

BANGLADESH 1975-1981

TRANSITION FROM AUTOCRACY TO MULTI PARTY DEMOCRACY

(EDITED VERSION)

DR SYED MOKBUL HUSSAIN

Bangladesh 1975-1981
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Dedicated to

Wife : Sajeda Parvin Hussain

Son : Syed Tanvir Hussain

Daughter-in-law : Syeda Farhana Hussain

Daughter : Syeda Adiba Hussain

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PREFACE

Until recent past, as observed, one significant feature of a number of Third World countries including Bangladesh had been the collapse of democratic order followed by introduction of authoritarian rule. After her independence in 1971, Bangladesh started off with a parliamentary system of government which functioned under various constraints and lasted only for three years. The ruling Awami League leadership though claiming themselves as the champions of democracy, manifested their utter failure to sustain the democratic system and opted for single party BAKSAL rule in 1975. In Bangladesh owing to weakness of political institutions, overall failure of the politicians and leaders to deal with emerging politico-economic crises, widespread corruption, mismanagement and the like brought an opportunity for the extra-constitutional forces to intervene and they readily exploited the same to grab political power on August 15, 1975. In November 1975, after a series of *coup* and counter-*coups*, Shaheed Ziaur Rahman was brought to state power and subsequently Shaheed Zia established himself as the country's undisputed national leader. This success of Shaheed President Zia marked a significant change in the nation's history and political system with a far-reaching positive consequences, most importantly, in establishing a multi-party democratic order.

This study focuses on two major regimes in Bangladesh. The analysis, as presented, reveals that the first regime led by charismatic leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was replaced by

military rule through the behind-the-scene machinations of politico-military quarters. In this book a detailed analysis of pragmatic rule in Bangladesh under Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman from 1975 through 1981 has been furnished. The major aspects which have been examined include: the circumstances of the involvement of extra constitutional forces in the political change, the process of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman's consolidation of political power; and his reforms to initiate the process of democratic development and a host of socio-economic programmes for overall national progress.

This study is qualitative as well as descriptive and analytical. For collecting necessary information both secondary published materials and primary sources have been used. These include concerned government documents and materials, local and foreign books, newspapers, journals and relevant weeklies. A number of civil military officials and politicians were also interviewed. Opinions and data which were gathered have been evaluated and presented precisely. There are numerous publications on the rise of authoritarianism in the countries belonging to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. However, there are insignificant number of books and materials on this aspect in Bangladesh. Scholarly and in depth studies focusing on the role of extra-constitutional forces and the transition from autocratic rule to democracy in this country are still scant. In this context, the present book is an academic pursuit to bridge the gap.

This book is divided into five broad chapters. Theoretical formulations on military in politics and significance of its role in developing societies have been presented in chapter-I. This section mentions the difficulties and constraints of the newly emerging countries to keep the western type of liberal democratic set-up. In the post independence period the unity formed during the nationalist movement eroded and parochial

political struggle and bitter division among parties, groups, regions, classes, and sects became evident. Consequently, the umbrella party soon lost its vigour and controlling capability. Even the charismatic leader became undone to cope with the ever-increasing multifarious crises. Due to lack of democratic tradition and culture and disagreements on state fundamentals, parliamentary system could not function. In many instances the nationalist leaders themselves and the authoritarian rulers disbanded the democratic framework. Single party system became a norm in these countries especially in Africa. Simultaneous occurrence of socio-economic and political crises as such paved the way for introduction of autocratic rule in these countries.

Chapter Two of this book examines the nature of army intervention in Bangladesh politics and discusses the *coup* and counter-*coups* during 1975. After furnishing a historical background right from colonial days to the liberation war phase, the writer analyses the Awami League (AL) rule in the post-independence period till 1975. The points which have been highlighted include the failure of state policies pursued by the Awami League Government, leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Indo-Bangladesh relations, food crisis and US-Bangladesh relations, the role of radical opposition, predicaments of Awami League, relations between the AL government and the army and mismanagement in socio-economic sectors. This chapter describes the background of the establishment of authoritarian rule, and sepyo revolution of November 7, 1975.

Chapter Three presents a detail and in depth analysis of Shaheed President Zia's rule highlighting democracy and development and discussing his ascent to state authority, the measures taken by his regime to consolidate power, civilianization process, restoration of multi-party system and

the nature of political and economic development during 1975-1981. In the process of analysis this section elucidates the strategies of Shaheed President Zia and his policy programmes that had been chalked out for democratization of the polity. Shaheed Zia's development efforts ranging from *Swanirvar* programme and *Gram Sarkar*, reorganization of the civil service, to socio-economic and foreign policy measures have been examined with an overall performance of his government. This chapter comments that the success stories and the accomplishments of Shaheed President Zia in above spheres are indeed unique and unprecedented in contemporary history of the Third World.

Chapter Four investigates the nature of Bangladesh's political process under Shaheed Zia. It has been discussed that although Shaheed President Zia successfully steered the wheel of the state introducing a successful multi-party democratic system, during the period, certain forces both from in and outside remained active to encourage conflict, factionalism, schism, and squabbles within the Bangladesh armed forces. It has been pointed out in this chapter that Shaheed Zia's creation of a strong popular support base outside the cantonment demonstrating his increased efforts towards upholding the cause of democracy alienated some quarters of the army. Repeated *coup* attempts at Zia's time unfolded the strife among the aspirants. This chapter also tries to find out the nature of army rebellions against Shaheed Zia and describes the *coup* attempts and on going conspiracy within the armed forces. Though initially Shaheed President Zia followed a supple policy later he took a hard line to control the situation but could not escape his brutal killing on 30 May 1981.

In the concluding chapter an evaluation of the study has been made. While summing up, this chapter recapitulates

Shaheed Zia's contributions towards building of people's democracy and prosperous Bangladesh, his state policy programmes and development efforts highlighting his sincerity, personal honesty, dedication, statesmanship, and capable leadership for which he will remain alive for ever among the great millions.

This book is an outcome of a Ph. D. thesis submitted to the Calcutta University in 1992. In the process of research and publication of this book I owe my debt to a number of persons and institutions. First, I am indebted to my supervisor Professor Jayanta Kumar Ray who offered me his kind guidance at every stage of research and took the trouble of going through my work. I am thankful to those civil-military officials and political leaders who spared their valuable time for my interview and enriched me with their comments. I am appreciative of the services that I received from Calcutta and Dhaka university libraries and other institutions. My affectionate feelings are due especially to my wife Parvin, son Tanvir, daughter-in-law Farhana and daughter Adiba who all along remained a source of great inspiration to complete my endeavour. Finally, I would like to bear all responsibility for any shortcoming, omission and comment presented in this book.

Dhaka

December 2001

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INTRODUCTION MILITARY IN POLITICS AND BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

A discussion on Bangladesh in the post-independence period till mid-1975 would reveal that the direct intervention of the military in the country's politics had been the outcome of a number of factors the major one being the terrible failure of the then political leadership in state management and upholding the democratic system. However, the violent political change in mid-1975 proved to be a transitional phase leading to further *coup* and counter attempts. During this critical time Shaheed Zia who was not all instrumental in the process had been brought to the fore. Indeed, the events of mid-1975 and those that followed in almost blinding succession swept him into the apex position wherefrom he could preside over the destiny of Bangladesh for the subsequent years. Bangladesh after these events in the post-1975 period appeared to be greatly different from many of the Third World countries insofar as their experience of living under military rule was concerned.

Considering the extent of impact on state and society in the Third World exerted at least by the high-ranking military officials it was accepted widely that they had almost assumed the position and role of a separate political force.¹ A survey of military *coups* that happened in the member countries of the United Nations provides the basis of such a generalization. Up to June 1957, the members of the world body numbered 159; of them 82 had the experience of military rule.² In August 1975, when Bangladesh was under the shadow of military rule at

least 29 percent of the Third World states had been under military governance.³

The explanations for such endemic and recurring military intervention in politics are multi-dimensional and varied. But it is generally observed that the military is never induced to topple a stable and legitimate political government. Because the risky consequences that follow the end to such a government are which the military as an institution is hardly equipped to face. Moreover, some members of the military may even believe that this government has a voice preponderant over them. On the contrary, a government with eroding legitimacy is easily toppled by the military. The factors that contribute to the erosion of legitimacy of a civilian government include *inter alia*, failure to curb militant public agitation, economic downslide or full-fledged crisis resulting from either the failure to devise appropriate policy or due to the failure to implement policies, corruption of the political elite in power, and adopting of anti-constitutional measures to extend the stay in power. But it is not always certain that a conglomeration of all these factors would make a military *coup* inevitable. A *coup* takes place only when, overtaken by a political ambition, the military elite cashes in on the circumstances created by such factors.

