in the whole country. In 1989 they observed 60 days countrywide *hartals* and blockades summoned by opposition parties. They continued their movement till to the last. Students' movement got momentum again when the opposition parties sketched an outline of various programs and provided for a sit-in-strike in front of the secretariat on October 10, 1990. In course of observing this program, 5 were shot dead including Jihad Hossain, 37 were bullet affected and 100 scores injured. In this circumstance, students took an oath to oust Ershad from state power and they promised, "We would not let the blood of the martyrs go in vain. We will oust the present government, we will eliminate autocracy."<sup>157</sup> In addition, the students also promised, "Until autocracy falls, we would not give up whatever blood we have to pay for this, whatever lives we have to sacrifice. We would not go back until victory comes."<sup>158</sup> Through bulletins against Ershad they declared, "Your hands are bloody, your legs are with leprosy, your throats are with sores. For God's sake, step down, step down."<sup>159</sup>

<sup>156</sup> *Dainik Ittefaq*, 11 November 1987; Shamsul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.34.

<sup>157</sup> *Weekly Chitra Bangla*, 14 December 1990.

<sup>158</sup> *Bulletin*, All Party Students Unity (APSU), Dhaka University, 3 December 1990.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*; Shamsul Alam, *op.cit.*, p.36.

Students of 22 rival student organizations came forward and created the *Sarbo Dolia Chattra Oikkya* (All Party Student Unity-APSU) in November. This new body provided unified and integrated leadership in the anti-Ershad movement and became instrumental in extending the unity movement and reduced the personal hatred of the opposition's leaders. The APSU compelled all the major opposition's alliances to accept their demands and to sign a Joint Declaration on November 19, 1990, highlighting the process of democratic transition.<sup>160</sup>

This Joint Declaration purveyed an extra-ordinary strength to the all out efforts of the students' community in particular and to the oppositions' camp as a whole to oust Ershad's autocratic government. Day by day, the anti-Ershad movement was getting new momentum one after another. The situation of the country became unruly and tumultuous and the people became angry. Student pulverized all plans taken by Ershad and transgressed all coercive measures including curfews. They led the movement with a vigilance eye to oust Ershad's from his office and to establish democracy in the country. They brought the anti-Ershad movement on a lofty place in the first week of the last month of 1990. In this circumstance, Ershad became perplexed and lost all the way to stay in power. During this time, huge tumult, uproar of the people's voice and a violent motion occupied the whole political scenario. At this juncture of astounding outburst, Ershad was compelled to resign from his post and handed over power to the nominee of Combined Opposition Alliance (COA), Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.<sup>161</sup> With this resignation of Ershad the anti-autocracy movement and the mass upsurge became successful and the people saw the light of democratic transition in Bangladesh. It was a great victory on the part of the students, common people, and the opposition, which paved the way for the democratic transition in Bangladesh.

### 3.4.3. Student Politics under Democratic Regimes of the Nineties

With the fall of Ershad regime in December 1990, caretaker government was formed with Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad at its head. After assuming power, Shahabuddin Ahmand repealed all the black laws concerning educational institutions. It is noticeable that students also protested and demonstrated against

<sup>160</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.135.

<sup>161</sup> .Ibid.

these laws during Ershad's regime. For this reason, students hailed the activities of Justice Shahabuddin.<sup>162</sup>

The primary objective of caretaker government was to hold a free, fair and credible election. To achieve this objective he declared the date of general election. Students got involved in their respective political parties for upcoming election. Many student leaders participated in the election and they swapped their own political party regarding national election. General student activists were used as muscle power and they got themselves involved in various violence. 30 activists of *Chattra League* and *Chattra Shibir* were killed in an election conflict in Chittagong on 9 February 1991. Incident like this continue to happen across the country at a regular basis.<sup>163</sup>

However, *Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)* won the majority seats of 1991's general election and formed the government with the support of *Jamat-E-Islami Bangladesh*. It was expected that, in the regime of Khaleda Zia, student politics would be restored to its healthy trends. But that expectation was nipped in the bud. In the regime of Khaleda, student politics became tensed with the issue of Pakistani's citizen Golam Azam. Moreover, *Ekkatorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee* (Extermination Committee for War Criminals-ECWC) led by *Shaheed Janani* Jahanara Imam called upon anti-Golam Azam movement and students directly participated in that movement. This participation of the students made the movement popular and thus the movement received momentum. In fact, this movement created an alternative path for students' community and found a platform for the trial of anti-liberation forces.<sup>164</sup>

A violent situation ensued in student politics from the beginning to the end of Khaleda's regime. Students' organizations in this time were active in terrorism, party politics, intra-party feud, extortion, monopolizing seats in residential halls; tender violence, district-wise fractioning, personal enmity and many other un-students' like activities. Student leaders and their student's front were virtually inactive in this period concerning students and educational related problems: A study shows that incidents of intra-party feud of major political party's students' wing in various educational institutions and areas were 19. Among them, 10 of JCD, 8 of BCL and 1

<sup>162</sup> *Dainik Bangla*, 8 December 1990.

<sup>163</sup> Mohammed Hannan, *History of Student of Movement in Bangladesh 1990-1999* (Dhaka; Agamee Prakashani, 2006), p.22.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.401-402.

of BCL (JSD-Inu) were noteworthy. 13 students were killed due to constant intra-party feud. Among them were, 7 from JSD, 5 from BCL and 1 from BCL (JSD-Inu). The key factor behind these feuds was to establish leadership, seize residential hall, monopolizing residence hall's seats and regional dominance, ensure financial gain and so on.<sup>165</sup>

Conflicts among opposite students' front were not lesser than intra-party feud. In this period, conflicts among opposite groups in major educational institutions were 31. Among them were 8 between JCD and BCL, 6 between JCD and other fronts (Except BCL and ICS), 3 between BCL and other fronts (except JCD and ISC), and 14 between ICS and other fronts. 26 students lost their lives in those clashes. It is worthwhile to notice that 15 students were killed and 600 were wounded due to exclusively clashes with ICS. Rival groups used deadly weapon, such as *three-knot-three* rifle, *stungun*, cocktail, hockey stick, machete, arrows and bows in those clashes. Authorities of educational institutions were forced to shut down those institutions for days after days owing to this violence. Thus, the situation became insufferable for the general students.<sup>166</sup>

During Khaleda Zia's regime, there were binary views regarding terrorism and congenial atmosphere for study. On one side some students' organization were involved in terrorist activities and on the other side, a large portion of the students raised the anti-terrorism and anti-strike movements in educational institutions. By this time, students opposed terrorism and strikes and declared, "we want to study, attend classes and we do not want to destroy ourselves little by little."<sup>167</sup> This demand of student community was published in newspapers and it stirred the whole nation.

In 1993's students' movement, terrorism gripped everything. By this time, "vein-cutting" expedition by *Islami Chatra Shibir* added a new dimension in the arena of terrorist culture.<sup>168</sup> Against this backdrop, a new student front by the name of *Anti-communal student Community* was floated to root out communal politics and to ward off Shibir's "vein cutting" expedition.<sup>169</sup> The year 1994 saw a completely new trend of

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.119-127.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Dainik Ittefaq*, 1 January 1993.

<sup>168</sup> Hannan, *Student Movement 1990-1999*, op.cit., p.402.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

*fatwaism*. In opposition to this trend student's community, especially 15 student organizations beefed up their anti-communal movement.<sup>170</sup> At the closing of this year, students' community staged demonstration in protest against the skyrocket price of newsprint.<sup>171</sup>

From the very beginning of 1995, students of Dhaka and other universities demanded the cancellation of female students compulsory returning to respective residential halls by sunset. But many students' organizations were involved in un-student like activities and left the movement leaderless. Later on, female students on their own started campaigning to repeal 1922's Proctorial Rules.<sup>172</sup> Apart from this creative movement by female students, one of the bad news of 1990s was the direct involvement of female students in terrorist activities. In 1996, female students were at each other's throats in various residential halls and women colleges. In those fighting, they were aggressive and their manners were un-women-like.<sup>173</sup>

Awami League won the general election in 1996 and formed the government with the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. No qualitative changes were noticeable in student politics in Hasina's regime. Terrorism, seizing the residential halls, monopolizing seats in residential halls, extortion, tender violence and intra-party feud also persisted in Hasina's regime. This allegation can be proved from Justice Shahabuddin's speech. He said that, terrorists have turned the educational institutions into battlefield under the banner of different political parties. Armed young generation has seized the residential halls. Their collection of toll and extortion form construction factories have turned out as their profession. They are becoming millionaire with the help of student politics in a short span of time. Who wants to study? If one can be a millionaire by student politics.<sup>174</sup> From this statement, then student politics can be easily deduced. In fact, by this time student politics plunged into a wayward situation. Golam Mortoza's opinion in this regard is relevant. He said that student politics had a glorious period in 1960s and 1970s. In those days, downtrodden and suppressed people would turn to student leaders if they faced any difficulties. Student leaders, on their part, left no stone unturned to help them with cordiality. People of the country counted on student leaders at any

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p.403; *Sangbad*, 18 January 1994.

<sup>171</sup> *Dainik Prothom Alo*, *Dainik Ittefaq*, *Sangbad*, 19 November 1994.

<sup>172</sup> See detail in Dhaka University Proctorial Rules, 1922.

<sup>173</sup> Hannan, *Student Movement 1990-1999*, *op.cit.*, pp.114, 117.

<sup>174</sup> *Sangbad*, 30 June 1997; *Ittefaq*, 2 March 1998.

impossibility. But those days have gone. Now everybody hates student politics. Extortion, terrorism, seizing the residential hall's, monopolizing residence hall's seats, district-wise fractioning, contractor-ship are the primary objectives of student politics.<sup>175</sup>

Due to the wayward condition, creative and intellectual student community has abstained from student politics even in democratically elected government's period. They tried to bring back the glorious heritage of student politics. Then president Shahabuddin was instrumental in this process. Justice Shahabuddin opined that student politics should be banned in this miserable condition and the general students applauded him. It is noticeable that, in support of president's statement, general students brought out a procession in the closing year of 1996 at Dhaka University. It was an unprecedented incident in a campus like Dhaka University, which is regarded as launching pad of politics.<sup>176</sup> The same right was demanded at a seminar at Khulna University organized by Bangladesh Debating Society (BDS). In this seminar student politics and student leaders were evaluated thus, "one is as great student leader as many weapons as one possessed."<sup>177</sup> On March 1997, students of Mass-Communication of Dhaka University brought out a procession with placards against existing terrorism. The slogan of this procession was, "Go down with terrorism; Go to hell, terrorist; this campus is mine; I want to study."<sup>178</sup> In the same month students of Bangladesh Agricultural University formed a human chain to ease session jam.<sup>179</sup> In the same time student politics was temporarily banned at Rajshahi University. In the middle of the year 1999, students to ban student politics blockaded Vice-chancellor of Khulna University. Their demand was, "University has nothing to do with politics or politics related things."<sup>180</sup>

It is unthinkable for a country, which has a glorious period of student politics to take such steps against student politics. But it became possible only for the present trends in student politics. Though these steps failed to change the present trends in student politics, it became popular and played a vital role in raising consciousness among students. In spite of this, movement led by student's community did not bring

<sup>175</sup> Golam Mortoza, "Dhaka Bishwabidyaloi Parishtiti: Chattra Rajniti Proshner Mukhe" (Situation at Dhaka University: Student Politics is Questionable), *Bichitra*, 30 August 1996, p.23.

<sup>176</sup> Hannan, *Student Movement 1990-1999*, *op.cit.*, p.404.

<sup>177</sup> *Dainik Inkilab*, 2 March 1997.

<sup>178</sup> *Dainik Jonokontho*, 18 March 1997.

<sup>179</sup> *Dainik Ittefaq*, 23 March 1997.

<sup>180</sup> *Dainik Vorer Kagoj*, 1 July 1999.

qualitative change in student politics. The key factor behind this was the back up and exploitation from the leaders of main political parties. They repeatedly used student politics as vehicle only to grab power. With this, student politics has been inactive and terminated. Truly student politics, student movements, student community of Bangladesh were beaten up by many visible and invisible factors. It is indispensable to figure out those factors and have to bring back healthy trends in student politics as early as possible.

### **3.5. Changing Pattern of Student Politics in Bangladesh 1972-2002 Vis-a-vis the state of Democratic Practices in Bangladesh**

In the new country, also student movement would play crucial role in restoring democracy. During Bangabandhu regime, student community opted for mass education system. They urged the government to take steps to draw up education policy demanding. "There must be representative from the student community in the education policy commission." In Mujib regime, intra-party feud in Chattra League was constant phenomenon. Among all student organizations, Chattra League (JSD) with its parent organization became as a strong opposition force and challenger of the regime.

During Zia regime, student raised their voices against Zia's military government and launched movements for the withdrawal of martial law and emergency powers, introduction of parliamentary democracy, release of all political prisoners and restoration of freedom of press etc. Zia's regime witnessed student's resentment in 1977 when he held referendum in order to legitimize his rule and consolidate. Students also took part of 1980 anti-government movement to topple the regime and to get rid of controlled democracy of Zia. Student supporters of opposition parties mounted criticism against Zia for changing the nationality from 'Bangalee' to 'Bangladeshi', returning to Islamic ideology from a secular position, giving advantages and patronages to the collaborators to be revived etc.

The first challenge of Ershad regime came from student community in September 1982 when he tried to impose a new education policy. Students moved under the umbrella of 14 student organizations and labeled the new education policy as regressive and 'reactionary-ideological'. They observed a gherao program and staged grand agitation on February 14, 1983. On that day many students were died down including Zafar, Joinal and scores injured due to police brutal atrocity. In 1988 and 1989 students continued their glorious and valorous role in making an

irresistible political movement in the whole country. On October 10, 1990 when opposition parties took a sit-in-strike in front of the secretariat, students took an oath to oust Ershad from state power. Students of 22 rival student organizations came forward and created *Sarbo Dolio Chattra Oikkya* (All Party Student Unity-APSU) in November. Students foiled all plans taken by Ershad and transgressed all coercive measures including curfews. They led the movement with a vigilance eye to oust Ershad from his office and to establish democracy in the country. They brought the anti-Ershad movement on a lofty place in the first week of the last month of 1990. Ershad became perplexed and lost all the way to stay in power and resign from his post and handed over power to the nominee of Combined Opposition Alliance (COA), Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

During the regime of Khaleda, student politics became tensed with the issue of Pakistani citizen Golam Azam. Students took part in anti-Golam Azam movement led by *Shaheed Janani* Jahanara Imam. Terrorism and congenial atmosphere for study were pole apart. On one side some students' organization were involved in terrorist activities and on the other side, a large portion of the students raised the anti-terrorism and anti-strike movements in educational institutions. From the very beginning of 1995, students of Dhaka and other universities demanded the cancellation of female students compulsory returning to respective residential halls by sunset. But many student leaders of this movement were involved in un-student like activities and left the movement leaderless. Latter on, female students on their own started campaigning to repeal 1922's Proctorial Rules.

In Hasina's regime no qualitative change can be traced in student politics. Terrorism, seizing the residential halls, monopolizing seats in residential halls, extortion, tender violence also persisted in Hasina's regime. Due to this unhealthy trends student community has abstained from student politics even in democratically elected government's period. They tried to bring back the glorious heritage of student politics. The then president Shahabuddin was instrumental in this process. Justice Shahabuddin opined that student politics should be banned in this miserable condition and the general students applauded him.



## Chapter 4

### Causes of Involvement of the Students in Political Activities: A Comparative Analysis

Examining a cross-cultural perspective it is really understood that specific and universal human nature common to all is responsible for all the student movements. George P. Murdock clearly mentions that although there is much dissimilarity in different cultures they have a number of things in common. Science easily can analyse these common nature and qualities of these cultures to come to a resolution on anything.<sup>1</sup> In the same way, it is possible to say that all the student movement, are due to the common causes and aspects although their nature and condition are sometimes truly different. These common causes and aspects of every student movement should be taken into direct consideration scientifically in order to fix our opinion about every student movement. In this writing student movements have been scientifically observed with special focus on the main characteristics of student movements and on the causes of their sporadic outburst.

In Hungary, Prince Metternich who always opposed reform and progress of the country was severely and brutally overthrown in 1848. These strong revolutionary changes were taken place by the students of those countries.<sup>2</sup> So it is possible to say that these are the students who can bring a country any change with their youthful vigour. These students with the help of Louis Kossuth made a serious protest against what the Prince was doing.<sup>3</sup> The students ultimately became successful in their mission. So it is unambiguously tangible that students in any country developed or developing play a vital key role in the further development of the country. Thus it can easily be said that students are a great force for every country.

Students, as they are at a specific, particular stage of life are always governed by their ideological emotions, which are their main zeal. They are constantly ideologically changed. For their being changed with idealism, the political activities

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Anirban Banerjee, *Exploring Student Politics* (Kolkata; The Saraswati Press, 1998), p.

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<sup>2</sup> Hasan Uz Zaman, *Student Movement of Bangladesh in the International Perspective*, (Dhaka; Dana Publishers, 1984), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

done by them are undoubtedly different from those done by the other ordinary people. Hence several sorts of making are found out in every country. It is also noticeable that students in meaning movements think of ideal issues existed earlier and beware of mythological incidents that inspire them to be rigid in their goal. They belong to the ideologies and mythologies, which are said to be the factors responsible for making a country economically and socially well, developed.<sup>4</sup> In accomplishing their activities, the students lose patience with the old people, as they do not prefer change. Because of these moralistic qualities, student movements aiming at the betterment of their social and political life are totally different from labour movements.<sup>5</sup>

Student politics are of a small group of population of a country because the number of students of the total population of a country is really negligible considering the whole population. For this reason, it is advisable that students should be associated with the other sectors of population in the society to give their activities a success. Otherwise, it is cleared that their movement will never be fruitful although they try meticulously to reach their destination. The political activities of theirs will result in complete failure if they do not have the assistance of the others prominent in the society. The students and the masses suffer from the same causes and problems. They undergo the same oppression and therefore, it is true to say that they will be united behind their target. If the students do not go together with the other classes of people in the society, they are bound to be the victim of failure in spite of there having good aim. For all these reasons mentioned above. Mao Tse-Tung has advised the students to be with the masses. He also said that they could play a "vanguard role".<sup>6</sup> Feuer has mentioned this going back of the students to the masses again as "back-to the people spirit".<sup>7</sup>

Students normally become politically irritated when they see that somewhere there are political problems continuing in these circumstances. They go biased towards the issues by which the other classes of people are moving forwards. Hence student movements are considered international since students of every corner of the world

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis A. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations: The Character of Significance of Student Movements* (New York; Basic Books, 1969), pp. 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> See Bruce D. Larkin, "China" in Donald K. Emmerson (ed.), *Students and Politics in Developing Nations* (New York; Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 164.

<sup>7</sup> Feuer, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1, Cited in Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

are conscious of what happens in other places of the world. Students of every corner of the world saw the Vietnam War that caused the rise of student movements in all the countries of the world. Students are in contact with ideological trends because they move faster than any other thing. For this reason, being changed with the ideology, students of different countries go furious and involve themselves in seriously unexpected student movements. When they are politically biased towards a mission, their emotions to the mission really turn invulnerable. They cannot help accomplishing their objectives. For this, we see that the international unions of students and the international student conference have come into existence after the Second World War. These have been the usual places where students of various kinds gather and hold their meetings.<sup>8</sup>

It is also true to say that all the students do not always participate in the student movements. Students normally having some specialties involve themselves in the student movements. Sometimes it is also observed that students having no intention at all to take part in the student movements are in the midst of them. So, sometimes situations urge them to be at one with the authentic activists. In this sense, it is said that the real activists of the student movements possess special qualities. Considering the characteristics of the participants, four groups are easily identified: (a) there is a group who are totally unwilling to participate in the student movements. This group, although they cannot express their opinion clearly are always against the student movement. They hate student movements. (b) There is another group of students who support for their academic betterment. This group aims at achieving something good at their institutions. So they become the supporters of the student movements. (c) There is another group who for religious reasons, always oppose the student movements. (d) Only those who are entirely political minded or direct activists of politics are the real lead persons of the student politics. This is the group that is responsible for the creation of the student movements.<sup>9</sup>

The ideas mentioned here are considerably applicable to all the students of all the countries in the world at any time. It is the apprehension of many of the thinkers that those students who are really politicized directly take part in upholding the policy of the student movements. These participants in the student movements have direct interest in political issues and affairs. Update politics always interests them. This is

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<sup>8</sup> Philip G. Altbach, "The International Student Movement", in Altbach (ed.), *The Student Revolution: A Global Analysis* (Bombay; Lalvani Publishing House, 1971), p.

<sup>9</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

why they suffer from restlessness of when any political violence nears them. They cannot help joining the violence as they are political minded. The emotions they have belong to politics. They think that their struggle, as it is seen the student political movement is for the radical change in the society, in the politics itself and in the country. These students directly involved in politics or in student movements are above the average students. They are superior to the other students politically and academically. They are responsible for organizing strikes and for any kind of political violence.<sup>10</sup> They mainly educate themselves in the subjects available in the easier faculties, arts, humanities, social science and so on and so forth.<sup>11</sup> They normally avoid subjects of technical and professional types. They are also seen to be disrespectful towards the existing rules and regulations of the country and towards the authority as well.

There are undoubtedly several reasons why students join student movements. According to Kulygin, there are mainly four striking motivations responsible for students' predication in the movements. The reasons are: (a) the rational value motivation. It is for the movement of the society; (b) the second motivation is the emotional motivation. For this emotional motivation, people of various sectors feel a negative emotion, which ultimately make them join the movements; (c) The third motivation is the traditional motivation in which people become fascinated by the fact that their forefathers were the supporters of the movements as well. So they must participate in the movements; (d) the last motivation, which helps the people, thinks of the future betterment of their life. They imagine that they must better their future life and therefore join movements they see before them.<sup>12</sup> Besides the motivations mentioned above, some other social, economic and political reasons frequently cause student movements. These are: (a) National Liberation Movements, (b) Government Policy, (c) Education System, (d) Generation Gap, (e) Social Background, (f) Unemployment problem, (g) Alienation and so on and so forth.<sup>13</sup> Some of the paragraphs written below will focus on the causes of the student movements conscientiously.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, Preface to S.M. Lipset (ed.), *Student Politics* (New York; Basic Books, 1968), pp. v-vii.

<sup>12</sup> Vladimir Kulygin, *Youth and Politics*, cited in Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

It is noticeable that in many countries national liberation movements be the causes of the student movement. Nationalism stands for the cohesion of modern societies.<sup>14</sup> Nationalism can come out in various forms. One of those forms of nationalism is the colonialism. The colonials become mad on selling their own products and want to buy raw materials for their capitalist development. This creates enslavement in those aims. Sometimes, it is also possible to notice that the whole group of the native population is going exterminated because of the effect of the colonialists on them. Sometimes it is also observed in the colony that the new settlers are trying to convert the natives to their own idealism. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many countries of Asia and Africa were subjugated. Bipan Chandra said, "From the very beginning capitalism has developed by being a fetter on the social, economic and political progress of its colonies - the other countries involved in the growth of capitalism."<sup>15</sup>

Colonialism affects many sides of a country. It not only influences the political condition but also nurture the economic condition of that domain. It connects the metropolis to the peripheral towns economically and politically for the political and economic connection between the rulers and the ruled people makes the colony westernized.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is really true that having contact with the lead persons who are ruling over the colony the ruled got themselves westernized. The colonial effects create some new institutions there and bring some changes in the old traditional system of everything. For the effects of the colonial power, some humanely qualities like humanitarianism equalitarianism and secularism came into being. For this, people become secular and worldly.<sup>17</sup>

It has been seen in many countries that education itself plays an important role to divert the people of a country from one mental tendency to another. Gaining education, the people of a country make themselves belong to a middle class in which some intellectuals are found out. In that class, there are some professionals and intellectuals available. The students who peruse books and take general education can easily realize the real motive of the western education and the

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<sup>14</sup> Hans Kohn, "Nationalism" in L. David Shills (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. II, (London; Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (New Delhi; Sangam Books, 1984), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (New Delhi; Orient Longman, 1984), p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

behaviour of the colonial masters. The students of Indian subcontinent at the time of Lord Ripon's regime got alert to the differences between the declared equality of the Europeans and their actually and partially racist characteristics. At that time the common people of this area were groaning because of the oppression made by the colonialists. The awareness of the common people normally resembles that of the agitating students. Both the students and the common people become aware of the fact that they are being exploited and opposed.<sup>18</sup> So, the two groups unite themselves in getting relieved of the oppression. In this way, it is possible to say that the students take part in liberation struggles with the common people.

At present politics is an important factor in nationalism. Through politics, in other words, nationalism comes into real existence. Hence, it is politics direct and indirect that begets nationalism. The influence of politics in nationalism in the colonial countries is not less than that of imperialist countries. So, it is unambiguously tangible that in colonial countries, political influence in nationalism is immense. The term, nationalism refers to the demand of the people to have the government of their ethnic complexion as they represent the majority of the population.<sup>19</sup> Self-political identity is generally meant by nationalism in many countries. The condition of nationalism in a country is undoubtedly different from that of the other countries. For this reason, Desai says, "The study of nationalism in each country becomes a separate task."<sup>20</sup> In spite of the ideas mentioned above, there are some people who are of the opinion that for some unknown reasons liberation movements take place at the same time simultaneously. They do their best to identify why students' participation in those countries are seen.

Colonial role, to a greater extent, is responsible for causing the student movements in many countries. It has been observed that colonial issues have been the main and vital forces for the students to go mad on saving their status.<sup>21</sup> Colonialism, a problem some idea to the students, bring the nation humiliation that creates protesting feelings in the mind of the students. But the protest against the humiliation varies from country to country because the ideology behind this protest varies.

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<sup>18</sup> Bipan Chandra and *et al.*

<sup>19</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay; Popular Book Depot, 1984), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Harsja Bachtiar, "Indonesia", in Emmerson (ed.), *Student and Politics, op.cit.*, pp. 180-184.

It has been seen at a time in China that the students had to face two difficult problems. One of the two difficulties the students faced in China is that they had to defend themselves against the foreign powers which almost made the country at that time a semi-colony. They also had to enquire into the weak and oppressive Manchu regime, which was almost surrendering itself to the power of the imperialism. At last the Manchu regime had to surrender to the 1911 bourgeois - democratic revolution.<sup>22</sup> There were four components, which inspired Chinese students to take part in the revolution. These were—youthness, modernity, purism and nationalism. According to Larkin, "Youth, modernity, purism, and modernism are the four banners of the Chinese student movement ... youth and modernity are consistent but rarely dramatic in their imprints to the student movement. Nationalism, by contrast, catalyzed the pre 1949 movements. Purism, ever present but accentuated by the doctrinal style of Maoist thought, was the central features..."<sup>23</sup> At that it is noticed that the warlords were getting mixed up with the imperialists. Japanese pressures made Yuan Shi-Kai surrender and abrogate all the rights owned by the power of the foreign people. When the Chinese demand was rejected, the instance May 4<sup>th</sup> movement of 1920 came into being. This movement is said to be the begetter of the communist party of China. The condition of China, then in the semi-feudalism and aggression of the imperialism was a recurrent matter. The weak government could not regulate the situation, and therefore, China moved towards socialism. The students started working for communism.<sup>24</sup>

Students of Bengal took the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 into their direct consideration. Bengal at that time fully belonged to the imperialist power and hence it was being ruled by the British Empire. It underwent severe changes during the rule of the British imperialist power. The British made Bengal one of their integral parts finding the jewel in the crown. In Bengal, socio-political and cultural transformation took place owing to the British rule. The British were never favourable to this socio-economic change of Bengal. It is observed that they were always against the petit bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie who were then, growing classes. The imperialists became alert to the fact that these rising classes should not expand their domain more. Students of Bengal noticed this contradictory interest of the British and theirs.

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<sup>22</sup> Bruce D. Larkin, "China", in Emmerson (ed.), *Ibid*, pp. 162-164.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.

<sup>24</sup> Hasan-Uz-Zaman, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

This creates awareness amidst them. So, they being emotionally and nationally changed actively took part in all the consequent movements seen in their country. They became vigorously eager to bring the imperialist power the downfall.<sup>25</sup> To accomplish their mission, they became at one with the Gandhi agitations and committed the secret and heinous terrorist activities:

Not only the imperialist oppression but also some other factors are responsible for any national liberation movements. Various sorts of discriminations at the regime of any ruler cause the national liberation and student movements. Population of any country grows hostile to the oppression they face at their period. When people of a country come across the tyrannical situations, they divide themselves into different classes on ideological issues. Pakistan became separated from Bangladesh at the issue of the honour of the Language itself. Mohammad Anwar Hossain went through the study of the student activism in the Bangladesh Freedom War. He aims that students participated in the liberation war as the direct fighters as reporters and as intelligent agents.<sup>26</sup> Students of Palestine are now active in making their country free from tyrannical influence of Israel. Day after day they are sacrificing their lives for the sake of the betterment of their would be country. The role of theirs is of great importance to get relieved of what is actually happening there. To a greater extent, it is true to say that the students of Palestine are the lead figures of all kinds of movements in that country. Abdul Karim who is 20 years old and a student utters: "The uprising must continue to the end, until we reach a good solution for the Palestinians".<sup>27</sup> The utterance of A. Karim possibly resembles that of other students there.

Students unknowingly outclass themselves in the field of protest when they can see that misgovernment is going on in the country. The carelessness of the government in making decisions troubles the restless minds of the students. The students always view what the government is doing and what kind of decision they are making for the government of the country. If the students find anything undesirable and undreamed of the government policy they grow hostile to the government. In

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<sup>25</sup> Barun De (ed.), *Student Community of Bengal in Liberation Struggle* (Kolkata; Teachers Concern, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Mohammed Anwar Hossain Talukder, *Rajshahi Students and the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle: A Survey Report* (Rajshahi; 1992), p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> *The Saturday Statesman*, Calcutta, 9.4.1988, p. 3; Quoted in Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 8.



these circumstances, the government is bound to face the student movements. The government normally has policies on education system, ecclesiastical system, distribution system and so on and so forth. The government wants to go forwards according to their designed policy. But the problem is that all the groups of students cannot be satisfied with the policy made by the government and therefore, they get excited and protest against the policy makers. Normally, the education system, which is an important aspect for the students, affects the students directly a lot. If the students see that the education system does not fit their desired expectation, they cannot help shouting slogans against the misdemeanour of the government. They start launching a diatribe against the government.