The duties of any civilian government include maintaining law and order, safeguarding life and property of citizens; and protecting territorial integrity of country. But when government fails to do these duties properly it forfeits its claim to administer the country. In the backdrop of failure of a civilian government to deliver the desired goods people may become mentally prepared to seek deliverance in the rule by a well-organized military.⁴ The immediate background to such a public sentiment is created when the beleaguered civilian administration seeks the assistance of the armed forces in

curbing steadily growing anti-government agitation. In the case when the armed forces are successful in doing the assigned task of restoring law and order the civilian administration develops a somewhat dependency syndrome. Under such circumstances the military elite starts harbouring the powerful ambition of replacing the discredited civilian authority. Such a psychology of the military has two explanations. On the one hand, by rendering successful service in the aid of civilian authority the military becomes aware of the limitation and helplessness of this authority. On the other hand, such an exercise produces a kind of self-confidence in the military rank and file that induces the political ambition.⁵ The background to the *coups* in Syria (1949), Colombia (1953), Turkey (1960)/ Dahomey (1965), Nigeria (1966), and Pakistan (1977) was created by the widespread breakdown of law and order. One survey indicates that 66 percent of the 105 successful *coups* that took place between 1947 and 1966 were preceded immediately by socio-political chaos and disorder.⁶

An economic crisis gripping the country may also induce generals into politics. Between 1957 and 1964 it was found that 75 percent of the countries under military rule had per *capita* income lower than \$64. Whereas only 6 percent of the countries with over \$836 per *capita* income witnessed *coups*⁷. Sometimes it is revealed that the middle class background of generals is a factor to be reckoned with in the case of a *coup* induced by an economic crisis, and this is because of the fact that the middle class turns out to be worst hit by such economic crisis. In other words, the praetorian generals, in fact, act in defence of the interest of the class they belong to. The *coups* that took place in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic in 1963 are examples of this type.⁸

Rampant and widespread corruption among the members of the ruling elite is found to be an encouraging signal for the

politically motivated military to gobble power. The examples for such *coups* are provided by the ones that took place in Pakistan and Iraq (1958), Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanganyika (1964) and Nigeria (1966).⁹ Corruption does not mean only squandering of public resources; it does also mean taking recourse to anti-constitutional measures with an ulterior political motive.¹⁰

A civil administration mirrored by such obvious failures forfeits its claim to rule the country; and in the process loses its acceptability. In fact, rules and regulations; and even orders of such an administration are occasionally/frequently flouted with impunity. Disregarding the accepted norms of participatory system this administration also loses its public support-base. All such manifestations are witnessed in a country with a low-level of political culture; and such a country appears ripe for interference by the praetorian army.¹¹ Such a low level of political culture renders political institutions either weak or ineffective. Various groups are encouraged to promote their interests through agitation and demonstration. Consequently, countries with low level of political culture are found to be besotted with student and labour unrest. Rich people depend on corrupt practices to gain their objectives; and common masses, under the influence of disgruntled political elements, take to streets. Eventually, the army takes over and the scenario undergoes a change.¹²

It is interesting to note that the military has its own perception as to weighing the failure of a civilian administration. If budgetary allocation for defence is slashed for some reason, and if the military considers such allocation insufficient such an administration is viewed negatively; and military intervention takes place for replacing it. Many of the *coups* that had taken place in Peru up to 1964 could be explained by this factor. The 1948 *coup*, for example, was

precipitated by the government plan to cut the size of the armed forces by one-third, a measure necessitated by financial stringency.¹³ In 1966, the *coup*-makers in Ghana alleged low salary and insufficient arms and ammunition.¹⁴ In 1991, the newly elected government in Haiti provoked a *coup* by its move to curtail the privileges of the military.¹⁵

The distinctive characteristics of the military as an institution come in a big way to help the leaders to plan and execute a *coup*. Such characteristics include unified command, chain of command, discipline and efficiency in coercive actions. These characteristics set the military apart from civilian institutions.¹⁶ Of course, such built-in institutional factors do not come to any help if the military is riven by infighting. In such countries as Myanmar, Indonesia and Bangladesh the military has been found to develop political ambition quickly because of their involvement in the war of independence. The armed forces in these countries have demonstrated arrogance against the corrupt administration responsible for creating political unrest and chaos.¹⁷

A question may be raised : what is there in the military that ensures apparent political stability and economic progress? Even in the case of economic development the military cannot go about the business single-handed. Again, by training and orientation the military does not command any special attribute that ensures both political stability and economic development.¹⁸ An appraisal of the record of the developed nations of the West shows that remarkable economic progress has been achieved because of the role of entrepreneurs. The role of an entrepreneur does not resemble that of the military who are not motivated in the same way as the entrepreneurs are. The entrepreneurs are not conditioned and constrained by rules of discipline and chain of command as found in the military.¹⁹ By an oversimplification it is

sometimes suggested that as a large institution with its range of activities covering the whole of the country the military is certainly capable of implementing any project, however big or difficult it may be. As against such a generalization it is argued that despite all its built-in structural advantages the military in isolation, is not an institution to sustain the complicated process of economic development. The empirical evidence, however, suggests that the military, in concert and cooperation with other institutions, has been instrumental in the economic growth of a country. Thailand is an example where the entrepreneurs yielded some places in the board of directors to the military; and this was how economic progress was ensured.

The scenario in the Western world is different wherein defence capabilities are integral to professionalism of the military.²⁰ It is sometimes argued that this concept of military professionalism is obsolete. On the contrary, it is suggested that military professionalism should include both civil and military spheres. This is the reason why the military training institutes offer courses in economics and politics alongside military strategy. In these days the armed forces are required to be prepared for war as well as peace-time services. In the 1960s the Malaysian military was engaged in certain special areas not accessible to civilian authorities for doing some non-military groundwork. It was found that through such activities by the military these areas were prepared for going through the process of economic growth. The modern definition of military professionalism does include such non-military extra-professional perspective; but an extension into non-military professionalism through corruption and with ulterior political motive would certainly be contrary to the spirit of professionalism.²¹

The non-military extra-professional role of the military (in

economic development, for example) would, however, depend on the nature of relationship between the armed forces and the political elite. If this relationship is conditioned by democratic practice the role of the military in development activities may be insignificant. In the countries with such civil-military relationship the armed forces are deployed to render services in times of natural calamities or in counter-insurgency operations. But in a country where democratic practice is conspicuous by its absence the military as an institution is not subject to civilian control; and development activities are preponderantly influenced by the armed forces. It is obvious that in such a scenario the armed forces legitimize their political role through engaging themselves in such development activities. Moreover, they take the initiative to build rapport with civil bureaucracy and with technocrats; even go to the extent of floating a political platform on their own.²²

The other side of the military dominated political scenario is that, the military may refrain from direct participation in developmental activities. They may leave the job to be done by the bureaucracy and technocrats and concentrate on maximising benefits for themselves. The experience from Thailand shows that the military officers may become partners in commercial houses, and directors of commercial organizations. They may also be found engaged in drug trafficking and smuggling of gold. The ordinary soldiers are also provided with some opportunity to maximise gains by letting them engage in multifarious commercial transactions. The military in Thailand appears to subscribe to the contemporary definition of professionalism whereby their spheres of activity include national politics as well as economic development.²³

In the 1950s and 1960s some Western analysts discovered that professional politicians in the Third World countries,

constrained as they were by their penchant to serve group interests and corruption, contributed to the failure of Western model of democracy and economic development strategies. Extending this type of analysis they started arguing that the military, because of their professional training and orientation, would be able to deliver what the politicians failed to. Most of these analysts were from the United States. It is interesting to note that in those times such a perception of the Third World military was relevant to the orientation of American foreign policy. Immediately after World War II the United States sought to strengthen the Third World democracy in its bid to checkmate the spread of communist ideology. But this policy faced a dilemma as many of the states succumbed to military rule. The positive perception of the role of the military in politics and economic development was indeed an upshot of the imperatives related to this dilemma. Granting that democracy had an unfavourable soil in the Third World the Western World now embarked upon the policy of patronizing military rule as an agent of modernization. It was also argued that military regimes sufficiently backed by Western aid and assistance would act as bulwarks against the spread of communism.²⁴ The ending of the Cold War has, however, changed the scenario. As the threat of communism is no more that military has fallen from the grace of their one-time mentors; and successful practicing of democratic governance has now become a prequalification for these states for receiving Western aid and assistance.