In Pakistan, immediately after its independence, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan and his cohorts took attempts to impose Urdu as the state language against the wishes of the majority people (Bengalis) of Pakistan. On February 25, 1948 Jinnah while speaking in the Constituent Assembly held in Karachi declared, "Pakistan being a Muslim State, Urdu will be its state language".<sup>28</sup> This irresponsible speech made a dangerous mistake at the very initial state of Pakistan. The decision on state language taken by Pakistan ruling elites became strange to the Bengalis and it threatened the cultural identify of the people of the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The Bengali students community immediately raised their voice for the recognition of Bengali as a state language, which led to an explosion of public resentment against the ruling elite of Pakistan through a series of demonstrations, meetings, processions and strikes all over the country. As a result, in the entire East Pakistan, the ruling elite was to face a large-scale movement of the students. Finding no other alternatives, and being pressurized by the situations, the Pakistani ruling elites withdrew the decision and declared that Bengali would be one of the state languages in Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> Almost similar incidents were happened due to governmental decisions in Assam (1986) on and Andhra Pradesh of India and in France in the year 1986 the government of that country was forced to withdraw the education bill, which was supposed to forward the eclecticism.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy, 1950-1971* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1991), p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Talukder Moniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1988), pp. 55-57.

<sup>30</sup> In Assam, government ordered that the Assamese should be put to the minority schools. This decision of Indian government threatened the cultural identify of minority group of Assam. In

Another student's movement was developed in Bangladesh when General Ershad declared the new education policy in the country. Ershad's military government announced its new education policy on 23 September 1982 for next five years. The education policy was characterized by a number of regressive features. The regressive ideological overtone can be understood from the speeches of Ershad. In December 1982, at a secret conference Ershad said, "... I want children to read the Quran in Arabic, remember Allah when they converse. We want Islamic education everywhere through giving Islam a place in the constitution.... I want to introduce such an education system so that students are not brought up as revolutionaries, rebels."<sup>31</sup> Such a regressive ideological tone of Ershad to the new education policy was highly criticized by the students who were nuclear, non-communal and influential in Bangladesh politics. They became alienated to military government students and their 14 organizations got together and started movement against Ershad's new education policy accusing it of being unscientific, communal and undemocratic. During the course of the movement, the 14 students organizations formed an alliance in the name of Chattra Sangram Parishad (Students Action Committee-SAC). The SAC transformed the movement into an anti-government one which was continued throughout the 1980s. In France in the year 1986 the government of that country was forced to withdraw the education bill, which was supposed to forward the eclecticism. In this movement, all classes of people of the French societies helped the students with their support.

Sometimes, student protest arises owing to the economic policy of the government. The government misses looking at various regions in a balanced economic view. They overlook the problems of a specific period and become cautious about other regions. This creates discriminatory policies on the part of the government. As a result of this sort of discriminatory policy of Ayub's government in Pakistan, the exploitation of the resources of the Bengalis was reaching its climax and the economic disparity between the two regions—East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan, marked the widest gap. Due to the widening disparities between

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Andhra Pradesh of India, government raised quotas for the castes. For this ridiculous decision government had to stand before the court. The verdict of the court was in favour of the students. In France in 1986, the government put a discriminatory education bill, which was forced to withdraw by the students. See details in Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>31</sup> See *Ittefaq*, 4 August 12, 18 December, 1982; *Sangbad*, 15 January 1983; Quoted in Bhuian Md. Monowar Kabir, *Politics of Military Rule and the Dilemmas of Democratization in Bangladesh* (Dhaka; Parama, 1999), pp. 75-76.

East and West Pakistan, the forces of nationalism amongst the Bengalis were taking deeper roots and with political suppression, the urge for a national consolidation was becoming stronger. Against the economic disparity between the two wings of Pakistan, the students of East Pakistan with other forces such as workers, politicians, lawyers, teachers etc. developed a strong movement through strikes, meetings and demonstrations on the basis of six-point given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hailed as Bangabandhu.<sup>32</sup> This student movement ultimately led to 11 points movement, mass upsurge of 1969 and finally it led to the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971. Like anti Ayub movement, centred on economic disparity between East and West Pakistan, a number of student movements, took place in the various parts of the world. The chauvinist movement, the Assam student movement and the Khalishta movement are the best examples in this sphere. These movements happened only due to the economic causes. When government fails to tackle the unemployment problem, they face student movements.<sup>33</sup> Thus, it is obvious that economic and education policies of the government cause students protest.

Political agitations in a country come into being when the domestic and foreign policies directly work on the political affairs of that country. Although it is seen that on surface any political violence seems to be for the domestic causes. But if someone enquires into the real causes of the violence she/he easily finds out that severe foreign policies of the government are also responsible for the creation of that threat of violence. It is quite clear from the examples seen in Bangladesh and in Korea. In Bangladesh, President Ershad who was a military dictator did not want to be overthrown. His refusal unthinkably irritated the students of Bangladesh. The students grew impatient at the policy of President Ershad. They joined the movement led by the opposition parties. The movement was going to be successful in their target. At that time, the President finding no other alternatives declared in the country a state of emergency and closed all the universities sine die.<sup>34</sup> In the same way as in Bangladesh, the Korean students became pioneers in the field of political movements against the President Chun. In India, in the similar way, Mrs. Gandhi

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<sup>32</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-90.

<sup>33</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Masud Hasanuzzaman, *Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics* (Dhaka; University Press Limited, 1998), p. 134; Monoar Kabir, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-152.

was forced to leave her power.<sup>35</sup> So it is obviously true that student movements considerably result in success in overthrowing any sort of government strong or weak.

The USA experienced unspeakable student protest and critical remarks in the sixties because of its foreign policy. So, in that country foreign policy caused drastic student protest. The USA sent a lot of students to Vietnam War that made the country lose huge lives and suffer heavy economic loss. Monetary loss in that Vietnam War on the part of the USA had a direct effect on the government's monetary policy. For this War with the Vietnamese, the USA had to bear with the international criticism. The Americans, at that time, saw no truce of victory over the Vietnamese. The Americans in war suffered from restlessness and hopelessness as they were supposed to be defeated. For this misdirection to the Vietnam war, the USA had nothing as a reward but a mischievous student protest against what the decision makers had done in the country. At that time, the campuses of the US Universities remained unrest because of the callous decision on foreign policy taken by the rulers. A commission was formed to tackle the situation. The commission came to this conclusion that there were no alternatives to reshuffling the decision and to stopping the Indo-China War. The affected students took the decision on the war as malice towards them.<sup>36</sup> From the examples shown above, it is clear those foreign policies taken by the government spur students on to movements.

In many countries, education system itself is responsible for leading student activism. The government of any country plans the educational system. If it is seen that the educational system has not fitted the students they will undoubtedly involve themselves in the political activities and thus the country experiences movements.<sup>37</sup> It has come to the notice of many that in many countries, developed or underdeveloped, education system is governed directly by the executive body. In the USA and in India Mr. David N. Smith and R.C. Srivastava respectively find that the education system of these two countries is authoritarian and bureaucratic.<sup>38</sup> This

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<sup>35</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>36</sup> The Report of the US Presidents Commission on Campus Unrest, Washington DC, 1970, p. 9; Otto Klinsberg, *op. cit.*, p. 2; A. Belden, *Student Politics in France: A Study of the Union Nationale des Etndian de France* (New York; Basic Books, 1970), p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> G.S. Manaukhani (ed.), *Student Power in India* (New Delhi; Oxford and IBH Publishing, 1975), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*

finding is almost traced in the field of the education system of Bangladesh. The students of Bangladesh like the students in the countries, Canada, USA, Germany, India and France demanded that they would be allowed to take part in the decision making body.<sup>39</sup> In a democratic country it is possible to raise questions like this. If the students can take part in the decision-making, it is desirable that every decision taken by the government and the students jointly will be unquestionably acceptable.<sup>40</sup>

Studying educational system, one can observe that teachers themselves can turn into dictators. If this happens in a country, students of that country are doomed to be failures in their life. Teachers sometimes lose their teacher-like quality and turn into bankers and lose their knowledge.<sup>41</sup> They become deprive of their knowledge. At this level of the teachers, they make injustice to the students and become fully separated from teachers-student relations. Teachers become indifferent to the students need and hence the students get excited at the misconduct of their teachers. For this reason a tense situation starts between these two groups the students and the teachers.<sup>42</sup> The Visva Yuvak Kendra study points to the fact that the senior teachers are fully detached from the students in every institution in India. This causes hatred between the teachers and the students.<sup>43</sup> T.K. Tukul says that this scenario between students and teachers results in restlessness among them.<sup>44</sup> Because of the deterioration of the teacher-student relationship, student movements happened in the medical faculty at the Tokyo University in 1968.<sup>45</sup> Amrik Singh, V.V. John and some other educationalists are of the opinion that teachers create crises on university campuses. In these circumstances it is observed that teachers are neglecting their responsibilities for their students and departments.<sup>46</sup> If the situation

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<sup>39</sup> Mohummed Hannan, *The History of Students Movement of Bangladesh: Mujib Regime*, (Dhaka; Agani Prakashani, 2000), p. 19; *Sangbad*, February 5, 1972.

<sup>40</sup> Anil Baran Ray, *Student and Politics in India: The Role of Caste, Language and Region in an Indian University* (New Delhi; Manohar Book Service, 1977), p. 5; Paul R. Brass, "The Politics of Ayurvedic Education" in Susanne H. Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph (eds.), *Education and Politics in India* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 353-358.

<sup>41</sup> Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York; Continuum, 1994), p. Ch. II; Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Lalita Prasad Vidyarthi, *Student Unrest in Chotanagpur, 1969-1970* (Kolkata; Punthi Pustak, 1976), p. 214.

<sup>43</sup> Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, *The Dynamics of Student, Agitations* (Bombay; Somaiya Publications, 1993), pp. 3-5.

<sup>44</sup> T.K. Tukul, *Student Unrest in India* (Bangalore; 1971), p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> Anirban Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Amrik Singh, *Asking for Trouble: What it Means to be a Vice-Chancellor Today* (New Delhi; Vikas, 1984), pp. 37; cited in Anirban Banerjee, *Ibid.*

is like this, then the students get devoid of knowledge and moral sensibility. Their investment of money, energy and time on education becomes fruitless. As a result students' sufferings know no bound.<sup>47</sup>

A student normally becomes aware of the real social condition, if he/she is educated enough because knowledge is light. His or her acquired knowledge gives him/her the light to look at the troubles, disorder available in the society. Knowledge of education sharpens the thoughts of students and therefore, they can simple perceive the drawback and irregularities of the society created by the rulers. Being aware of all these facts of society they take the initiative to remodel the system of the social structure. Students studying in arts and humanities groups are ahead of those of other groups in the accomplishment of the task. Those who study arts and humanities are nothing but critics of everything they see around them.<sup>48</sup> In this way, it gets clearer that education system and education policy controversial result in student movements and in chaos of the country.

It has been well proved that dwellers or particularly hall dwellers are active in supporting various movements and in taking part in various sort of political activities. Students living in halls are free from restriction imposed on them by their parents and therefore enjoy full freedom there. Being free, they can accomplish what they want to. They, then, want to make the impossible possible. They always like to take challenges. In these circumstances, students find nothing but the politics that nears them. Students residing outside their homes take politics as their safeguard against possible risk they may face during their stay outside.<sup>49</sup> When they are out of the control of their parents, the outsiders, namely their friends forcefully inspire them to join politics, which is a fashion to the aristocratic students. Sometimes, it comes to notice that students' participation in the politics is unknown to their parents.

Amirul Islam Chowdhury focuses on the fact that the cost at private universities is more then that of public universities. For this reason, it is seen that students

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<sup>47</sup> Jacques Barzun, *The American University: How Runs, Where It is Going?* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 68.

<sup>48</sup> Metta Spwncer, "Professional Scientific and Intellectual Students in India", *Comparative Education Review*, 10 June 1966, pp. 296-305.

<sup>49</sup> S.M. Lipset, "Students and Politics: A Comparative Perspective" in *Dadaclus*, 97(1), 1968; see also Anirban Banerjee, *Op. cit.*, p. 12; Julian Nagel, *Student Power* (London; Merilin Press Ltd., 1969), p. 112.

studying at private universities are less interested in politics than those of public universities.<sup>50</sup> This scenery is true to the private universities in the Bangladesh like USA, Latin America and Japan. Students of these private universities are authentically keen on securing knowledge about the subjects helpful to gaining good jobs. They only think of their betterment of future life. These universities offer their students courses applicable to their practical job life. This benefits their students.

The generational reunion is not possible as the old system of anything is quite different from the new system of anything. The old values and beliefs are differential from those of the new, and for this cause, these two cannot reunite with each other.<sup>51</sup> The old novel, *Turgenev's Fathers and Sons* can never reconcile itself with new drama Galsworth's *Strife*. As the two beliefs the new and the old cannot bridge the gap, there remains wide gap between them. For this reason, it is seen that there is a differential quality between these two ages, new and old. This generation gap causes student activism in politics. The students of the present age cannot accept the beliefs and ideology of the past age. So this intolerance ultimately results in their activism in politics.

Some people are of the opinion that every generation is altogether different from other generations. It is only because of the fact that a particular generation possesses particular habit, belief, and life style. Every generation has its' own tradition and culture. Every culture cannot cope with other cultures. So, cultural conflict highlights the generation gap.<sup>52</sup> Here, it is necessary to define what a generation is. A generation means a group of people at a specific period of time who are sharing the same belief, tradition, custom or the ideology in general.<sup>53</sup> So the modern generation cannot approve of anything existed in the old generation. This generation conflict affects the students to involve themselves in the violent clashes with culturally different people who belong to the other ideology and to other generation. Generation gap can be said as the generation struggle like Marxist class struggle. As Marxist attitude suggests that various classes in the society causes struggles in the society. The generation gap in the same way creates student protest

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<sup>50</sup> Amirul Islam Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam(ed.), *Bangladesh: On The Threshold of the Twenty First Century* (Dhaka; Asiatic Society of Bangladesh), pp. 519-527.

<sup>51</sup> Otto, Klinsberg and et al., *Students Values and Politics: A Cross-cultural Comparison* (New York; Free Press, 1979), pp. 279-280.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Feuer, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

against the irregularities of the country. According to Feuer, generation gap is like the Marxist class struggle.<sup>54</sup> But to say the truth the above argument cannot be accepted unquestionably. In modern time the term generation gap has come to the notice of the critics. Over population and the process of maturation have been responsible for the generation conflict. The scientific attitude of people results in generation struggle as well.

Now a day, the generation gap is the main factor for which the student movements take place in many countries. The old customs do not fit the new generation, and hence they are totally dissatisfied with the old. The old way of life was not much too sophisticated and aristocratic but the modern generation is unthinkably stylistic. This clash between the new and old tradition and culture gives birth to new movements. This clash seems to be far attaining the civil rights. This class clash was the sole cause of the U.S. Civil Rights Movements and of the New Left Movement.<sup>55</sup>

Many sociologists argue that there is no logic in the thoughts that generation gap or inter-generation conflict spurs students on to their political activism. In analysing this, it has come out as well that student activism cannot be called a teenage psychological revolt against their fathers and mothers either.<sup>56</sup> Treating student movements as a psychological protest of a group of immature students is absurd, unacceptable and unreal too.

Some social scientists that are working on bourgeois are of the opinion that the protest made by the young students against the misshapen structure of the society is not due to the generational conflict. Paulo Freire focuses on the fact that the social and economic conditions of a country shape the mind of the students into what they perform in their everyday life. Therefore, it is not the generational conflict but the socio-economic background of any country that design the would be performance of the students. The recurring social structure models the nature of student movements. Everybody knows that children behave how their parents behave. So, seeing the parent teacher authoritarianism, they learn how they can be one of the members of the authority. This notion of theirs helps them a lot. So, they

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Aileen D. Ross, *Student Unrest in India: A Comparative Approach* (Montreal; McGill-Queens University Press, 1969), p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> Vladimir Kulygin, *Youth and Politics, Trans., Galina Sdobnikova* (Moscow; Progress Publishers, 1987), p. 123.



turn revolutionary against the disorder of the society. This protest of the students cannot be said as the generational protest but personal and emotional and moral protest against the disorder of the society.<sup>57</sup>

There is a bitter controversy about whether the student political activists are from the intellectual elite or from the lower or middle class. Some people have already gone through this study to come to the resolution. Some say that students belonging to the intellectual elite basically take part in the political activities. According to them, politics is a habitual routine work for the aristocratic class. They also utter that for their political influence, the lower and middle classes encounter problems after problems. To these classes their politics is a sort of disturbance. Their party politics cannot fulfil the demand of the lower and middle classes. So, they are always dissatisfied with their political affairs. Observing the American Student Politics, Seymour Martin, Lipset, articulate: "University students are children of the elite".<sup>58</sup> For this reason, the elite never goes beyond the decision taken by the student activists in the politics. The Bangladeshi student activism policy does not correspond to that of the Americans. Studies made on the Bangladeshi students by Talukder Moniruzzaman mention that the political activists do not belong to the elite but to the lower and middle classes. In the freedom struggle of this country, students played a vital role against the ruling elite of Pakistan to make Bangladesh free from them.<sup>59</sup> He also indicates that in Bengal students took part in politics for there having patriotic feeling. The aristocrat's take part in politics in order to keep their status intact on the other hand, the lower and middle classes directly involve themselves in politics and they shout slogans on the street. The aristocrats are not seen on the street at all. The lower and middle classes take benefit for their existence from politics.<sup>60</sup>

So it is well proved that there are two political groups, one belonging to the sophisticated rich group, another belonging to the middle and lower classes. The sophisticated rich group is always safe in what they do. But the lower and middle classes suffer from various problems, namely food problem, housing problem,

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<sup>57</sup> Paulo Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> S.M. Lipset, "Student and Politics in Comparative Perspective", in S.M. Lipset and Philip G. Altbach, eds., *Students in Revolt* (Boston; Beacon Press, 1970), pp. XV-XXXIV.

<sup>59</sup> Talukder Moniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dhaka; UPL, 1988), p.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

textbook problem and so on and so forth. It is the lower class and the middle classes who suffer from shortage of everything lead the student movements and create tumultuous revolt against the government.

Unemployment problem is another cause for which students suffer a lot. It is not a problem of a single country rather a problem of the world. Every country of the modern world is facing this problem considerably. In Bangladesh about 6.6 million people are suffering from unemployment problem.<sup>61</sup> In 2003, in Bangladesh this record was found out. An ILO report<sup>62</sup> gives us the information that in the third world countries unemployment problem is rising day by day and the income of the people having city life is deteriorating. In the western countries unemployment problem is producing part-time workers. France is continuously fighting against the unemployment problem.<sup>63</sup> The condition of Japan regarding unemployment problem is not negligible. This unemployment problem provides them with restlessness and hopelessness. These hopelessness and restlessness occurred in their mind cause their frustration. When the students remain jobless they are be idle. Everybody knows that an idle brain is a devil workshop. So their idleness gives birth to the thoughts of political movements.

In some of the literary writings such as Shanker's novel, *Jana Aranya* and Satyajit Ray's film version of this novel unemployment problem has been successfully handled for public awareness. In these writings, educated unemployment has been highlighted. Studies made in Bangladesh have suggested that all the educated sectors, namely medical, engineering, legal and other professional sectors are not fully devoid of unemployment problem. Dhar with his fellow workers has been successful in proving that the students of these sectors fail having good jobs. This frustration of the unemployment problem among the students makes them commit anti-social and criminal activities.<sup>64</sup> Hannan shows that a number of unemployed students staged demonstration in the capital city of Bangladesh in 1972 for service just after the liberation and that became as a threat to the then Mujib government.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> ILO Report on Unemployed, 2003, [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org), access in 31.07.08.

<sup>62</sup> *The Daily Observer*, Dhaka, September 4, 1987.

<sup>63</sup> John G. Gallaher, *The Students of Paris and the Revolution of 1948* (London; Feffer and Simons Inc., 1980), pp. XVI.

<sup>64</sup> T.N. Dhar and *et al.*, *Education and Unemployment in India: The Policy Nexus* (Kolkata; South Asia Books, 1976), p. 106.

<sup>65</sup> Mohammed Abdul Hannan, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Many thinkers study student alienation. This alienation among students is liable for student restlessness. Great philosophers like Hegel and Marx thought of the alienation of the students.<sup>66</sup> Conger has described youth alienation as "Marginal Man".<sup>67</sup> The characteristics of the marginal man include egocentricity, pessimism, isolation and so on. Normally it is viewed that the question of alienation comes first at the school level. The teachers in school do not usually get mixed up with their students. They are not expectedly friendly with their students. So, a gap is noticed between the teachers and the students. If teachers do not bridge this gap, the students go beyond their control, ultimately being defaced from the teachers, they be very close to terrorism.<sup>68</sup> This group of students cannot gain knowledge from their teachers. It is also said that the students themselves get separated from one another. The students dwelling in hostels have no contact with the people living in the society. Being isolated from the everyday, social life, they turn anti-social and indifferent to common social life. Finally they choose the political life.

Here it is mentioned that the above discussion has been made on two particular points, the student activism in politics and the social, political, and economic causes that support their activism. So, to elucidate student activism, it is crucially necessary to go through the social, economic and political facts of that country. Perusing the supplementary branches, one can have real scenario of the student activism. As political activism is a social factor, one should get down to social condition itself. This statement made on the student activism is not applicable to an individual student but to all the students in general. This is not applicable to a particular country or society but to all the countries and societies in the world in general. So, the statement to say the truth is not particularized rather it is a generalized statement on the student political activism and the causes behind it. Although it is seen that the political activities of the students vary from country to country, one had better think of it generally to come to the real nature of it.

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<sup>66</sup> Satya Sundaram Immaneni, *Student Unrest in India* (Machilipatnam; Mrs. Sriresha, B.Sc., 1976), p. 96.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Banerjee, *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Paulo Freire, *op. cit.*, Ch. II.

## Chapter 5

### Student Politics in Bangladesh: An Analysis of Present Trends

Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in the history of the world after a long bloodbath. The main objective of the liberation war was to establish a free and democratic country from the despotic and colonial rule.<sup>1</sup> Students played a vital role in liberation and participated in many groups, which was involved spontaneously with the liberation war.

Students are the conscious group of the society who are well aware of their role as a protestant against any injustice, which may happen in the society. They are morally stronger and neutral in their approach. They can resist any political, social and cultural threats, which could do harm to the society. According to S.M. Lipset students are more responsive group regarding social and political changes group apart from the intelligentsia.<sup>2</sup> Students evoke and inspire common people by their all-out efforts, meetings and processions and thus save the interests of the common people. Students are full of life, fresh and energetic. They are conscious about their surroundings regarding exploitation and injustice. They are always ready to fight against exploitations, corruptions, injustice to build a better society.<sup>3</sup>

Students are indispensable and conscious part of the society. Like all strata's of life, they have the right to do politics. Student politics deal with the interest of the students. When the students, in their objectives to fulfill the needs, aspirations for common people, take all-out efforts, movements, demonstrations and show their courage and morality to foil any untoward incidents which could solve impasse for the betterment of the country then it is called student politics. So in this way, student politics can be termed as a process in which an organized group headed under an institution and ensure its socio-economic, political and cultural values.<sup>4</sup>

Student politics emerged as an influential group in the aftermath of liberation war. Eminent political scientist Myron Weiner showed in a study that student plays an

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<sup>1</sup>Amir-ul Islam, "Democracy, Development and Human Rights: An Uphill Struggle for Parliamentary Democracy", *The Financial Express*, November 23, 1997.

<sup>2</sup>S.M. Lipset, "Student Activists" *Dialogue*, Vol.2, No.2, 1969, p.5.

<sup>3</sup>Hasanuzzaman, *Aantarjatik Prekhatate Bangladesher Chatra Andolon (Students' Movement of Bangladesh in International Perspective)*, (Dhaka; Dana Publication, 1984), p.12.

<sup>4</sup>Hasanuzzaman, *Ibid.*, p.12.

active role in less developed countries.<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh is not an exception to this rule. Student politics has been playing a pivotal role in developing democracy even before independence. Students' community became the main resistance force against Pakistan's exploitations, suppressions and oppressions in Pakistan regime.

They played a vital role, even before 1971, in challenging authoritative power and oppressions of Pakistan's elite forces.<sup>6</sup> Student played a dominant role from language movement to liberation war, especially language movement of 1952, autonomy movement of 1966, mass revolution 1969 and finally liberation war of 1971 noteworthy. Student politics remain glorious and unforgettable in the history of Bangladesh for their spontaneous participation in those movements. Even, in post-liberation period they helped in ousting despotic government and restoring democracy. These are glorious episode of student politics.

Terrorism and violence turned out as negative sides for student politics in post-liberation period. As a result of this, education system was hindered in a large scale.<sup>7</sup> In fact, student politics has been spoiled by violence, authoritarian and terrorism and become estranged from its glorious past. To tell the truth, this dirty politics was initiated in the last period of Pakistan regime. Ayub Khan floated a student front by the name of 'NSF' to shield his power.<sup>8</sup> Their atrocities are well known fact. Present unhealthy student politics can be termed as continuation of Ayub Khan's strategies.<sup>9</sup>

The present condition of the student politics is entirely unexpected to conscious citizens, the intelligentsia, guardians, and educationalists as well as for the nation. Student politics has lost its glorious history by involving in terrorism, corruptions, violence, extortions and other serious crimes. As a result, acceptance of student politics is questionable. This chapter, which deals with student politics, has illustrated present trends in student politics and offers some remedies to ease the problems.

<sup>5</sup> Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1968), p.158.

<sup>6</sup> Hasanuzzaman, *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>7</sup> Habiba Zaman, "Patterns of Student Leadership in Rajshahi University", *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol.5, IBS, RU, 1981, p.149.

<sup>8</sup> Sultan Ahmad, "Bishabidlaya Santras: Karon, Prakiti O Pratikar" (Violence in Campus: Causes, Nature and Remedies), *University Campus*, June 2001 (2), p.27

<sup>9</sup> Asad Adnan and Lutfar Rahman, "Obo. Bitarito Nabo Sagoto: Chatra Rajnitite Palabadal", *Vorer Kagoj*, 10 May 1991.

## Methodology and its Limitations

Survey method has been used to collect primary data in preparing this chapter. The respondents have been opted by random selection and their answers, based on fixed questions, have been collected. The author himself along with his six appointed student worked as information collectors. The respondents were given 120 questions to answer. Among them 114 respondents answered their fixed questions. The survey was carried out on to April 2002 and was finished on 15 April in the same year. The questionnaire was distributed among students, teachers, executives, businessmen and other professional groups at Rajshahi University as well as its surroundings. It is a difficult task to generalize all opinions of different occupations people in a simple law. Despite this, it can be hoped that survey report will show present trends in student politics focusing on student politics and violence, causes of violence, influence of political parties, session jams due to student politics and other academic problems. If any important information emerges out of this survey that will redress the present condition of student politics then it will help the nation to take a good decision.

**Table-1**  
**Age and Occupations of Respondents**

Age groups Occupations	Age Group					Total (%)
	17-22 Yr. (%)	23-28 Yr. (%)	29-34 Yr (%)	35-40 Yr (%)	41-above (%)	
Students	27 (35.53)	47 (63.16)	-	01 (1.32)	-	76 (66.67)
Teachers	-	-	02 (11.67)	08 (47.06)	07 (41.18)	17 (14.91)
Officers	-	01 (16.67)	-	03 (50.00)	02 (33.33)	06 (5.26)
Businessmen	07 (11.11)	01 (11.11)	03 (33.33)	02 (22.22)	02 (22.22)	09 (7.89)
Others	-	03 (50.00)	01 (16.67)	02 (33.33)	-	06 (5.26)
Grand Total	28 (24.56)	53 (46.49)	06 (5.26)	16 (14.04)	11 (9.65)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

Out of total 114 respondents, 76 (66.67%) are students, 17 (14.91%) are teachers, 06 (5.26%) are employees, 09 (7.89%) are businessmen and 06 (5.26%) are other professional groups. 27 (35.53%) of students belong to 17-22 years age group. 48 (63.16%) respondents belong to 23-28 years age group and only one (1.32%) is in

between 35 to 40 years of age. Other professional groups include three lawyers, two politicians and one physician.

It is found that large majority of respondents belong to 23-28 years age group. Most of them are students. 02 (11.76%) teachers belong to 29-34 years age group, 08 (47.06%) respondents belong to 35-40 years age group. 07 (41.18%) belong to above 41 years age group. Among executive's respondents, 01 (16.67%) belongs to 23-28 years age group, 03 (50.00%) belong to 35-40 years age group and 02 (33.33%) belong to above 41 years age group. Among businessmen respondents, 01 (11.11%) belong to 17-22 years age group, 01 (11.11%) belong to 23-28 years age group, 03 (33.33%) belong to 29-34 years age group, 02 (22.22%) belong to 35-40 years age group and 02 (22.22%) belong to above 41 years age group. From other categories, 03 (50.00%) belong to 23-28 years age group, 01 (16.67%) belong to 23-28 years age group, 03 (33.33%) belong to 35-40 years age group have their opinions.

### Respondents' Involvement in Student Politics

Respondents who are involved in student politics bear a great significance in this essay. The nature of this involvement is shown in Table.2.

Table.2

Respondents' Involvement in Student Politics

Occupations	Ratio of respondents involvement in Politics				Total (%)
	Involved (%)	Not Involved (%)	Still involved (%)	Yet to be involved (%)	
Students	17 (22.37)	11 (14.47)	04 (5.26)	44 (57.89)	76 (66.67)
Teachers	09 (52.94)	06 (35.29)	01 (5.88)	01 (5.88)	17 (14.91)
Officers	-	03 (50.00)	-	03 (50.00)	06 (5.26)
Businessmen	02 (22.22)	03 (33.33)	01 (11.11)	03 (33.33)	09 (7.89)
Others	-	-	05 (83.33)	01 (16.66)	06 (5.26)
Grand Total	28 (24.56)	23 (20.18)	11 (9.65)	52 (45.61)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

Table 2 shows that 28 (24.56%) were involved in politics out of 114. Among them 17 (22.37%) are students, 09 (52.94) are teachers and 02 (22.22%) are businessmen.