As it gradually turned out, the ground reality in the Third World contradicted the positive perception of the military vis-a-vis its role. It became apparent that insofar as serving of group interests in preference to national interests, corruption and administrative failure the military rulers could not make any qualitative difference. The political turmoil that once had

preceded military take-over also became instrumental in removing the military rulers. The political instability thus created stunted economic growth. Whatever economic growth that some military rulers were able to achieve had explanations elsewhere; at least not in the military rule itself. It is undeniable that a minimum precondition for economic development is political stability. But this stability is not really synonymous with the unchallenged control that the military exercises over the state machinery for some time. In evaluating the prospect for economic development of a country besides stability one has to take into consideration social structure, availability of capital, technology; and even state policy. Perhaps a case-study of Indonesia would illustrate the point being laboured at this stage. It is known that the political instability that existed before 1965 had much to do with the machination of the military. The military rule that began in 1966 did restore political stability conducive to economic development. But even then it would be far from truth to credit the army rule for the impressive economic strides that Indonesia made in the 1970s. The taproot of this economic prosperity was the twenty percent rise in the export price of Indonesian oil.²⁵ It is pertinent to point out that in the 1970s Singapore and Malaysia were conspicuous for achieving highest economic growth; and both were under civilian administration. On the contrary, during the same period the military ruled Myanmar and achieved lowest economic growth.

Based on such a discussion we need to reach a conclusion as to why military rule appears in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar; and not in Malaysia and Singapore. It may be argued that a country lacking in strong social forces capable of acting as counterpoise to the military becomes vulnerable to military rule. In fact, well-educated urban middle class, strong

entrepreneurial class and well-organized social forces act as hindrances to military interference in national politics. Considered in such a context it becomes easier to explain why military *coups* punctuated political process in Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar and Bangladesh; and why Singapore and Malaysia remained free from military rule. But it has to be emphasized that the scenario in the latter two states is explained by the existence of a comparatively less corrupted administrators geared to subserving national administration.²⁶ A contrary scenario is the one wherein political leaders, civil-military bureaucrats, and businessmen are found engaged in serving group interests. In such a scenario either military rule or civilian rule would not make any qualitative difference; and thus political stability and economic development would never be achieved. In 1990, under similar circumstances, a superficially stable authoritarian rule headed by a military turned civilian H. M. Ershad crumbled in Bangladesh when challenged by mass demonstration.

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2

BANGLADESH POLITICS: THE 1975 COUP AND ITS SEQUEL

The putsch engineered by half a dozen majors in the small hours of 15 August 1975 marked a significant alteration in the course of political history of Bangladesh. The *coup*, however, has been regarded by the scholars 'as a pacesetter in the sense that it was closely followed by a series of *coup* or *coup* attempts, and the seeds of all those were sown in that putsch.¹ It unfolded factionalism within the military high command and ranks and following the *coup* and counter *coup* there had been rise of the general soldiers organizing a sepoy revolution on November 7, 1975. In the process what is beyond doubt and above controversy is its sequel out of which emerged Shaheed Ziaur Rahman (Zia) as the strong leader at the helm of affairs. Since the *coup* that acted as a catalyst in this power configuration was the first of its kind in independent Bangladesh mere drawing attention to the circumstances immediately preceding would not suffice as an explanation. The long background that the *coup* had was, to a great extent linked to the experience during the Pakistan period. Bengali armed personnel had an earlier exposure to military intervention in politics in 1958.² Coupled with this was the extent of politicization that those fighting in the liberation war had undergone in 1971. Moreover, the socio-political forces that could act as a counter-weight to the political ambition of the army were weak in Bangladesh.

For a proper understanding of the complex web of events that eventually led to the *coup* we need to focus on certain selected

aspects of the past history of Bangladesh; and these are spread of Islam, British imperialism, Pakistani rule and the emergence of nationalism.³

Islam appeared in Bengal by the beginning of the thirteenth century. During the following five centuries Muslim rule in the subcontinent led to the emergence of a distinct Muslim community alongside the Hindus and Buddhists. Until about the mid-nineteenth century, the Muslims of Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) were predominantly agriculturists. The long spell of Muslim rule failed to make any qualitative difference in their livelihood. On the whole, the Hindu *zamindars* wielded politico-economic power in this region. The emerging Hindu-Muslim divide based as it was mostly on economic differentiation gradually assumed a religious undertone with a strong political overtone.⁴ As has been aptly observed, "... it was not religion which divided the Hindus and Muslims politically; though religious prejudices were blatantly exploited as a feeder catalyst to the latent communal antagonism ..."⁵ One impact of the British rule was to disturb the relative homogeneity of the Muslim community. The Permanent Settlement introduced in 1793 handed over the ownership of land to a new group of *zamindars*; but the Bengal Land Tenancy Act of 1885 sought to safeguard some of the rights of the peasantry who had a rough deal under the new arrangement. A cumulative effect of all these developments was the growth of a new but small group of Muslim *zamindars*. Alongside this new Muslim landed aristocracy there also emerged a small group of Muslim educated elite—a direct beneficiary of the introduction of English and the Western system of education.⁶ These two segments of the Muslim society actively supported the bifurcation of the subcontinent; and in the process East Bengal became the eastern wing of the new state of Pakistan. In 1950, a legislation was put into effect

to do away with the *zamindari* system. In that year the *zamindars* numbered 2237; and of these 358 were Muslims.⁷ In the fifties and sixties most of the Hindu *zamindars* migrated to India. Moreover, most of the Hindu educated elite did the same thing. Consequently, something like a vacuum was created in Eastern Bengal to be filled in by the rising Muslim elite who benefited out of the new avenues of opportunity in education and administration in the new political setting. Despite this slow but steady rise in influence and prominence the Muslim middle class was not powerful enough in the seventies to act as a counterpoise to the organized strength of the military.

During the Pakistan rule the people of East Bengal were subjected to something like internal colonialism. The political power was wielded by the civil-military bureaucracy, whose only intention was to perpetuate cultural, economic and political domination over the people of East Bengal.⁸ Disregarding the fact that Bengali was the mother-tongue of the majority population of Pakistan (i. e. the Bengalis) Urdu was imposed as state language. The Language Movement of 1948-52 that emerged in East Bengal defied this move successfully. This movement for Bengali as one of the state languages had its far-reaching consequence in initiating the process of Bengali nationalism. The economic basis of this nationalism was provided by the discriminatory policy pursued by the Pakistani ruling elite. The share of foreign exchange due to East Bengal was mostly spent in the industrialization of West Pakistan. Moreover, East Bengal was discriminated in import-export policy, industrialization; and in every sector of economic policy. Every year huge amount of resources were transferred from East Bengal to West Pakistan.⁹ Without foreign financial and technical assistance there could be no industrialization. Pakistan did get this kind

of assistance; but much of it was utilized in West Pakistan. Nearly two-third of the revenue budget of the central government was allocated for defence.¹⁰ Very little of this huge defence budget went to the benefit of East Bengal as Bengalis had very insignificant representation in the armed forces. The armed forces of Pakistan expanded in size, resources and even in political influence after Pakistan joined the U. S. sponsored security pacts in 1954.¹¹ The legendary twenty-two rich families of West Pakistan emerged under the direct patronage of the military assisted by the civil bureaucracy. These twenty-two families were instrumental in exploiting East Bengal and ensuring transfer of resources from there.

One major indicator of Pakistani colonial exploitation was the extent of economic deprivation suffered by East Bengal. As many as three central capitals were built, one after another, in West Pakistan at Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. East Bengal gained nothing out of this capital-building. On the other hand, East Bengal suffered most through such natural disasters as flood and cyclone. No attempt was made to minimise losses through such disaster. No long-term flood action programme was undertaken. Even during these times of natural calamities relief provided was thoroughly inadequate. The only possible way out of this vicious circle of exploitation was to achieve sufficient share of political power, but which could be possible only under a system of democratic governance. It was a common sense perception that Bengalis, being in majority, stood to gain under such democratic governance. This fact explains why the civil military bureaucracy in West Pakistan was consistently inimical to a speedy framing of a democratic constitution for Pakistan. In fact, the civil-military bureaucracy had been gradually arrogating political power in the backdrop of the

infighting and the consequent inefficiency of politicians - a process that culminated in 1958 in the first military intervention in Pakistan politics.¹² The constitution was eventually framed after long nine years in 1956 and had provisions for perpetuating domination over East Bengal. The name of the province 'East Bengal' was replaced by 'East Pakistan'. Moreover, Bengalis were not given representation in the National Assembly proportionate to their majority status; they had equal number of seats to those of the West Pakistanis.