23 (20.18%) were never involved in politics. 11 (9.65%) respondents are still involved in politics. It is worthwhile to notice that other groups of respondents are maximum 605 (83.33%). 52 (45.61%) respondents are yet too involved in politics. So this information shows that a large part of the society is not involved in student politics.

### **Opinion of respondents about present trends in student politics**

#### **Objectives of Student Politics**

Different professional organization aim at there own interest and mount pressure on authoritative group to achieve that interest. According to these characteristics, student politics should be confined to students' interest. But the present scenario of student politics is different. In this perspective what should be the objectives of student politics have been discussed here in the light of opinions gathered from the respondents.

Table 3 shows that 38 (33.33%) respondents out of 114 think that student politics should aim at the welfare of students while 22 (19.30%) respondents opine that it is a primary step to involve in national politics. 28 (24.56%) respondents have pointed out their role in national politics. But 26 (22.81%) are in the view that, as students are not concerned with the welfare of people, so there is no need of student politics right now.

Mujtaba Khandakar views on student politics are harmonious with this statistics. He opined in a study that 60s and 70s decade were a glorious period for student politics. Many people were optimistic about students' community and student politics. The downtrodden people would turn to student leader if they faced any difficulties and student leader made all efforts to do something for this people. The people of the country expect steps and measures from the student leader in impasse. But time has changed. Now everybody hates student politics. The main objectives of student politics have turned into extortion and violence.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Golam Mortoza, "Dhaka Bishwabidyaloī Parishthiti: Chatra Rajniti Proshner Mukhe", (Situation at Dhaka University: Student Politics is Questionable), *Bichitra*.



**Table 3**  
**Opinion on the objectives of Student Politics**

Occupations	Opinions on Student Politics Objectives				Total (%)
	Welfare to the Students (%)	Primary steps to involve in national politics (%)	Do not need Student Politics (%)	Role in National Politics (%)	
Students	24 (31.58)	16 (21.85)	13 (17.10)	23 (30.26)	76 (66.67)
Teachers	10 (58.82)	01 (5.88)	04 (23.53)	02 (11.76)	17 (14.91)
Officers	03 (50.00)	01 (16.67)	02 (33.33)	-	06 (5.26)
Businessmen	01 (11.11)	03 (33.33)	03 (33.33)	02 (22.22)	09 (7.89)
Others	-	01 (16.67)	04 (66.67)	01 (16.67)	06 (5.26)
Grand Total	38 (33.33)	22 (19.30)	26 (22.91)	28 (24.56)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

### Key Characteristics of Student Politics

The glorious period of student politics and present trends in student politics are contradictory to each other. Different professional groups have commented differently on student politics. With the help of below table, the present trends in student politics have been illustrated.

54 (71.05%) students point out that present student politics is involved with terrorism and extortion and bring about disappointment and dangerous effect to the nation. 08 (10.53%) students are on the view that present student politics is complimentary to the development of democracy and education system while 14 (18.42%) students do not support any of the above two views 13 (76.47%) teachers have pointed out towards terrorism and extortion followed by 04 (23.53%) teachers who do not support both views. It is significant that no teachers consider student politics as complimentary to the development of democracy and education system. 03 (50.00%) employees consider student politics is based upon terrorism and extortion while 02 (33.33%) employees termed student politics as complimentary to the development of democracy and education system. In business class, 06 (66.67%) business opined that present student politics is involved with terrorism and extortion followed by 01 (11.11%) businessman who does not support any of them. Other professional groups 05 (83.33%) respondents opine that present student politics is

involved with terrorism and extortion while 01 (16.67%) respondent consider student politics as complimentary to the development of democracy and education system. The survey revealed that the majority of the respondents, that is, 81 (71.05%) firmly believe that present student politics is built on terrorism and extortion. Golam Mortoza's study also reflects the same view. He says that intra-party feud; personal enmity, contractorship, extortion and result of these acts are responsible for the present student politics. Now student politics means only terrorism and extortion and the influence of outsider. For this reason, in every respect, student politics is questionable in the arena of national as well as international community<sup>11</sup> (Table.4).

**Table. 4**  
**Key Characteristics of Student Politics**

Occupations  Opinions	Ratio of Respondents Opinions					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Involved with terrorism and extortion	54 (71.05)	13 (76.47)	03 (50.00)	06 (66.67)	05 (83.33)	81 (71.05)
Complimentary to the development and education system	08 (10.53)	-	02 (33.33)	02 (22.22)	01 (16.69)	13 (11.40)
None of the above	14 (18.42)	04 (23.53)	01 (16.67)	01 (11.11)	-	20 (17.55)
Total	76 (66.67)	17 (14.91)	06 (5.26)	09 (7.89)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

### Terrorism and Extortion

Nowadays, murder, instability, extortion and terrorism are constant activities in the educational institutes. Lack of political ideology and exercise of democracy are responsible for these debasements from first class university of the country have lost their valuable life due to terrorism. For example, 60 students have died from 1974 to 1998 in Dhaka University, 25 students from 1975 to 1996 in Rajshahi University, 10 students from 1986 to 1998 in Chittagong University, 3 students from 1987 to 1997 in Islamic University and 12 students from 1973 to 1997 in Agricultural University.<sup>12</sup> Respondent's views on terrorism and inclusion of extortion in student politics are given here:

<sup>11</sup> Rezanur Rahman and Fazlul Bari, "Oshthir Shrikhaongon: Hattaya Ebong Santras-Gantombo Kothai", (Instability in Education Institution: Murder and violence-Where it is Leading To), *Khaborer Kagoj*, 3 August 1989, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> Sultan Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.13.

Table 5 shows 26 (22.81%) respondents believe that socio-economic factors are responsible for the inclusion of terrorism and extortion in student politics. Among them 18 are students, 03 (17.56%) are teachers, 02 (33.33%) are employees, 01 (11.11%) is businessman and 02 (33.33%) are from other professional groups. 24 (21.05%) respondents have pointed out involvement of student politics with the political parties. Among them 18 (23.68%) are students, 03 (17.56%) are teachers, 01 (16.67%) is employee, 01 (11.11%) is businessman and 01 (16.67%) from other professional groups. Third factor, which 19 (16.67%) respondents think the use of weapons in politics. 19 respondents made up with 13 (17.11%) students, 03 (17.56%) teachers, 01 (16.67%) employee and 02 (22.22%) businessmen, 18 (15.79%) respondents are on the view that government's patronage is responsible for present situation while 11 (9.65%) respondents have pointed out fragile structure of present education system. 09 (7.89%) respondents have opined that lack of strong leadership is responsible for this.

**Table. 5**  
**Relation between Student Politics and Terrorism and Toll Collection**

Occupations	Percentage of response							Total (%)
	Involvement with parent organization	Lake of leadership	Use of arms in politics	Socio-economic condition	Present education system	Involvement of teachers in politics	Patronages of government	
Students	18 (23.68)	04 (5.26)	13 (17.11)	18 (23.69)	06 (7.89)	04 (5.26)	13 (17.11)	76 (66.67)
Teachers	03 (17.65)	02 (11.76)	03 (17.65)	03 (17.65)	02 (11.76)	02 (11.76)	02 (11.76)	17 (14.91)
Officers	01 (16.67)	01 (16.67)	01 (16.67)	02 (33.33)	-	-	01 (16.67)	06 (5.26)
Businessmen	01 (11.11)	02 (22.22)	02 (22.22)	01 (11.11)	02 (22.22)	01 (11.11)	-	09 (7.89)
Others	01 (16.67)	-	-	02 (33.33)	01 (16.67)	-	02 (33.33)	06 (5.26)
Grand Total	24 (21.05)	09 (7.89)	19 (16.67)	26 (22.81)	11 (9.65)	07 (6.14)	18 (15.79)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

According to political scientists, lack of exercise for democracy in students' organization, perilous education system in an undemocratic state, politics without proper guidance, and rise of fundamentalist are responsible for emergence of terrorism and extortion in campus as well as in student politics.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Rezanur Rahman and Fazlul Bari, *op.cit.*, p.5.

Sultan Ahmad, in particular, has pointed out several factors for terrorism and extortion in student politics. These include exploitation of the educational institutes as a platform for political activities, exposure of audacity in political speech and other activities, nourishment of terrorist, financial support for buying weapons from main political parties, intra-party feud, irregular student council election, run the administrative from political stand point and their inactivity, lack of retribution and so on.<sup>14</sup> These views are identical with the present survey. The question of rising fundamentalists was not included in questionnaire, so respondents did not give relevant answer to this question.

### **Influence of Ruling Political Party's Student Wing**

Since Pakistan regime students are fighting for establishing a democratic and healthy political system against many undemocratic and autocratic authorities. But indulgence from military and despotic ruling has spoiled the true spirit of student politics. How much healthy political atmosphere counts on the ruling party's student wing is given on the basis of respondents view in Table 6. Table 6 shows that 75 (65.79%) respondents said that healthy student political depend on the student wing of ruling party. Among them, 49 (64.47%) are students, 10 (58.82%) are teachers, 02 (33.33%) are employees, 08 (88.89%) are businessmen and 06 (100%) are from other professional groups. 39 (34.21%) respondents have opined that healthy political do not depend on student wing of the ruling party. It is worthwhile to notice that other professional groups consider student wing of ruling party as significant factor in bringing about congenial atmosphere in the arena of student politics. In 1974, seven murders occurred due to the feud of two central leaders. In President Ziaur Rahman's regime Jatayatabadi Chatradal engaged in conflict with other student organization. 'Notun Bangla Chatra Samaj' conflicts with opposite student organizations in Ershad regime and its consequences, which led Dhaka University to turmoil, are fine example to this phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> It makes no differences with the respondents view on this topic.

<sup>14</sup> Sultan Ahmad, *op.cit.*, pp.27-28.

<sup>15</sup> Rezanur Rahman and Fazlul Bari, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6.

**Table. 6**  
**Ruling Party's Student Wings' Influence on Student Politics**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Dependent upon government party's student wing	49 (64.47)	10 (58.82)	02 (33.33)	08 (88.89)	06 (100)	75 (65.79)
Not at all dependent	27 (35.53)	07 (41.18)	04 (66.67)	01 (11.11)	-	39 (34.21)
Total	76 (66.67)	17 (14.91)	06 (5.26)	09 (7.89)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

**Association of Congenial Atmosphere between Healthy Student Politics and National Politics**

By healthy national political atmosphere we mean democratic political system where political activities can operate transparently by showing tolerance.

If congenial atmosphere or democratic system prevails in national politics then its good result can be observed in every sphere of the country. Democracy of Bangladesh had been suppressed by the military and despotic rule before its birth. Furthermore, want of democratic exercise within political parties, intolerance attitude towards others have through the political atmosphere into turmoil. This situation has infected student politics severely. Respondent's views in this regard are given in the following table.

**Table. 7**  
**Healthiness of Student Politics**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Helpful to develop healthy student politics	69 (90.79)	12 (70.59)	04 (66.67)	08 (88.89)	06 (100)	99 (86.84)
Not at all helpful	04 (50.26)	03 (17.65)	-	-	-	07 (6.14)
None of the above	03 (3.95)	02 (11.76)	02 (33.33)	01 (11.11)	-	08 (7.02)
Total	76 (66.67)	17 (14.91)	06 (5.26)	09 (7.89)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

Among different professional groups, 99 (68.48%) respondents think that healthy national politics helps to build up healthy student politics. Among them 69 (90.79%) are students, 12 (70.59%) are teachers, 04 (66.67%) are executives, 08 (88.89%) are businessmen and 06 (100%) are from different professional groups. total 07 (6.14%) have opined that healthy national politics do not work as catalyst for student politics. 08 (7.02%) were abstained from giving their opinions or both views. It is acknowledged truth that healthy national politics plays a vital role in shaping student politics (Table.7).

### **Relationship between Student Politics and Terrorism and Session Jams**

Session jams and terrorism are the common traits of educational institutions in Bangladesh, whether student politics works as a catalyst in the present situation or not is reflected in the opinions below.

67 (58.77%) respondents mentioned in table 8 think session jams and terrorism are caused by student politics. The respondents interviewed in the survey is made up of 47 (61.84%) students, 06 (35.29%) teachers, 08 (66.67%) executives, 07 (77.78%) businessmen and 03 (50%) from other professional groups. 44 respondents among them think session jams and terrorism is not the by product of student politics. Among them 27 (35.53%) are students, 11 (64.71%) are teachers, 02 (33.33%) are executives, 02 (22.22%) are businessmen and 02 (33.33%) are from the other professional groups. Only 03 (2.63%) respondents refused to give any opinion. One thing worthwhile to notice is, only the teachers were different in their views among others and more importantly majority of the teachers (11 among 17) is against the view that session jam and terrorism is the offshoot of student politics. Nevertheless, the statistics prove that the recent student politics is somehow or other contributing to the prevailing session jam and terrorism. Affirming this truth is the example of Islamic University, Kushtia. From 1987 to 1998 the Islamic University was unexpectedly closed down for 287 days due to the 16 clashes caused by student politics and all this violence resulted in 3 losses of valuable lives and while 34 others were injured.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Information Source: *Public Relation Office*, Islamic University, Kushtia.

**Table. 8**  
**The Relationship between Student Politics and Terrorism and Session Jam**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Student Politics is responsible	47 (61.84)	06 (35.29)	04 (66.67)	07 (77.78)	03 (50)	67 (58.77)
Is not responsible	27 (35.53)	11 (64.71)	02 (33.33)	02 (22.22)	02 (33.33)	44 (38.60)
No comment	02 (2.63)	-	-	-	01 (16.67)	03 (2.63)
Total	76 (66.67)	17 (14.91)	06 (5.26)	09 (7.89)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected for Primary Data.

**Opinion for and against the Student Politics Debate over the closure of Student Politics**

The negative events of recent student politics are taking the country and nation into a whirl of crisis. It is becoming a headache for people from different walks of life. So, for the better interest of the students and nation, respondents from different spheres opined for the closure of student politics, which is shown in the next page.

**Table. 9**  
**Opinion for The Closure of Student Politics**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Should be banned	55 (72.37)	11 (64.71)	04 (66.67)	09 (100.00)	06 (100)	85 (74.56)
Should not be banned	18 (23.68)	04 (23.53)	-	-	-	22 (19.30)
None of the above	03 (3.95)	02 (11.76)	02 (33.33)	-	-	07 (6.14)
Total	76 (66.67)	17 (14.91)	06 (5.26)	09 (7.89)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

The table above shows that 85 (74.56%) respondents are for the closure of student politics for the better interest of the country and nation. Among them 55 (72.37%) are students, 11 (64.71%) are teachers, 04 (66.67%) are employees, 09 (100%) are businessmen and 06 (100%) are from other spheres. 22 (19.30%) respondents are against the closure of student politics. Among them 18 (23.68%) are students, 04 (23.53%) are teachers and 07 (6.14%) respondents abstain from giving any opinion on the basis of the opinions given by the respondents, it can be said that the

mainstream student politics of recent times is not favourable for the students or the better interest of the nation. For this reason, student politics should be banned for the better interest of the students and the nation. According to a census initiated by the *Daily Vorer Kagoj* it is said that for a specific period of time student politics should be banned. Among 9202 respondents who took part in the census 6947 (75.49%) respondents opined for the closure student's politics, 1645 (17.88%) respondents gave opinion against the closure of student politics and 610 (6.63%) respondents gave no opinions at all.<sup>17</sup>

### Fixing time for the closure of student politics

In the previous chapter opinions for the closure of student politics given by different people of different occupations was illustrated. Relating to this topic one more question was also included in the questionnaire. That question is should student politics be banned for the long term or short term. Respondents' opinion on this topic is shown below:

**Table. 10**

**Fixation of the time for the closure of student politics**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					Grand Total (%)
	Students (%)	Teachers (%)	Officers (%)	Businessmen (%)	Others (%)	
Should be banned for the long time.	45 (65.22)	08 (11.59)	03 (4.35)	07 (10.14)	06 (8.70)	69 (81.18)
Should be banned for short time.	10 (62.5)	03 (18.75)	01 (6.25)	02 (12.50)	-	16 (18.82)
Total	55 (64.70)	11 (12.94)	04 (4.71)	09 (10.59)	06 (7.06)	85 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

According to table 10 it can be said, 69 (81.18%) respondents have opined for the closure of student politics in favour of the long term. Among them 45 (65.22%) are students, 08 (11.54%) are teachers, 03 (4.35%) are employees, 07 (10.14%) are businessmen and 06 (8.70%) are from other categories. Only 16 of the respondents are for the closure of student politics for the short term. Among them 10 (62.2%) are students, 03 (18.75%) are teachers, 01 (6.25%) are employees and 02 (12.50%) are businessmen. On the basis of the opinions given by the respondents it can be fairly

<sup>17</sup> *The Daily Vorer Kagoj*, 12 May 1998.



concluded that the mainstream of recent student politics is not beneficent for the students or the nation.

### Ways to uplift the student politics from present situation Opinion of the Respondents

From the language movement up to the struggle against the military regime of Ershad students worked as a catalyst in all the movements in between. Student movement is not autonomous or self-supporting incident. Students' movement raised consciousness in the different phases of this country. Students played a vital role in making awareness among public on various issues. Regardless of these, the recent student politics is declining into its negative tendencies. The sterility of student movement came into being after the mass revolution of 1969.<sup>18</sup> How student politics can make a way out of its present situation and recover the glory of the past, which is studded with history and heritage, is reflected in the opinions of respondents shown in the table below.

**Table. 11**  
**Restoration of Healthy Student Politics**

Occupations	Percentage of the Opinion of the Respondents					
	Stoppage of political patronage. (%)	Student should not be used as a political weapon. (%)	Law enforcement agencies should be neutral and active in their jobs. (%)	Authority of educational institutional should play strong and neutral role. (%)	Closure of Student Union Council (%)	Total (%)
Students	20 (26.32)	18 (23.68)	17 (22.37)	17 (22.37)	04 (5.26)	76 (66.67)
Teachers	04 (23.53)	04 (23.53)	03 (17.65)	05 (29.41)	01 (5.88)	17 (14.91)
Officers	02 (33.33)	02 (23.33)	01 (16.67)	01 (16.67)	-	06 (5.26)
Businessmen	02 (22.22)	03 (33.33)	02 (22.22)	01 (11.11)	01 (1.11)	09 (7.89)
Others	02 (33.33)	01 (16.67)	01 (16.67)	02 (33.33)	-	06 (5.26)
Total	30 (26.32)	28 (24.56)	24 (21.05)	26 (22.80)	06 (5.26)	114 (100)

Source: Collected from Primary Data.

According to information of table 11, 20 (26.32%) students, 4 (23.53%) teachers, 02 (23.33%) employees, 02 (22.22%) businessmen and 02 (33.33%) are from other

<sup>18</sup> Asad Adnan and Lutfar Rahman, *op.cit.*, p.35.

categories have opined for the stoppage of the political patronage. Students should not be used as a weapon is the opinion of 18 (23.68%) student, 04 (25.53%) teachers, 02 (33.33%) employees, 03 (33.33%) businessmen and 01 (16.67%) from other categories. Law enforcement agency should be neutral in their jobs is the proposal of 17 (22.33%) student, 03 (17.65%) teachers, 01 (16.67%) employees, 02 (22.22%) businessmen and 01 respondents from other categories have mentioned about the role of educational institution which should be strong and neutral. Hardly there is an opinion about the closure of student council. 04 (5.26%) students, 01 (5.88%) teacher, 01 (11.11%) businessman gave their opinion on this topic. All the opinions can be organized as below.

### **Proposals for the progression from present situation .**

The proposals gathered from the respondents are given below:

1. The patronage of politics should be stopped.
2. Steps should be taken to stop student's proneness to be used as weapons.
3. The authorities of the educational institutions should get full support from the government law enforcing agencies, which are neutral, and hard line.
4. Educational institutions should reform and renovate its rules and regulations so that it will be easy to punish the culprit.
5. Student council should be terminated or election to the student council should be held in proper time. Steps should be taken to bar the non-student from participating in the election.
6. Measures should be taken by the authority to prevent any political parties from using educational institution as platform to operate their activities.

During the survey many experts' views on these proposals have been evaluated and found to be relevant with the respondents' opinions. Expert's views do not disagree with the proposals. Some of the proposals are given below:

1. Educational institutions are for studying and research; it should not be used as platform for political activities and slogans. The authority should ensure that no political party is operating their programmes at the institution. The authority can use all rules and regulations to prevent such activities.

2. Sophisticated methods should be taken by the authority to prevent non-students, outsiders, armed men from sheltering in the hall and use it as their stronghold.
3. A handful of teachers who motivate students in terrorist activities and advise them in many ways should be sentenced exemplary punishment.<sup>19</sup>
4. Above all, political parties are recommended to cut off all sort of relations with student organizations.<sup>20</sup>

If the government, different political parties and educational institute extend their honesty and good intentions then it is possible to wipe out terrorism, extortion, ill practice and ease session jams from educational institutes. The civil society and guardian can play significant role in this regard.

## Conclusion

This study aims at demonstrating what is student politics, present trends in student politics, that is to say, what characteristics exist in present student politics and how student politics can restore its past glory. The survey revealed that, like many other less developed countries, students are conscious group of the society which operate through various activities for the demands and needs of the people as well as their own. But the present scenario of student politics is different. Respondent's opinions reflect the exact situation of student politics. Existing student politics deals with terrorism and extortion rather than welfare of the students. Many evil cycles are ingrained such as influence of government and opposition political parties, uses of weapons, mismanagement of educational authorities, fragile education system, socio-economic blight and so on, in the system, which question the wisdom of student politics. This deadlock can be overcome by the mentioned proposals in this study. It is true that all students, teachers, authorities of educational institutes, political parties, government, the intelligentsia and guardians have to work in unison to restore past glory of student politics.

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<sup>19</sup> Sultan Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.28.

<sup>20</sup> Mujtaba Khandakar, "Chatra Rajniti: Medhabira Dhure Sore Jaache" (Student Politics: Meritorious are Drifting Away), *Bichitra*, 23 May 1997, p.27.

## Chapter 6

### Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

#### 6.1. Summary

From the study of democratic institutions in Indian Sub-continent it can be said that many free institutions, which were modeled either on the British System or Dominion system were not functioning properly in India. The Government directed all matters by Executive Council rather than the laws and regulations. The Executive body called on additional members only to discuss and pass the proposed enactment.

Through passing the Act of 1919, the English government introduced the basic system of parliamentary government in the provinces, which was enlarged and extended under the Act of 1935. All these measures did not make a full-fledged responsible government. The Act of 1935 allowed the Governor-General to exert his power like that of General De Gaulle's-constitution. But the power of Governor-General or Governor differed from a constitutional figurehead in the parliamentary system.

The validity of these facts cannot be doubted or challenged as the Simon Commission or the Joint Select Committee as a shield to grasp power in the peculiar circumstances in undivided India used those. In fact, the recent advancements in the parliamentary systems in the new Asian countries have proved some observations and statements made by the authors of those valuable documents. But the concept of responsible government either by installments or a process of gradualism seemed to have been achieved opposite result by the recent developments in new democracies in Asia.

The Parliamentary form of government failed because our country was not so much accustomed to it. Furthermore, this form of government arouses controversy over the suitability of the presidential system in Pakistan. The Pakistan constitution commission reached in the same conclusion: "It is not correct to say that we have been used to the British type of Parliamentary form for a long time. Government of the Parliamentary pattern was introduced only when independence was gained." On the contrary, the existing system before independence was based on the theory of a

'Strong Executive' rather than on any idea of Parliamentary. The system was perfect in its kind and might be regarded as 'Vice regal'.

Jinnah envisaged Pakistan as a constitutional, parliamentary democratic country imbued with Muslim values. He controlled all reins of power and was the Governor General, the President of Muslim League as well as the head of the Constituent Assembly. His personality and personal authority were enough to silence any challengers to his position. Jinnah and his then Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan suppressed and deprived people of their rights in every way possible. Thus it was a democratic country in theory not in practice. East Bengal was densely populated where as West Pakistan was sparsely populated, but this did not matter much. It is true to say that it was the rule of minority for the majority. These factors created a backdrop for a steady flow of power towards the executive and away from the democracy. The law and order situation was deteriorating day after day. Because of this reason, the Pakistan Army was called in. As a result, the power of Army came into the hand of Ayub Khan. This bureaucratic-military nexus buttress the government but it stripped the mass of their basic rights. Ayub Khan's so called 'Basic Democracy' order was undemocratic in both letter and spirit as it did not offer any choice to elect the head of the state directly. Election is a journey towards democracy. But the ruling elite of Pakistan was little interested in election and they feared that the political system would be dominated by East Pakistan. However, after Ayub tenure, General Yahya assumed power and he held a general election in 1970. In this election Awami League won a landslide victory but Pakistan ruling elite was reluctant to hand over power to the Bengalis. Instead of handing over power, the junta started genocide in East Pakistan on 25 March 1971. This brutal act hastened the decay and disintegration of Pakistan and secession of Bangladesh.

The constitution of Bangladesh at the initial state incorporated democratic values and rights. But the constitution faced the music of then opposition party and was criticized by other. The constitution of 1972 saw the insertion of secularism, socialism, Bengali nationalism and democracy for which Bengalis fought against the Pakistani ruling Elite's more than 24 years. Zia and Ershad used the sentiments of Muslim people to enact Muslim laws. Thus they earned devoted Muslims respect and faith. They did not implement the values and spirits of Islam in the state's life, but they used it as weapons to shield their dictatorship.

In Bangladesh, one of the main problems of the opposition parties face is that the ruling party always suppresses them. The ruling party blames the opposition for any untoward incident while the opposition party deflects the blame of ruling party. Thus, they are at each other's throats only to tarnish the image of the country to abroad. Furthermore, the opposition activities remain untold by the government-owned national television, namely BTV. The ruling party sometimes gagged the media and the press. They do not allow these mass media to publish anything relating to opposition party's activities.

The separation of Judiciary from executive body is essential in democracy. But in Bangladesh it was a far cry. Recently, the caretaker government declared the separation of Judiciary from executive on 1 November 2007. Bangladesh entered into a new era. But the independent judiciary and its fair justice remains a far cry. Some critics and political leaders believe that the then government has influenced many judgments. No government takes initiative step to bridge the gap. So the separation of Judiciary exists only in mouth, not in practice.

Leadership is a striking quality of a political leader to lead the party as well as the state. Bangladesh produced a very few successful leader. When M.A. Jinnah becomes the Governor General of Pakistan, he refused to allow parallel leadership in terms of democratic procedure. In the same manner after the independence of the country Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, precursor in the realm of parliamentary democracy, did not hesitate to establish one party authoritarian rule in the name of BAKSAL. Mujib was an influential and powerful leader, but he suffered from inner conflict. He was not able to check his party's intra-clash. It was also the same case with General Zia. When Zia came to power, he concentrated all power in his hand. He held many portfolios at the same time. He was the president and the head of the government, supreme commander of the Armed Forces. He later established a political party in the name of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). This party started its journey with Zia at its head. Ershad closely followed his patterns and strategies of ruling. He held many offices and departments in his hand. Like Zia he initiated a political party, which name was *Jatiya Party*. Like Zia, he was the president of the country and the head of the government. The country saw the first woman Prime Minister when Khaleda Zia and her party won the participatory election of 1991 under the caretaker government. But she did not break with the tradition. She held

the office of the Prime Minister, Chairperson of B.N.P as well as the head of the government. In the similar fashion, Sheikh Hasina exerted her power on everything. Like Khaleda Zia, she also concentrated all power in her hand. So it turns out to be a personal, autocratic leadership. Under this sort of leadership, no institutions can run smoothly.

Another crisis prevails in participatory elections when one political party wins a participatory election, then other party rejects the poll result on the ground that the election was unfair, rigged and unacceptable. But the winning party claims the election result as "free, fair and credible". BNP won the 1991's participatory election, under the caretaker government, but Awami League rejected the result. BNP, in turn, followed this ill-practice of rejecting poll result of 1996 and staged demonstrations in the streets, called strikes across the country and left the country in a complete deadlock. Awami League followed this tradition in the election of 2001 when BNP gained the power. BNP and its alliances won two-thirds of the total seats. But BNP and its alliances failed to fulfill people expectation.

Bangladesh, After Liberation in its history, saw the terrorism many terrorist groups, Islamic fundamentalist and underground political parties. The government failed to curb them and sometimes they termed it as 'media type'. These Groups poised direct threat to our democratic institutions like court, universities and so on. Beside this, the country received a major blow to clashes major political parties. The intolerant attitude of major political parties and their leaders caused to happen many bloody clashes. The bloody clashes ensued across the country and threatened the democracy in the country.

Executive arrogation poises threat to democracy. In Bangladesh this happens when an elected chief executive concentrates all power in his hand and everything should be done according to his likes and dislikes. This practice was introduced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder of Bangladesh and followed by the next rulers of Bangladesh, such as Zia, Ershad, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina.

NGOs and members of the civil society are not playing vital role in bringing sustainable democracy. They poke their nose in our politics instead of raising consciousness among people concerning the human rights, suffrage and so on.

In Bangladesh, students have played an active role in politics like the students of all underdeveloped areas. Students have always been a significant pressure group and

student politics in the past made important contribution to the democratic development of Bangladesh. Since the very beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, students of Bangladesh played an important role in the struggle for establishing democracy and for independence from the British colonial rule. At the very initial stage of student politics, students, the conscious part of the Bengal, influenced by the Bengal Renaissance, fought against superstition and conservatism and they defined the rights of man along with the demand for free and compulsory education for all.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a major trend in the development of some student organizations in Bengal. *Academic Association, Sorbotottodipica Sava, Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, Deshahitaishenee Sava, Calcutta Students Association, Samadarshi Ghusti*, etc. were the main student organizations of that time. The members of these organizations focused on the development of society as well as country, fought against suppression, deprivation and degradation of Bengali by the British, opted for autonomy, denied the caste system and did not believe in private property.