But before the constitution could be put into practice and a general election held military intervention took place in 1958. For the next one decade Field Marshal Ayub Khan developed a system of administration that was a corporate complex of civil-military bureaucracy and businessmen. But a strong and large-scale public demonstration in both the wings of Pakistan began in November 1968; and finally in March 1969, the Ayub regime was replaced by another military administration with General Yahya Khan at its head. In East Pakistan the main objectives of anti-Ayub agitation were to ensure adult franchise, a democratic governance based on direct election and the end to exploitation by West Pakistan. A major political programme encompassing all such demands was the Six-Point enunciated by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League. The Six-Point movement spearheaded by the Awami League added an alarming dimension to this anti-Ayub agitation. But one manifest limitation of the Six-Point movement had been that it was entirely confined to the urban elite only. But the mass uprising of 1969 led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani was comparatively more broadly-based movement and spread to the countryside.¹³

In 1970, the first general election on the basis of adult franchise was held under the Yahya regime. In this election the

Awami League led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman secured absolute majority in the National Assembly of Pakistan. For the Awami League this electoral victory ensured a central government under its leadership and for Bangabandhu the prime ministership of Pakistan. But, as it turned out, the ruling elite in West Pakistan were found unwilling to welcome the Awami League into power; and the reasons for which were not far to seek. The Six-Point programme of the Awami League envisaged autonomy for East Pakistan; and the ruling elite in West Pakistan, in the process, would be left with no opportunity to exploit the Bengalis. The unwillingness of the West Pakistani ruling junta to share power led the people of East Pakistan to intensify their movement for regional autonomy under the charismatic leadership of Sheikh Mujib. In the face of pressure and army threats from the junta, Mujib resorted to a peaceful constitutional movement of the Bengalis. On March 7, 1971 in a mammoth public meeting of more than one million people at the Ramna Race Course, Dhaka, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered a historic address where he declared non-violent non-cooperation movement against the regime and concluded the speech with his famous utterings "our movement this time is the movement for freedom and our struggle this time is for independence." The whole Bengali population complied with all his directions which gave Sheikh Mujib de facto authority all over East Pakistan. The military crack down on the Bengalis that took place on the fateful night of 25 March 1971 was, in fact, an extreme step to undo the verdict of the first ever general election of Pakistan. But this step had the inconceivable impact of transforming an autonomy movement into a full-fledged liberation war. Immediately after the military crack down scattered armed resistance from the Bengalis had been organized and at this crucial hour formal

declaration of the independence of Bangladesh came from the golden voice of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman from the Chittagong radio station on 26-27 March 1971. On 16 December 1971, the joint forces of freedom-fighters and the Indian armed forces were able to defeat and compel the Pakistani occupation forces to surrender.¹⁴ This defeat in the liberation war and the consequent disfiguration that Pakistan went through was a demonstration of the failure of the military-bureaucratic alliance and misguided politicians.

Between 1972 and 15 August 1975, the Awami League ruled Bangladesh. Despite the obvious resource constraint and other odd circumstances common to a state like Bangladesh the new ruling elite was presented with an opportunity for demonstrating a firm commitment to deliver the goods. Unfortunately, as the subsequent events showed, this opportunity was simply squandered. Of course, it has to be admitted that the new administration beleaguered by the overwhelming burden of losses through the nine-month long liberation war could not render a magical service overnight. In 1972-73, compared with 1969-70 GDP registered a downslide by 14 percent, *per capita* income by 20 per cent, industrial production by 30 per cent, jute production by 28 per cent; and rice production by 15 per cent. Lack of sufficient supply led to a sharp rise in the price of daily necessities.¹⁵ Contrary to such a fast deteriorating socio-economic scenario popular expectation for the government to deliver the goods was rising. How far the incumbent government was able to bridge the gap between its level of performance and popular expectation would ever remain a matter of spirited controversy. The basis for such a controversy was provided by the fact that during all these years the ruling elite and especially their cronies were found to be abusing power for the purpose of self-gratification.¹⁶ The cumulative effect of

such a state of affairs was the growing distance between the rulers and the ruled; and widespread dissatisfaction among the masses.

The war of liberation had kindled hope for a better tomorrow among the masses. Such hopes and aspirations crystallized as the people had to make tremendous sacrifice through this liberation war and undergo unbelievable tribulations, which, however, was not the case with some of the Awami League leaders. Throughout the whole period of the war they lived in the safe havens in Calcutta and other Indian cities. About 70 percent of them were in Calcutta; 15 percent was scattered over other cities; and the rest 15 percent was associated with war efforts.¹⁷ On occasions these leaders while living in India did things which left their sense of commitment to the cause of independence open to question; and indeed such questions were raised immediately after liberation mostly by a group of freedom-fighters. On the one hand, the Awami League leadership was accused of purposely avoiding a long drawn-out people's guerrilla war organized from within the country; and on the other, of preventing an armed resistance movement from turning into a national democratic revolution.¹⁸ The 1970 general election was contested by the Awami League with effective aid and assistance from the Communist Party of East Pakistan and the National Awami Party (Muzaffar); and all three of these parties were united by an election alliance, albeit undeclared. But when on 17 April, the Government-in-exile was formed none except the Awami League was represented in the power structure. Even this government was found to be discriminating against those who were not its followers while providing necessary assistance for the refugees. For all these factors, the new government in Bangladesh found it very difficult to develop a national consensus based on effective

support from the political parties.¹⁹

The policy of the Awami League Government-in-exile for recruitment and training of freedom-fighters was also discriminatory. As it was, training facilities sponsored by the Indian government were open only to clearly identified Awami League followers. Consequently, the left-oriented youths who were in India and eager to fight had either to suppress their identity to qualify for training or to undergo training at less equipped camps run by their own organizations.²⁰ The freedom-fighters or their organizations with such an experience refused to acquiesce in the political dominance of the Awami League in the new state of Bangladesh. The political tension thus created militated against law and order and a proper functioning of a fragile parliamentary government.

On 1 June 1971, eight left parties formed in Calcutta a coordination committee for the liberation war. Led by Maulana Bhashani this committee immediately attracted attention from the concerned quarters. Eventually, by September the Government-in-exile had to form an all-party advisory committee. But the major aim behind this move was to counter the Pakistani propaganda that no political party except the Awami League was for independence. But it is worth noting that this advisory committee met only once; and that too perfunctorily.²¹ Such a manner of directing the war was a clear message that in future the Awami League would not count on other political parties in managing the affairs of the new state of Bangladesh. It should, however, be mentioned that all the parties in the coordination committee had a pro-China leaning; and China did not support the liberation war.²² In such a context, the Awami League Government-in-exile appeared to have a logic in taking the stand it did *vis-a-vis* these pro-Chinese left parties. But despite such a logic some

sort of divide was created between the Awami League and these left parties that would cast a long shadow over the desired smooth functioning of political system in independent Bangladesh. Even in the post-independence period the Awami League Government failed to work out a *modus vi-vendi* with these left parties. Moreover, the Awami League was constrained in its role as its own house was not in order. The war-time divide and consequent tension between the liberal and extremist factions had remained simmering during the war; and burst literally open as the new government assumed power. The elite fighting force called '*Mujib Bahini*' representing the liberals and groomed under the direct patronage of the Bangladesh Government-in-exile and the Government of India was a target of extremist invectives. It was pointed out by these critics that the members of the '*Mujib Bahini*' were hand-picked and trained for the purpose of protecting the Awami League regime in independent Bangladesh; and not for acting as combat force in the liberation war.²³ All these allegations and counter-allegations created the unwelcome circumstances that militated against the successful functioning of parliamentary democracy in independent Bangladesh.