Before the end of the British rule, students took part in various anti-British movements, especially in the Civil Disobedience Movement and in the Quit India movement. They were more active in these movements and played a vital role in these struggles. They fought for their country against British rule with a great patriotic fervor. During the course of the movements, students of that time assumed leadership in all movements and providing leadership, they made these movements successful. At the end of the British rule, students of Bengal put a significant contribution in curbing communal riot and holocaust, which was broken out in the whole Bengal. They took part in the anti-riot activities and worked whole-heartedly to bury the hatchet between the Hindu and Muslim.

Pakistan was liberated from British colonial power in 1947. After the creation of Pakistan, the student community in this part of that country emerged as the main force of protest against all sorts of suppression, oppression and exploitations. The post-independence phase of student movement was triggered, at first, by the issue of a democratic constitution making for new state. Students of East Pakistan organized themselves for this political issue and they outright rejected the proposals for future constitution of Pakistan of Basic Principles Committee for the first time. In



this sphere, students observed strike and took the leading role in absence of the national leaders.

Students took up the cause of Bengali rights and interests and fought for their right to practice democracy in their hard-earned homeland. It was students who lead the historic Language Movement of 1948-1952. Later, students upheld the ideal of language-based Bengali nationalism most enthusiastically. In 1954, students put forward with a 22-point demand, which included higher education for all, and they moved to root out the disparity between the two wings. Students protested Ayub Khan's insertion of some undemocratic provisions to the constitution in June 1962 and opted for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. They also agitated for liberal, secular and scientific system of education, for adult franchise and for Bengali autonomy under Six-point programme of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. They fought for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the Agartala Conspiracy Case (1967-69). It was students who were the main force in organizing the mass uprising in 1969 that brought about the fall of Ayub Khan. At the end of Pakistan period, large number of student joined the Liberation War of 1971 in various capacities launching a guerilla type war against Pakistani Military and their collaborators. Their glorious role in all liberal movements in erstwhile East Pakistan and their tremendous sacrifice for the people's rights and liberation made them heroes of independent Bangladesh.

In the new country, also student movement would play crucial role in restoring democracy. During Bangabandhu regime, student community opted for mass education system. They urged the government to take steps to draw up education policy demanding. "There must be representative from the student community in the education policy commission." In Mujib regime, intra-party fued in chattra league was constant phenomenon. Among all student organizations, Chattra League (JSD) with its parent organization became as a strong opposition force and challenger of the regime.

During Zia regime, student raised their voices against Zia's military government and launched movements for the withdrawal of martial law and emergency powers, introduction of parliamentary democracy, release of all political prisoners and restoration of freedom of press etc. Zia's regime witnessed student's resentment in 1977 when he held referendum in order to legitimize his rule and consolidate.

Students also took part of 1980 anti-government movement to topple the regime and to get rid of controlled democracy of Zia. Student supporters of opposition parties mounted criticism against Zia for changing the nationality from 'Bangalee' to 'Bangladeshi', returning to Islamic ideology from a secular position, giving advantages and patronages to the collaborators to be revived etc.

The first challenge of Ershad regime came from student community in September 1982 when he tried to impose a new education policy. Students moved under the umbrella of 14 student organizations and labeled the new education policy as regressive and 'reactionary-ideological'. They observed a gherao program and staged grand agitation on February 14, 1983. On that day many students were died down including Zafor, Joinal and scores injured due to police brutal atrocity. In 1988 and 1989 students continued their glorious and valorous role in making an irresistible political movement in the whole country. On October 10, 1990 when opposition parties took a sit-in-strike in front of the secretariat, students took an oath to oust Ershad from state power. Students of 22 rival student organizations came forward and created *Sarbo Dolio Chattra Oikkya* (All Party Student Unity-APSU) in November. Students foiled all plans taken by Ershad and transgressed all coercive measures including curfews. They led the movement with a vigilance eye to oust Ershad from his office and to establish democracy in the country. They brought the anti-Ershad movement on a lofty place in the first week of the last month of 1990. Ershad became perplexed and lost all the way to stay in power and resign from his post and handed over power to the nominee of Combined Opposition Alliance (COA), Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

During the regime of Khaleda, student politics became tensed with the issue of Pakistani citizen Golam Azam. Students took part in anti-Golam Azam movement led by *Shaheed Janani* Jahanara Imam. Terrorism and congenial atmosphere for study were pole apart. On one side some students' organization were involved in terrorist activities and on the other side, a large portion of the students raised the anti-terrorism and anti-strike movements in educational institutions. From the very beginning of 1995, students of Dhaka and other universities demanded the cancellation of female students compulsory returning to respective residential halls by sunset. But many student leaders of this movement were involved in un-student

like activities and left the movement leaderless. Latter on, female students on their own started campaigning to repeal 1922's Proctorial Rules.

In Hasina's regime no qualitative change can be traced in student politics. Terrorism, seizing the residential halls, monopolizing seats in residential halls, extortion, tender violence also persisted in Hasina's regime. Due to this unhealthy trends student community has abstained from student politics even in democratically elected government's period. They tried to bring back the glorious heritage of student politics. The then president Shahabuddin was instrumental in this process. Justice Shahabuddin opined that student politics should be banned in this miserable condition and the general students applauded him.

## **6.2. Major Findings of the Study**

Major finding of the study are shown below.

### **□ Student organizations are to defend any autocratic rule**

Students and student organizations played a significant role in their fight against autocratic rule in the post-independence period. As the student; were literate and self-confident they had the capacity to motivate and educate the mass to oust the autocratic rule. Their fight did not confine to autocratic rule, they also extended this fight against autocratic rule of educational institution.

Authoritative power of teachers, backed up by certain political parties, has given them an upper hand to take any decision unilaterally without realizing whether it will be fruitful for students or not. This monopoly of power leads to corruption among teachers. As Lord Acton has pointed out, "...absolute power corrupts absolutely". So there should be balance of power between the students and the respective authority, as history tells us that the weaker powers are vulnerable to the stronger power.

### **□ A training center for promising political leadership**

Student Politics prepare the ground for national politics. This can be proved by the fact that majority of the national politician used to join national politics from student parties. So, student politics remain as launching pad for national political leadership. In this backdrop, educational organizations-oriented student politics can be regarded as training center for national politics. If anything hampers this free flow of student

politics in educational organizations then the future political leadership will remain a far cry. If this phenomenon continues to exist then only the bourgeoisie will run the country, which is against the spirit of politics.

#### □ **Students' role in Nation Building and Policy Making Process**

Student politics wishes to ensure that the potentiality and enthusiastic spirit is not nip in the bud and to some extent can contribute to nation building and policymaking process.

#### □ **Decisive Role of Students in Providing Check and Balance**

Student politics plays a decisive role in providing check and balance in upper level policy makers by showing them what the educated section of the society is thinking about the steps taken by them.

#### □ **High Political Ambition for Career Building**

Young people with high political ambition can receive an early head start in their careers from student politics.

#### □ **Accession of Small Ammunition in Political Arena**

Accession of small ammunition to campus has not only polluted the political arena but is has also polluted the society. Armed by those weapons, but not by support from student, the student leaders have launched a reign of terror within or outside the campus by collecting tolls. The ongoing development works received a threat from student groups, as they demand a percentage of total amounts. Thus, the true colour of student leaders who claim themselves as conscience of people, force a part of people to seek refuge in corruption.

#### □ **Students are involved in full time politics and part-time studies**

The overall expectation from the students is that, they will seek worthwhile job after finishing their academic study and move their carrier in that direction which is beneficial for them as well as for the nation. But this expectation turn out to be fruitless when the student become involved in full time politics and part time studies, then the dream, dreamt by their family and nation ends in vain. Even at the end of their academic life the student politician do not emerge as successful national politician. They also fail to get suitable job for them, thus they become a burden for the nation. So they turn out to be a liability of the nation instead of being an asset of

it. The frustrated student then engages themselves to toll-collection, hooliganism, hijacking and all kinds of heinous and gruesome activities, which create anarchy in the country.

□ **Present student politics in based on power politics**

The murder in campus or in the vicinity of the campus for a pie in the power has a bad effect on the family and the society. The family loses its potential breadwinner and in case of the society, one killing leads to another and thus worsens the situation more.

□ **Present student politics makes many crisis**

Student leader's involvement with the politics in most cases money making, keeps him away from the academic life and study. And that is why he has no option but to copy in the examination or force the teachers to defer the examination, which creates session jam. For this reason, academic life comes to a halt and it takes a lot of time for each of the students to finish their academic life. So serving the interest of one coterie ended up in deprivation the interest of all and leads them to frustration. Moreover, as the time goes by, the general students are losing their age to compete the BCS and other government and private competitive examinations.

□ **Supporters of various student organizations are addicted to various sorts of drugs**

A study by *The Daily Star* shows that most of the students who are involved in student politics are addicted to various sorts of drugs. The student leaders not only take the drugs themselves but they inspire others to use drugs. In this way, the campus becomes a hotbed of various drugs.

□ **Student politics leads to spend a lot of money**

All the educational institutions of Bangladesh except private institutions are provided with subsidy from the government, which enable the promising and poorest student to enroll in the best institution in Bangladesh. The source of this subsidy is the annual development budget, which is contributed even by the poorest farmer of the country. As the prolongation of session jam increased the government is bound to spend a lot of money for subsidizing in education with other development works of the government remain subsidized.

□ **Present student politics in causing for brain drain**

The unrest and uncertainty in the country's educational sector has compelled many parents to send their children abroad. For this reason, the country is losing a considerable amount of foreign currency. This hopeless situation is causing brain drain, as the meritorious students who can compensate the expenditure are leaving the country following the herd. So the fruits of subsidized education are enjoyed by other nations.

□ **Present student politics is muscle-based, not popular support-based**

Student parties' allegiance to the national political parties causes the tug of war between the political parties for the dominance in campus, which left the political parties to be at each other throats. For this reason student politics has turn out power hungry, muscle power and transient. A survey shows that 81.25% respondents think that allegiance to national politics is the key factor for the present state in student politics. Some respondents also termed the student politics, that it is the politics of 'corpses'. In fact, killing in the campuses gives upper hand to one party over the other. Thus, these sort of gruesome activities are foiling the entry of idealistic politics to the country's political arena but it is also paving the way for future politics based on muscle-based, apart from being ideological and popular support-based.

When dominance in campus matters, aspirated groups are ready to create factions within the party. It has been found that factions are based on localism instead of idealism in recent years. So internecine conflict within the same group persist. This add fuel to the fire, as the present worsen environment become more worsen in the campus.

□ **Present student politics is a threat to national security**

Free flows of illegal arms have always been a threat to national security. The flow of arms is not only violating the sanctity of the campuses but also these guns are used the terrorizing in the proximity of campuses. Furthermore, these arms are rented to the top terror. Student organizations use hired gunmen to occupy the various resident halls in the campus. These gunmen do not belong to campus. So they do not care about the welfare of the students. That is why they use the campus as a safe haven to be free from being arrested.

The supremacy over the other student groups depends largely on the supremacy of weaponry in the age of muscle politics. The days have gone when the student groups used knives to get the upper hand over the opponent in the campus. Now a days, student groups are using so sophisticated weapons that the police are feeling helpless to match these weapons with there ones. The supply of these weapons comes from different sources. They are collected from smugglers, insurgents, local manufacturers, arms dealers and rented from criminals. The student leaders keep a good relationship with all those parties to ensure smooth supply of weapons. In this way, free flow of arms and ammunition creates anarchy in the society, which might even break the national security.

### **6.3. Recommendations**

During the survey 19.30% of the respondents felt that student politics should not be banned, but under the present unhealthy situation in student politics, there should be some restrictions upon it. The remaining respondents think that students may get involved in politics after the completion of their student life. Student should confine all their concentration on studies in their student life. Students can raise the voice for their problems and demands, but this should not be termed as "Student Politics."

To revive the student politics, the following suggestions can be adopted:

- Each political party has to cut off all connections from its student front. Student groups think that they are student wing of certain political party. So they do not have any separate identity as a student group. Political parties should stop their patronizing to the student groups. If this can be done then they will not dare to get involved in any illegal activity. They are under illusion that leaders of the political party will use their influence to save them even if they do anything that is a breach of law. So if the patronizing can be stopped then they will fear the law enforcement agencies.
- Political parties should modify their mindset about student politics. At present, most of the political parties strength lies in the students. So the political parties should come to the realization that students are for the development of the country not for the mistreatment of political parties.

- Student leaders should be selected or elected from the student groups without the influence or interference of its parent organization. In this process, democracy will be restored within the party.
- Political parties have to abstain from speaking ill of opposition parties. They have to be more cautious in choosing their actions. They should exhibit proper respect and tolerance to the opinion of the opposition. Inconsiderate comments and actions by the political parties have sparked tension among students, which ended in violence and bloodshed.
- Authorities of all educational institutions should be free, fair and neutral to all. On many occasions it has emerged that the authorities are relaxed in taking any action against the student wing of the ruling party. Ruling party's student group try to establish their supremacy over the opposition group by using this preferential treatment.
- It has become a popular trend that after every violent incident occurred in the institution, then and there would be a Fact-finding Committee. But the report provided by the fact-finding never comes to light. The fact-finding committees suggestions or actions never have been materialized. So the authorities should give up this show up business. If once, the report of the committee is followed then congenial environment in the campus will persist. Otherwise, as it is happening now a day, a series of violence incidents will take place, which will ultimately destroy the sanctity of the educational institutions.
- Allocation of seats in hall should be measured upon eligible or meritorious ground. But it has turned out that authorities allocate seats only in papers, but in reality for getting a seat in the hall one has to undergo a lot of trouble. At some point one has to surrender his allegiance to the ruling group of students of the hall. As halls are the hotbed of violence in educational institutions, authorities have to be strict and determined in maintaining control over the halls. The authorities should allocate seats to the eligible students and ensure that they can stay in the hall without any sort of disturbance. And the authorities should pay visit the hall at a regular basis to ensure law and order in the hall.



- Election to the student's union should be held in proper manner, with enthusiasm and vigor. But the trend in Bangladesh has become that the election of students' union is something, which creates tremendous tension and violence in educational institutions. Every possibility of armed conflict is there ever since the declaration of the election date. This can be overcome by following an academic calendar. In this case Jadavpur University of India is a classic example. The election date is announced at the beginning of the year in the academic calendar. Nobody is allowed to stick any printed posters or graffiti on wall. Only placards can use. On Election Day, classes go on as usual. For each class only one period of 50 minutes is spent for the election. A teacher along with the polling agents comes to the class with the ballot box. Students cast their votes as the teacher gives their attendance on the register book. No clashes or conflicts can be reported from this process. This procedure allows a violence free and effective election. This instance can be followed in all the educational institutions of Bangladesh.
- Our education system and syllabus should be upgraded and pragmatic. The present trend is that even if a student does not attend his classes at all, only a week of studying of some selected topics just before the exam will ensure a second class. This specially true in the case of faculty of Arts and Social Science.
- Teachers and respective authorities should not show their allegiance for a particular political party. A teacher may have his or her own choice in regarding political party, but it is expected from him/her that they will not use their political power to influence student.
- The concept and practice of "grouping and lobbying" should be wiped out. It is true that a handful of teachers are involved in "grouping and lobbying" politics but these few teachers are capable of turning the educational institution into an unhealthy one. So this ill practice of "grouping and lobbying" should be stopped.
- Meritorious, genius and politically cautious students should be encouraged to take part in politics. General students are reluctant to join in politics as hoodlums and thugs are dominating the arena of student politics. Furthermore, students have to review their opinion on student politics in order

to revive it to its original course. They have to ensure the rights for the students not the interest of political party.

- The common trend to elect the leaders of student' union on the basis of their party identity should be discarded. A leader should be elected by virtue of his academic background, involvement in extra-curricular activities, courtesy and last but not least by his personal image as a student leader. If this can be done, then there is a possibility to bring out the qualitative change in student politics.
- Students should help the authorities to implement any decisions and steps. Any decision taken by authority may go against particular student group, but it has been taken considering the greater interest of the student community.
- Students have to be more cautious and outspoken in raising their voice about their rights. "United we stand, divided we fall" should be their motto throughout their student life. So that they can ward off terrorism, violence and extortionism in the educational institutions.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

Student politics in many countries of the world has a long historical tradition. Not unlikely many other states of the world, the student politics of Bangladesh holds many characteristics, which are common to all movements. The long historical tradition has contributed on student politics of Bangladesh with some specific features. First of all, the student politics of this country has a pronounced anti-colonial stance by which students put contribution in the freedom struggles against the British colonial power and the Pakistani ruling elites. Like other former colonies, Bangladeshi student politics holds this anti-colonial tradition. The second feature of the student politics of Bangladesh is an anti-establishment stance. It has been the hallmark of the student politics in Bangladesh. One of the most important features of the student politics in Bangladesh is that the students have become championed to the cause of people against governmental attempts to curb democratic rights and freedoms in both pre-independence periods. In Pakistan period, students of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, raised their voice and fought against the suppressive measures taken by the Pakistani ruling elites through language movement of 1952, anti-Ayub movement in 1962, six points based movement in 1966, 11 points

movement in 1969, mass upsurge in 1969 and in the Liberation Struggle in 1971. After Liberation of Bangladesh, students fought against the military dictators for establishing democratic rights and freedoms in the country. The anti-Ershad movement may be the best example here. The third most important feature of student politics is that the students of Bangladesh are very much progressive in their outlook although there are a few conservative or reactionary trends. For establishing the democratic rights and fundamental freedoms and protecting the people of Bangladesh, the students as the pioneer put contribution through their movements against authoritarian onslaughts.

Like many other less developed countries, students are conscious group of the society which operate through various activities for the demands and needs of the people as well as their own. But the present scenario of student politics is different. Respondent's opinions reflect the exact situation of student politics. Existing student politics deals with terrorism and extortion rather than welfare of the students. Many evil cycles are ingrained such as influence of government and opposition political parties, uses of weapons, mismanagement of educational authorities, fragile education system, socio-economic blight and so on, in the system, which question the wisdom of student politics. This deadlock can be overcome by the mentioned recommendations in this study. It is true to say that all students, teachers, authorities of educational institutions, political parties, government, the intelligentsia and guardians have to work in unison to restore past glory of student politics.

### **Untapped Areas of the Future Research**

The study marks off following untapped Areas on which further researches may be conducted.

1. Student organizations and their History.
2. Role of student organizations in the development of congenial atmosphere in the institutions level.
3. Nature of student organizations in Bangladesh.
4. Relation between student politics and national politics.
5. Student organizations and their internal democratic practices.
6. Student organizations and their working system.
7. Participation of the student leaders in the national level politics.
8. Role of student politics in the national level decision making process.
9. Governmental role in banning student politics in Bangladesh, etc.

## Appendix-1

The A.B.S.A. under the leadership of its President, Promode Kumar Ghosal and its General Secretary Birendranath Gupta, dedicated itself to pursue the following programmes at its first meeting-

- (1) Establishment of free Day and Night Schools for imparting elementary education to poor students and the working class.
- (2) Establishment of a Volunteer Corps at Calcutta and its branches in the districts.
- (3) Establishment of a Worker's Training College.
- (4) Establishment of study circles, libraries and reading rooms.
- (5) Establishment of a free Hindi school.
- (6) Maintenance of the journal, *Chhatra*.
- (7) Establishment of Physical Culture Centers.
- (8) Collection of important data concerning village life.
- (9) Arrangement for an All-India Student's Tournament.
- (10) Carrying on active propaganda for the organization of district students association.

## Appendix-2

The objectives of the A.I.S.F. were spelt out. These were as follows:

- (1) Equal encouragement should be given to all students from different provinces for exchange of ideas and cultural exchanges should also be encouraged.
- (2) To give suggestions for improvement of the present day education system.
- (3) To preserve the rights of the student community,
- (4) To prepare the students for future citizenship responsibilities and arouse social, economic, political consciousness. So that they might be able to contribute there right to the freedom struggle.

**Appendix-3**  
**Tables showing the disparities**

**Table 1**

**Foreign Exchanges Earning and Trade Balances Between East and West Pakistan (Rupees in crore)**

	Foreign Balance		Interwing Balance		Overall Balance	
	East	West	East (-)	West (+)	East	West
1948-49	14.68	-64.83	12.05		2.63	-52.78
1949-50	24.41	-34.70	18.51		5.90	-16.19
1950-51	75.82	+17.54	20.85		74.97	+38.39
1951-52	32.31	-55.20	18.77		13.54	-36.43
1952-53	26.71	-14.99	6.92		20.69	-8.07
1953-54	35.19	-18.33	23.50		11.69	+5.17
1954-55	41.14	-29.16	10.68		30.46	-18.48
1955-56	68.06	-22.21	9.55		58.51	-12.66
1956-57	9.09	-81.78	19.77		-10.68	-52.01
1957-58	25.25	-88.07	43.29		-18.04	-44.78

Source: Anisur Rahman, "East and West Pakistan: A Problem in the Political Economy of Regional Planning" Cambridge: Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1968, p.12.

**Table 2**  
**Development Expenditure in East and West Pakistan**

Period	Development Plan Expenditure	Outside Plan Expenditure (1 4 5)	Total Development Expenditure		Total Expenditure		Development Expenditure in Regions as % of all Pakistan	
			Private	Works	Programme		7	8
	Total 1	Public 2	3	4	5	6		
<b>East Pakistan</b>								
1950/51-1954/55	1,000	700	300	-	-	1,000	2,710	20%
1955/56-1959/60	2,700	1,970	730	-	-	2,700	5,240	26%
1960/61-1964/65	92,506	250	3,000	-	450	9,700	14,040	32%
1965/66-1969/70	16,560	11,060	5,500	-	-	16,560	21,410	36%
<b>West Pakistan</b>								
Indus Basin Works Programme								
1950/51-1954/55	4,000	2,000	200	-	-	4,000	11,290	80%
1955/56-1959/60	7,500	4,640	2,930	-	-	7,570	16,550	74%
1960/61-1964/65	18,400	7,700	10,700	2,110	200	20,710	33,550	68%
1965/66-1969/70	26,100	10,100	16,000	3,600	-	29,770	51,950	64%

Source: Report of Advisory Panels for the Fourth Five-Year Plan, vol.1, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, July 1971.

**Distribution of Foreign Aid and Loans, 1947-48 to 1959-60**

	East Pakistan		West Pakistan		Centre		Total Taka in Crore
	Rs. in Crore	% of Total	Rs. in Crore	% of Total	Rs. in Crore	% of Total	
Foreign Development Aid	93.89	17	3335.22	62	113.03	21	542.14
U.S. Commodity Aid	129.00	30	262.00	64	18.00	6	409.00

Source: Economic Disparities between East and West Pakistan, (1963) Planning Department, East Pakistan, p.21.

**Net Resource Inflow of Foreign Aid**

	East Pakistan		West Pakistan		Total Rs. m
	Rs.m		Rs.m		
Second Plan (4 years) 1961-1965	2,582		7,67		10,255
Third Plan 1965-1970	4,481		6,904*		11,385

\*This amount excludes Rs. 1,900 million of foreign assistance received by Pakistan for the Indus Basin Replacement Works in West Pakistan.

Source: Planning Commission, Islamabad, Reports of the Advisory Panels for the Five Years Plan, Vol.1, July, 1970, p.110.

**Central Government Development Outlay 1947-48 to 60-61**

	East Pakistan		West Pakistan	
	Total (Rs. in Per Capita crore)		Total (Rs. in Per Capita crore)	
Investment	172	38	430	117
Loans	184	40	224	61
Grants-in-aid	76	15	101	28

Source: Economic Disparities Between East and West Pakistan, op.cit., p.18.

**Distribution of Revenue Expenditure 1947-48 to 1966-61**

	East Pakistan		West Pakistan		Unallowable	
	Rs. in Crore	% of Total	Rs. in Crore	% of Total	Rs. in Crore	% of Total
Revenue expenditure including working expenses of commercial departments	269	12	995	45	952	43
Revenue expenditure including working expenses of commercial departments	86	5	616	34	1,138	61

Source: Economic Disparities between East and West Pakistan, op.cit., p.17.



**Defense Expenditure (in million of rupees)**

Year	Total Expenditure	Defense Expenditure	Percentage
1949-50	856	625	73
1959-60	1,847	1,044	55
1965-66	4,498	2,886	64
1966-67	3,776	2,294	60

Source: Pakistan Budget 1968-69, Ministry of Finance.

**Health Services**

	Number in East Pakistan	Number in West Pakistan
(a) Hospital	76	393
(b) Dispensaries	489	1,754
(c) Beds of Hospitals & Dispensaries	6,984	26,200
(d) Population/Bed ratio	9,000:1	2,000:1

Source: 20 Years of Pakistan in Statistics, C.S.O.

**Per Capita Income**

	Total Income		Difference		Per Capita		Disparity
	E.P.	W.P.	E.P.	W.P.	E.P.	W.P.	
	E.P.	W.P.	E.P.	W.P.	E.P.	W.P.	
1949-50 (GNP)	12360	12106	+254		287	338	18%
1959-60 (GDP)	14489	17253	-2764		278	366	31%
1967-68	20235	28652	-8417		302	530	75%

Source: Third Five-Year Plan of Pakistan and Economic Survey of East Pakistan.

## Appendix 4

### 6 Point Formula

#### The Charter of the Autonomy Movement

The Formula containing the explanatory note was circulated with the sub title 'our right to live' in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President of the East Pakistan Awami League. The point were-

1. In point one of the Formula, it was said that the constitution of Pakistan should provide for a federation in its true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution and a parliamentary form of government with supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise. This was defined with seven ingredients: (a) Pakistan would be a federation, (b) it would be based on the Lahore Resolution, (c) the Government would be of a parliamentary form, (d) the Government would be responsible to the legislature, (e) the legislature would be supreme meaning a sovereign body, (f) it would be directly elected, (g) the election would be on the basis of universal adult franchise.
2. In point two, the recommendation was that the federal government 'shall deal with only two subjects, viz., defence and foreign affairs and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the federating states.'
3. Point three was related to currency. Mujib in this connection recommended either one of the two-measures:
  - a. Either two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings, Or
  - b. One currency for the whole country provided separate banking reserve, separate fiscal and monetary policy were adopted for East Pakistan and effective constitutional provisions were made to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan.
4. Point four was related to taxation. Mujib's proposal was that the power of taxation and revenue collection should vest in the federating units and the federal center would have no have any such power. The Federation would have a share in the state taxes for meeting their required expenditure. The consolidated federal fund would come out of a levy of a certain percentage of all state taxes.

5. Point five was related for foreign exchange, inter-wing and external trade. Mujib's proposal was:
  - a. There would be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings.
  - b. Earning of East Pakistan would be under the control of East Pakistan government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan government.
  - c. The two wings would meet foreign exchange requirement of the federal government either equally or in a ratio to be fixed.
  - d. Indigenous products would move free of duty between the two wings.
  - e. The constitution would empower the unit government to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreement with foreign countries.
  
6. In point six, Mujib recommended the setting up of a militia or a Para-military force for East Pakistan. So that it could be made self-sufficient in the matter of defense. An ordnance factory and a military academy with the naval headquarters would set up in East Pakistan.

## **Appendix 5**

### **11 Points Programme**

Students Action Committee declared 11 points programme as the basis of Anti-Ayub Movement on 5 January 1969. The 11 points were as follows:

1. Full autonomy of educational institutions, comprehensive expansion of education and arrangement of education by low cost;
2. Re-introduction of parliamentary democracy;
3. Conferring full regional autonomy on the basis of 6 points of 1966;
4. Conferring autonomy to all provinces canceling one unit in West Pakistan;
5. Nationalization of Bank, Insurance and large industries;
6. Reducing tax and revenue for peasant class;
7. Conferring reasonable wages and bonus and education, dwelling house and medical, etc. for labour class;
8. Proper use of water resource and flood control in East Pakistan;
9. Withdrawal of all persecution acts and security act;
10. Pursuing independent and neutral foreign policy and canceling all military pacts including CENTO and SEATO;
11. Release of all political prisoners and withdrawal of all political cases including Agartola conspiracy case.

## Appendix 6

### A Survey Report of Public Opinion on Present Student Politics

No. Particulars/Question

1. Age

17-22 years  23-28 years  29-34 years  35-40 years   
Above 41 years

2. Sex

Male  Female

3. Occupation

Student  Teacher  Executive  Businessman  Others

4. Educational Qualification

S.S.C  H.S.C  Graduation  Post Graduation

5. Which educational institute do/did you attend?

6. How many years of University study have you passed or completed or nearly completed?

7. Do/did you have any involvement in Student Politics?

Yes  No

If yes or no, then answer any one of the following

Did have  Did not have  Still have  Still do not have

8. Which of the following elements should be the aim or objective of Student Politics?

To do something useful/welfare of students  Initial step to participate/exercise in national politics  No need of student politics  Playing role in National Politics

9. What is your opinion about the present trend of student politics?

a) Related with terrorism and toll collection.

b) Helpful to the development of the standard of democracy and education.

c) None of the above.

10. What are the causes of involvement of student politics with terrorism and toll collection?

a) Involvement of main political parties in student politics.

b) Lack of sound leadership.

c) Use of arms and weapons in student politics.

d) Present socio-economic condition.

e) Present education system.

f) Involvement of teachers in politics.

g) Patronization of Government in its student organization.

11. Do you think that the healthy student politics depend on the influence of ruling party's student wing?

a) Depend upon ruling party's student wing.

b) Not at all dependent.

12. Do you think that the national politics is helpful to build up healthy student politics?

a) Helpful to develop healthy student politics.

b) Not at all helpful.

c) None of above.

13. Is student politics responsible to cause session jams and terrorism?

a) Student politics is responsible.

b) Not at all responsible.

c) No comment.

14. What is your opinion for and against the student politics?

a) Should be banned.

b) Should not be banned.

c) None of above.

15. For how long student politics should be banned?

a) Should be banned for long time.

b) Should be banned for short time.

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16. What should be the ways to uplift the student politics from present situation?

- a) Stoppage of the political patronage.
- b) Student should not be used as political weapon.
- c) Law enforcement agency should be neutral and active in their jobs.
- d) Educational authorities should play strong and neutral role.
- e) Closure of Student Union.

17. Please put special comments or proposals for the progression of student politics from present situation.

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*Rahman, Ziaur and S.A. Faisal Md. Murad*, "Student Politics: For the Students". This paper was presented at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) Young Scholars' Seminar on "Student Politics: Alternative Visions", Organized by the BISS in Dhaka on 10 August 1999.

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