On 16 December 1971, the Pakistani forces capitulated to the combined forces of the freedom fighters and the Indian army; but the taking over of the reigns of government in independent Bangladesh by the Government-in-exile was delayed until 22 December. The delay by one week still remains inexplicable. But the political elements inimical to the Awami League immediately started suggesting that the delay was caused by the fact that the leaders who assumed power in Bangladesh had not directly participated in the liberation war. Moreover, they also raised the question as to the desirability of a coalition government by drawing leading freedom-fighters

from other political parties. Again, this was an issue that defied any easy explanation. But the argument to the effect that a popular leader for his having not made a direct contribution to war be unable to run the affairs of state is not certainly tenable.²⁴ How far such an allegation was born out of a patriotic fervour or of selfish desire for a fair share of power would remain debatable. When a call was given by Bangabandhu to the freedom-fighters for surrendering arms these critics of him and his administration did not oblige. The majority of the freedom-fighters of non-political origin were quick to surrender arms and getting back to their respective professions.²⁵

Those freedom-fighters who had political background and pronounced political orientation and anti-Awami League bias (for reasons stated above) did not surrender arms; and by doing so they remained a challenge to the fledgling government and its delicate structure of parliamentary democracy. Of course, many of them did not believe in such a Western model of democratic government. Moreover, most of them did not have any clear perception *vis-a-vis* the goal of the liberation war. The East Pakistan Communist Party led by Sukhendu Dastidar, for example, fought against the freedom-fighters and the Pakistan army at the same time. On the other hand, the Communist Party under the leadership of Huq-Toaha collaborated with the pro-Pakistani cadres; and fought against the freedom-fighters.²⁶ Again, there were some amongst these left forces who did baulk at the idea of induction of the Indian army into the liberation war; they favoured a full-blown revolutionary war born through a prolonged armed resistance carried out without any Indian assistance.²⁷ The left variant of the liberation war also includes the Maoist Communist Party, which, headed by Abdul Matin and Alauddin, fought with the Pakistan army and wrested

control over the Atrai region in Rajshahi district. When Bangabandhu's call to them for surrendering arms went unheeded some emissaries were despatched to negotiate. But the Maoists killed all of them. In retaliation, army were sent; and in the consequent encounter some Maoists were killed.²⁸ These incidents clearly demonstrated the extent of divide that existed between the Awami League and its detractors. Moreover, such a confusing socio-political scenario was further complicated when a fake group of freedom-fighters comprising the collaborators of the Pakistan army and some professional criminals emerged.²⁹ Known as the '16th Division' these fake freedom-fighters were found indulging in such anti-social activities as looting of police stations, banks, *bazars*, hijacking of cars and kidnapping of young women.

In the backdrop of such a hopeless scenario the Awami League Government felt the need for associating the freedom-fighters in the governance of the country. Accordingly, on 17 January 1972, Bangabandhu announced that a national militia would be raised comprising the freedom-fighters; and also that according to efficiency, commitment and merit the freedom-fighters would be entitled to jobs in development and nation-building, defence and law and order departments.³⁰ But before this plan could be put into effect he demanded that the freedom-fighters surrender their weapons within ten days to the government. It was also warned that possession of arms by any person after the expiry of this stipulated time would be considered unauthorised and illegal. This statement was not well received by the vast majority of the freedom-fighters; they read into the scheme a different meaning and considered it a ruse to take away their weapons, the only possession which gave them status and authority in a fluid society.

The government plan thus aborted and most of the politically ambitious freedom fighters retained their weapons.

Consequently, as the government perceived, a threat was created to the over-all law and order situation.³¹ But at the same time, one really unimaginative act of the government created further disillusionment for the freedom-fighters numbered about one lac twenty-five thousand; but the Awami League MPs and other party high-ups issued freedom-fighter certificates totaling about twenty lac.³² In other words, eleven out of twelve of these certificate holders were fake. Nevertheless, these countless number of fake freedom-fighters were soon to be found harnessing maximum political leverage to maximise their material gains. It thus appears that the nascent democracy was threatened, by creating a dangerous equation between party and state.³³ Two factors - declining state of law and order and politicization of the business of state by the Awami League - coupled to put the delicate democracy in real jeopardy.

Another administrative step that miscarried, and - literally stabbed the fledgling polity in the back was the one that related to the collaborators of the Pakistani junta. There were indeed emerging scenarios about these collaborators. On the one hand, some freedom-fighters began to take reprisals against the collaborators on purely personal grounds that appeared to be settlement of old scores. In the process some innocent people were dubbed 'collaborator' and had to suffer severely. On the other hand, some real collaborators, through their politically active relatives, managed to turn themselves into freedom fighters. Again, some of these collaborators who, immediately after independence, had gone into hiding began to surface gradually. So, to deal with such a situation the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order, 1972 was promulgated on 24 January³⁴ This order clearly spelt out the definition of a 'collaborator' and the type of punishment to be meted out to him. But the misapplication of the order failed to

achieve the desired objective; but it did create social turbulence. Again, the explanation was the Awami League's penchant to equate party interest with that of state. The members of the ruling elite were found to be settling their personal scores against their political adversaries by abusing this order. Under this order about fifty to sixty thousand people were arraigned many of whom were innocent. But a vast majority of the collaborators remained almost untouched. A cumulative result was a divided society that acted at cross-purposes with the building of a national consensus so necessary a prerequisite for the successful working of parliamentary democracy.³⁵

The behavioural manifestation of the Awami League rank and file appeared galling to many. At a time when a war-devastated country needed leadership wedded to austerity and discipline the Awami League leaders allegedly began to behave in a most irresponsible manner and amass wealth through corrupt means. Political power was used (or abused) as the means for economic and other material gains. Of course, such a role of these leaders has its explanation in their lower middle class origin. There were, however, leaders with exceptional personal image of incorruptible character. Tajuddin Ahmed was one such example who, despite his exalted official position during the 'early days travelled by rickshaw in Dhaka to his office.³⁶

Hailed as a major step towards establishing a socialist economy nationalization of the industrial sector was indeed a slapdash initiative born out of unrealistic imagination. A goal to achieve an exploitation-free socialist society was the natural outcome of the exploitation by Pakistan and the spirit of the liberation war; and the leaders of the new country were duty-bound to translate such a goal into reality. But before going about such a delicate and difficult business the Awami League

and/or its economic advisors should have taken into consideration the performance record of the public sector even in such socialist countries as the Soviet Union and China. In fact, despite being endowed with highly trained political cadre and bureaucracy both these countries had already been facing problems in their public sectors, and having second thought about an effective alternative. Ignoring such negative empirical evidence Bangladesh rushed headlong into a situation that was bound to be counter-productive. These were people without any past experience and requisite managerial expertise entrusted with the task of managing nationalized industries. Their managerial efficiency was demonstrated not in production, but in making themselves rich almost overnight at the cost of these industries.³⁷ This became evident when it was disclosed that in less than eighteen months the twelve corporations in the nationalized sector incurred a loss totalling about Tk. 930 million.³⁸ The picture of the overall economy under the impact of such mismanagement was equally disheartening. Compared to 1969-70, the export earning went down by 36.38% in 1972-73. The production of sugar declined by 79%; newsprints by 25%, matches by 44%, paper by 51% and jute manufacturing by 24%.³⁹

The poor-performing economy received a severe jolt from the impact of smuggling and black-marketing by that small coterie of bourgeoisie that was slowly emerging. It may be mentioned that this group of people started rallying to the support of the Awami League in the sixties with the clear motive to shield themselves from the radical policies and actions of some left political organisations. The Awami League benefited much from such socio-political configuration as the bourgeoisie channeled money into its coffers. The bourgeoisie had also the dream to replace their more powerful Pakistani counterparts once the independence was achieved. But this

dream appeared to shatter when the new rulers in the independent country embarked upon a socialist economy. Frustrated and disillusioned they turned to easy means of making money; and this was how they turned to smuggling and black-marketing. Much of the relief materials that arrived in 1972-73 found their way into the hands of smugglers and black-marketeers; and ultimately ended up across the border.⁴⁰ In such a context an exasperated Maulana Bhashani was found lamenting as well as making a veiled threat to the government, "Such infectious diseases of the post-1947 Muslim League era as corruption, repression, bureaucratisation have infected also the present-day Awami League Government. This government is doomed to failure unless it successfully copes with these diseases."⁴¹

Under such trying circumstances what Bangladesh needed most was political stability. Besides the turbulence created by a malfunctioning government the role of extreme rightist and leftist forces also stood in the way of achieving such stability.⁴² The only alternative left to the government was to deal with the fast deteriorating law and order situation. The magnitude of the problem demanded that the army, Bangladesh Rifles and police be mobilized. But this could not happen as these forces were not simply equal to the task. Poor in organization and poorly equipped with weapons they appeared to be total mismatch for the armed gangs stalking across the country who wielded more powerful weapons. It was thus clear to the rulers that nothing short of a politically controlled crack-force could do the job. Out of such considerations the *Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini* was created as a personal force in February 1972;⁴³ the control of which was retained personally by Bangabandhu. Trained by Indian military experts and armed with latest weapons this *Bahini* appeared to be an elite corps drawing the envy of the regular armed forces, a fact that would be

significant subsequently. Accountable to no properly constituted authority this *Bahini* frequently cracked down upon the anti-establishment elements in the name of maintaining law and order. Given the nature of the *Rakkhi Bahini* acts such as these by them would certainly put at stake not only the image of the Awami League, but also that of India. Despite some commendable services rendered by them in coping with the menace created by the black-marketeers, hoarders and armed goons, the *Rakkhi Bahini* soon turned out to be a controversial armed machine used by the establishment for ostensible political purpose. This became apparent when it was found out that criminals enjoying patronage by the party in power escaped the wrath of the *Rakkhi Bahini*.⁴⁴

The *Rakkhi Bahini* episode clearly demonstrates how the Awami League administration was dominated by a narrow political outlook; and this was why and how it failed to cash in on even the goods it had delivered with commendable speed and efficiency. The drafting of the constitution within about nine-months was one such exemplary feat. But the rising prices of daily necessities and worsening law and order situation had something like a corrosive impact on whatever welfare ideals that the Awami League was meant to stand for. The decision to hold the general election on 7 March 1973 on the basis of the new constitution was undoubtedly a milestone in Bangladesh's journey towards parliamentary democracy. But the way the electoral process was intimidated in favour of the party in power left the future of democracy clouded. Thus the Awami League managed a landslide victory gaining 292 out of the 300 seats, out of the remaining 8 seats were won by independent candidates; and the rest 3 were bagged by leftist parties.⁴⁵ But some of the opposition personalities alleged that were they allowed to campaign freely and election in some

centres not rigged they would have secured at least 70 seats.⁴⁶ Even counting of votes was allegedly interrupted half way through when it appeared that opposition candidates would win; and when the results were finally announced government party candidates came out successful. Having thus bagged 97 per cent of parliamentary seats the Awami League could run the country as it wished. On the other hand, the minuscule opposition finding it difficult to play the role it was supposed to within the parliament shifted the politics of opposition outside the parliamentary premises.

The Awami League policy *vis-a-vis* the labour movement appeared to have worked at cross- purposes with the spirit of parliamentary democracy. The rank and file of the labour leadership used to consider Bangabandhu as a leader without any equal; this was the case even long before independence. But such an image of Bangabandhu suffered erosion as after independence the new government sought to organize *Sramik League*, an extension of the Awami League, in the various sectors of industry. Many committed and career labour leaders refused to tow the government line while the newly emerged pro-government labour leadership lacked professional image and expertise. The consequence was a division in the labour leadership and turmoil in the industrial sector; and the final outcome of which was a sharp fall in production.⁴⁷

The frequent dissension and infighting within the Students League, student front of the Awami League, also weakened the basis of parliamentary democracy and paved the way for military intervention in politics. By early 1972, many leaders of the Students League quickly got disillusioned by the arrogance, inefficiency and corruption of the Awami League leadership; two of them were A S M Abdur Rab and Shahjahan Siraj. They argued that democratic socialism was

not enough to build an exploitation-free society. In their view, only scientific socialism established through revolution could bring about the desired socio-economic change. On the contrary, however, pro-government student leaders including Abdul Quddus Makhan and Nure Alam Siddiqui were convinced that Mujibism⁴⁸ was enough to deliver the cherished goods, and further that those opposing it were enemies of socialism. Holding these two opposing strands of view the factions of the Students League parted company in April 1972. But the formal launching of the scientific socialism based Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) under the leadership of Rab and Siraj was delayed until 31 October of the same year.⁴⁹

Capitalising on a disillusioned public sentiment vis-a-vis the Awami League, JSD was quick to build a strong public support base with carefully crafted rhetorics. The political bullying suffered by JSD in the 1973 election also lent to its quick and widespread popularity. It is interesting to note that some rightist elements (ostensibly pro-Pakistan) were found attending JSD rallies and public meetings.⁵⁰ This return of the anti-liberation rightist elements from hibernation to which they had been driven immediately after liberation was the beginning of a turn-around in Bangladesh politics fraught with ominous significance.⁵¹ But the rightist elements were given the first official go-ahead when a general amnesty was declared for the Pakistani collaborators, but those accused of such specific offences as murder and rape were beyond the scope of this amnesty. It was estimated that the number of Pakistani collaborators covered by this amnesty was 36400. Most of them belonged to either the Muslim League or the Jamat-i-Islami.⁵² This act of Bangabandhu came under fire from majority of the freedom-fighters and some left organizations. They argued that in keeping with class character of the Awami League Bangabandhu had this rightist

bloc in the open as a counter-weight to the steadily emerging socialists.⁵³ It was also widely held, and with substantive reason that, Bangabandhu never demonstrated required harsh and stern attitude towards the Pakistani collaborators. It needs very little imagination to comprehend the fact that these rightist elements once allowed freedom of action would seek to square the deal with freedom fighters for the vicissitudes they had been through following liberation of the country; and this is exactly what happened in the subsequent political transfiguration characterized by decisive tilt towards the right. It was also reported that many top-ranking collaborators received financial assistance through the courtesy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁵⁴

Such magnanimity of Sheikh Mujib was considered as weakness by the collaborators who started continuous propaganda against the Awami League Government and formed a new political party namely Jatiyo Gonotantrik Party since their own organizations were debarred from functioning. Remaining confident in their own position they went to the extent of demanding compensations for those collaborators and *Al-badars* who had been affected during the liberation war.⁵⁵ But the logic concerning similar class character and interests of Awami League and the collaborators, perhaps may not be acceptable. Because, after independence, many of the ultra-left workers and leaders through their call for socialist revolution and propagation of Muslim Bengal collected arms from China and Pakistan; and thereby made massive endeavours to dislodge the Awami League Government.⁵⁶ Moreover, ignoring the class solidarity the pardoned fundamentalist forces allegedly engaged themselves in a conspiracy to unseat the ruling party and used religion for political purposes.⁵⁷ The two elements of this conspiracy - national and international - were greatly interconnected and

after 1974 flood which affected two-third of the country, the brutal nature of their collusion became more discernible. The flooding was preceded by devastating drought. Before that in October 1973, fuel price in the international market multiplied by four times. At that stage, the industrial nations also raised the price of their finished products like parts and spare parts by six times. Simultaneous effect on the price index of food stuff going up by eight times in the international market was also observed. As such it had been nearly impossible for a poor nation, Bangladesh, to import essential commodities like oil, spare parts and more importantly food stuff. Unexpected price spiral in world market brought disastrous impacts on the economy of Bangladesh. The unfortunate drought and flood in 1974 made the disaster even more worse with far reaching consequences. But even during that unprecedented national crisis, the ultra-right and ultra-left politicians indulged themselves in vilifying the Awami League Government. The anti-liberation forces like Jamat-i-Islami, Muslim League and their companions, who were declared unlawful, began campaigning that Sheikh Mujib had done a great blunder by dismembering united Pakistan. Alongwith them the pro-Peking elements started alleging that Bangladesh had been brought under the grip of Indo-Soviet social imperialism.⁵⁸

As part of their international connections, the anti-liberation forces in Bangladesh perhaps had been able to obtain support even from top-ranking U. S. policy makers like Henry A. Kissinger. In October 1974, Kissinger paid an official visit to Bangladesh when she was encountering a famine like situation. While branding Bangladesh as a bottomless basket Kissinger expressed that the country was in need of a large-scale foreign assistance. But U. S. aid was not available when the Bangladesh government sent two ships there and asked for food aid for her starving millions.⁵⁹ As early as in 1973 owing

to lack of foreign exchange and U. S. assistance, Bangladesh faced a severe food crisis and as observed, the government distribution system including public rationing was about to collapse.

At such a critical hour to overcome the food crisis in 1973 the Soviet Union sent Bangladesh 200,000 tons of food grains which she procured from USA and Canada. But continuation of such assistance was not possible on the part of the Soviet Union in 1974. On the other side, in the later half of 1973 and first half of 1974, committed American food aid under PL 480 did not reach Bangladesh despite an agreement was signed in this respect in 1973.⁶⁰

For Bangladesh the delay in the disbursement of food grains from the United States proved extremely dangerous and it was explained by some quarters as an on-going international conspiracy against the incumbent government. In May 1974, when flood was knocking at the door but food was barely available in the government store-houses, came the inhumane U. S. declaration that supply of food aid to Bangladesh under PL 480 could not be possible on account of Bangladesh's jute export agreement with Cuba as made in 1973. Critics opine that such American stance was not due to strict adherence to US laws but in fact an attempt at exerting political and economic pressures on a poor nation. In support of this view further arguments are forwarded that when Bangladesh officials made the above jute agreement with Cuba, they were in the dark regarding the Cuba related preconditions of PL 480. Again, they were not at all informed about those terms while signing food aid agreement with US officials. Moreover, as per PL-480 there are provisions of obtaining US food aid with special permission from the American President under special circumstances. During that time Egypt exported raw cotton to Cuba but it did not hamper

the supply of US food aid to that country. But differential application of the same law and discriminatory US attitude toward Bangladesh caught many political observers by surprise. The real explanation for such behaviour perhaps was that at that stage the then Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, as part of Middle Eastern politics, assisted in implementing Kissinger's diplomacy in West Asia and consequently, USA followed a soft and open door strategy in case of Egypt.⁶¹

The private food exporting agencies in the USA were not unaware of the above American policy towards Bangladesh. While supporting their own government decisions, they cancelled all the food related treaties signed in 1974. Facing acute food crisis in the country, the Awami League Government brought about a significant change in its economic policy perhaps to placate the American policymakers. Thus in July 1974, modifications were made in the investment policy and more foreign private investments were encouraged. But in spite of such appeasing moves US food aid to Bangladesh was not expedited. It remained suspended until the export of jute bags to Cuba was finally over. Eventually, however, when American food grains reached Bangladesh soil, the famine of 1974 had left its devastating impact on Bangladesh. According to private estimate about one lakh people died of starvation during the famine, but the government statistics showed the number as 27,000.⁶²

Perhaps large- scale deaths caused by famine could have been avoided had the government's food department remained alert and sent relief materials in time to the most adversely affected areas like Rangpur. But the then Awami League government failed to perform its designated role during this critical time. Such questionable performance as some observers believe, stigmatized Awami League

Government led by Sheikh Mujib for the unfortunate numerous deaths caused by famine.⁶³

It has been estimated that the amount of food grains available at that time in the whole country, though not adequate, could have prevented the man made famine and unnatural deaths through a proper and well-planned distribution system. As such prioritization should have been resorted to supplying food to famine affected parts by reducing distribution at the authorized urban rationing centres.⁶⁴ Another approach to reduce death casualty could have been recovering food grains from the dishonest hoarders to meet the food shortage. But as observed, the government could not handle the crisis properly mostly on account of a great lack of strong commitment, consciousness, unity and concerted prompt effort. During this time the Awami League had also problems within its own organization caused by factionalism. Intra-party cleavage became so intense that at many places several horizontal organizations of the ruling party remained simultaneously functional.⁶⁵ Thus the Awami League came under severe attacks on the charges of corruption, favouratism and inefficiency in managing the state craft. Its leaders started blaming each other and forwarded arguments to vindicate innocence. Such attempts of disgracing one another ultimately fractured the unity of the Awami League creating cracks inside the party organization. The members of parliament and the leading party stalwarts became extremely critical of the activities of the cabinet ministers.⁶⁶ Factionalism took a serious turn and penetrated the component organizations of Awami League. The young members of the pro-Mujib Students League brought serious charges of bank robbery, illegal possession of house, cars permits and similar corruptions against the Jubo League.⁶⁷

The President of the Jubo League was Sheikh Mujib's

nephew, Fazlul Huq Moni who had bitter strife with the former's political secretary, Tofael Ahmed. On April 4, 1974, seven students of Dhaka University were killed and Sheikh Moni charged Tofael Ahmed for such atrocious killing. To Moni the killing was staged by the supporters of Shafiul Alam Pradhan, the President of Students League with an instruction from Tofael Ahmed.⁶⁸

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib became greatly anxious watching the declining popularity of the Awami League. In October 1974, he reshuffled the cabinet by dismissing 6 ministers and 3 state-ministers. But as witnessed, most of the ministers and state-ministers with a record of questionable performance managed to remain in office while the innocents had been the victims.⁶⁹ Especially the expulsion of the first Prime Minister of independent Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmed from the cabinet raised great doubts among the intelligentsia regarding the political wisdom and honesty of Bangabandhu.⁷⁰ While remaining surrounded by sycophants he could never think of relinquishing his authority and state power.⁷¹ The challenge to state authority and socio-political order, however, came from the left radical underground parties.

In 1974, the pro-Chinese Sarbohara Party strengthened its anti-government activities and looted a number of Thana and banks, put to fire rail station, displaced rail lines and killed numerous Awami League workers. The government in retaliation adopted a policy of total repression against this party and subsequently its leader, Siraj Sikder, was arrested on January 1, 1975. On the next day Siraj was killed in a police firing incident.⁷² In the post-independence period of Bangladesh till October 1974, there were as many as 230978 crimes and out of which nearly 11000 had been murders.⁷³ Besides the Sarbohara Party, JSD and other pro-Peking

organizations through their terroristic and violent actions nearly paralyzed the country's fragile economy. On September 11, 1974, the efficiently organized explosion at the Soviet assisted Ghorashal fertilizer factory caused great loss amounting to 150 million Taka in foreign exchange. As a result, the factory was forced to suspend its production for ten months.⁷⁴ Apart from revolutionary activities, the extremist parties had clashes with the police and *Rakkhi Bahini* for about 100 times from June through November 1974.⁷⁵ During 1973-1974, more than 3000 Awami League workers had been killed either by the extremists or by internal conflicts.⁷⁶

The regime got puzzled with the simultaneous occurrence of the alarming happenings like natural disaster, national and international conspiracy, increased terrorism, corruption and non-functioning of the ruling party. All these forced Sheikh Mujib to resort to authoritarian practices which, however, had not been desirable. It remains as a matter of speculation whether it is logical for any intelligent statesman of a modern state to follow the undemocratic course of action as adopted by Bangabandhu. Negative criticism and propaganda which perplexed the government may be worth mentioning. One weekly magazine 'Hak Katha' of Moulana Bhashani reported that the amount of Bangladesh's wealth snatched by India during the Awami League rule was even more compared to the British over their 200- year colonial rule. The opposition remained indifferent to praise India's assistance in reconstructing the war ravaged country or withdrawing her troops from Bangladesh soil within less than three month period.⁷⁷ It may be recalled that immediately after independence during the financial crisis, 350 crore taka Bangladesh currency were printed in India. There were criticisms from the opposition that in order to destroy Bangladesh's economy, double amount of currency notes

worth of 700 crore taka had been printed by India. Facing such allegations and constant propaganda, Indian printed currency notes were withdrawn. While taking this decision Finance Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed correlated this step with the honour and dignity of the Awami League. The government tried to save its face and financial statement of the Bangladesh Bank was published in the news papers where it was visualized that the above mentioned 350 crore Indian print currency notes had not been fully deposited and 40 lakh Taka remained to be deposited. This news, however, did not stop the rumours concerning Indian intentions of disrupting Bangladesh economy. Because of such state of affairs the political career of Tajuddin Ahmed was affected and with that the popularity of the Awami League itself.⁷⁸ Under these circumstances, the ruling regime's resorting to arbitrary practices may be explained as an unexpected phenomenon and not justified.

Again, there were severe negative criticisms from the opposition against the India-Bangladesh friendship, cooperation and peace treaty signed between the two countries in March 1972. Widespread publicity was being made that through the signing of the accord, Bangladesh's, sovereignty had been cast off and Indian army was given a free entrance to her soil. This raised public apprehensions regarding the provisions of the treaty that were interpreted as opposed to mutual sovereignty. As such opposition's above endeavours created great confusions among the public mind.⁷⁹

Opposition movement and attempts to discredit the government became forceful and continued unabated. The more the ruling party failed to manage the affairs of the state, the more heightened was the opposition move. It had therefore been increasingly difficult for the government to counter opposition attempts only through autocratic means.

But Sheikh Mujib balanced in favour of the hardliners and followed the path of authoritarianism. Accordingly a number of repressive and undemocratic measures were taken including muzzling the press, prohibiting strikes, banning public meetings, suspending human rights through the state of emergency in late 1974 and finally introducing a single party rule. All such steps undoubtedly destroyed the prospects of parliamentary democracy and widened the scope for military intervention in Bangladesh politics.⁸⁰

After coming to power one laudable performance of the Awami League government led by Sheikh Mujib had been to formulate the country's constitution within a period of less than one year. The constitution was democratic in nature introducing Westminster type of parliamentary democracy and incorporating the trappings of the cabinet government. Thus there had been the provisions of the government's enjoying the confidence of the majority members in the legislature, cabinet's collective responsibility, leadership of the prime minister, and the constitutional role of official opposition. However, there was a great gap between these theoretical provisions and actual composition and functioning of the First Parliament constituted in 1973. In the context of the Awami League's absolute majority in the House with 292 seats with no recognition of any official opposition, creation of a government by criticism could not be possible. It was impossible for the feeble opposition (numbering about 8 including the independents) in the legislature to put any sort of check upon the executive. But despite such fact the head of the government failed to recognize the presence of any opposition in the House disregarding the democratic norm of tolerance. The existence of one-party dominated legislature meant that executive was all in all in the governance process. The significance of the legislature as such gradually declined

in the event of lack of effectiveness of the parliamentary devices e.g., question hour, adjournment motion, calling attention notice, half an hour discussion, and the committee system and more importantly assumption of arbitrary powers and authoritarian measures by the government. Brute majority of the party in power along with the provision of strict party discipline and lack of parliamentarians' right to cross vote turned the legislature into a mere rubber stamp of the regime to validate all its authoritarian moves. Consequently the government of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resorted to arbitrary practices and promulgated various presidential ordinances that were later brought before the House for regularization and parliamentary approval. A number of controversial ordinances were thus placed before the House in the form of bills. The ruling party also did not follow the parliamentary Rules of Procedure in the process of passing those controversial bills like the Special Powers Act, 1974, the *Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini* (Amendment) Bill, 1974, the Printing Presses and Publication (Amendment) Bill, 1975, the Emergency Powers Bill, 1975 and the Constitution Fourth Amendment Bill, 1975. These bills were passed in unusual haste and had smooth passage in the House only in a few hours time. There had been criticisms from the conscious quarters and politically relevant strata that prior to these legislations no public opinion was sought with hardly any scope for clause- by- clause legislative debate and necessary input from the concerned parliamentary committees. The status of the First Parliament was drastically reduced through the passing of constitutional amendment bills, more specifically the Second and Fourth. Through the Second Constitution Amendment Bill, 1973 the highest law of the land was amended and this empowered the executive to declare a state of emergency if deemed necessary. While activating this

provision the government could detain a person for a period of six months and deny legal protection to persons detained. This also involved suspension of citizens' fundamental rights. Such an alteration in the constitution went against the democratic practice and was inconsistent with the Awami League's past political commitments projecting itself as the champion of democracy and people's rights. There were vehement criticisms from the opposition section that the ruling party had been voted to power within the framework of the existing constitution and it had no authority to make any fundamental change in the highest document without seeking any approval from the electorate.

The passing of the Emergency Powers Bill, 1975 marked a significant decline of the sovereignty of the parliament. A resolution was moved in the House that 'this Parliament approves the Proclamation of Emergency issued under clause (1) of Article 141 A of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh by the President on 28th December, 1974 and that there should be no discussion on the resolution of the approval of the Proclamation of Emergency and that the rules be suspended.'⁸¹

Some critics argue that because of the introduction of special power provisions and ordinances, declaration of emergency remained without any significance. Their logic has been that even with the application of the above black laws in 1973-74, the Awami League government failed to improve the overall law and order situation in the country. It was expected that the government would arrest and punish the miscreants and ensure the security of life and property of the disgruntled masses. But as noticed, even after the declaration of emergency not a single notorious hoarder, black marketeer, smuggler or persons involved in destructive activities was arrested.⁸² The terrorist armed cadres went to the

underground and statistics show that from December 1974 through August 1975, there were numerous deaths caused by unidentified gun men. Seemingly the powers of the government, whether acquired through special legal provisions or emergency arrangements had been unhindered and omnipresent.⁸³

The Awami League leadership moved further and subsequently all necessary legislative arrangements were taken to finally alter the fundamental character of democratic system as envisaged in the Constitution. The decline of democracy was complete when in 1975 the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution was placed in the Jatiya Sangsad in the form of a bill containing the provisions of fundamental change from parliamentary system to a presidential form of government, introduction of single party rule in place of multi party system, an all powerful chief executive and a reorganized authoritative administrative structure. This amendment assumed a purely totalitarian character through the abolition of democratic principles and clauses highlighted in the constitution. As such the independence of the judiciary was gone and civil liberty and fundamental rights of the people had been denied. The amendment made the president the supreme authority to withhold his assent to any bill passed by the parliament. A judge of the Supreme Court could now be removed by the president who could appoint an additional Supreme Court judge without consulting the Chief Justice. The Supreme Court also lost its power over the subordinate courts. Similarly the power of the High Court to enforce citizens' fundamental rights was withdrawn. In the process of approval of this amendment legislative procedures were not at all followed as the Members of Parliament other than the prime minister and his few close associates, remained in the dark regarding the

contents of the bill. Despite this fact, the passage of this crucial bill only took less than half an hour and the voting was over within three minutes. The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution was adopted by 294 votes in favour with none against in the parliament on January 25, 1975 and this had been regarded by the scholars as the 'constitutional *coup*' since it empowered Sheikh Mujib to form a national party and suspend all other political parties that refused to join the national party. The amendment declared that, "Before this law had been promulgated, the person who was the President will not remain as President and the post of the presidency will fall vacant. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and shall take over the powers as the Executive President, and will continue as the President made by law under this constitutional amendment. According to the constitution, the republic will have one President and one vice-President. The people will directly elect the President. The President will nominate the Vice President. Tenure of the President and Vice President will be for five years. President will have all executive powers to administer the Republic. He will either directly or through his nominee will execute those powers. The Vice President will have powers to act as decided by the Presidential orders. A cabinet will be formed to assist and advise the President. The President will have the power to nominate a Prime Minister, Ministers, deputy Ministers, state Ministers from among the Parliament members or any one from outside who is considered fit to be a Parliamentarian. The President will chair the cabinet meetings. The Ministers will remain at their posts as long as the President desired. Under the amended bill the President has been authorized to form one political party in the country. This party will be the national party. According to the amendment no legal action can be constituted in any court of law against the President. And no court can issue any warrant of arrest or detention order against the President. No citizen is allowed to form any political party or join in any political activities other than the national party. The President will also be the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces."⁸⁴

An analysis of the above constitutional amendments reveals that through a peculiar arrangement under parliamentary framework excessive powers were concentrated at the hands of the head of the government. Hakim and Huque noted that 'a review of the Mujib regime in the pre-fourth amendment period reveals that the shift from a democratic to an authoritarian system was gradual and somewhat planned. The second amendment relating to the declaration of emergency in 1974 prepared the ground for Mujib's ultimate assumption of absolute power in 1975'⁸⁵. The passage to authoritarian rule of Sheikh Mujib in the name of 'second revolution' was complete when on the 6th of June, 1975 he announced the formation of the national party called the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League or BAKSAL. As such from the date of above constitutional amendment Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman assumed the office of the presidency for the next five years. He himself, all the members of the Parliament of the defunct Awami League, all its members, Cabinet Ministers, deputy Ministers, and state Ministers became members of the BAKSAL. Under Article 117 (A) clause 3 of the Constitution he declared the Party constitution and appointed a 15-member Executive Committee, a 115-member Central Committee and 5 Fronts of BAKSAL viz., Jatiya Krishak League, Jatiya Sramik League, Jatiya Mahila League, Jatiya Chatra League and Jatiya Jubo League. At the apex, the fifteen- member executive committee being the supreme organ of the national party, was composed of the chairman Mujib and of the rest fourteen, four were his relatives and ten had been his close associates. In the 115-member Central Committee with the exception of a few, all were former Awami League leaders. Similarly the five front organizations were no exceptions to include overwhelmingly the Awami Stalwarts. Critics thus pointed out that in the name

of national party Sheikh Mujib imposed the rule of erstwhile Awami League as evidenced by the lopsided composition of the council of ministers, executive and central committees, the district governors, and the five frontal units. Moudud Ahmed mentioned that 'the national unity sought for under the BAKSAL seemed to be only a political bogey and the creation of one party rule appeared to be mainly apolitical instrument to sustain the rule of the same elite group'.⁸⁶

In the process of introducing one party BAKSAL rule total central control over administration was ensured through the district governorship scheme directly under the presidential supervision. Like the structure of the party the 61 governors-designate were mostly AL party men about seventy two per cent. In the same manner regimentation was imposed upon the printed world through closing down about twenty daily newspapers published from major cities and banning numerous other dailies and weeklies. The regime permitted the publication of only four dailies (two Bengali and two English) and of them two had been directly under the government hand, one was nationalized and the other one was owned by Sheikh Mujib's nephew, Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni.

Introduction of an autocratic one party rule involving destruction of all sorts of fundamental and civil liberties had indeed been a new experience for the people of this country. Jahan mentioned that persons from all walks of life felt threatened by the provisions of a regimented system. Thus students and intelligentsia became apprehensive of the control of thought; lawyers disapproved the reforms in the legal system; members of the civil bureaucracy felt threatened by the authoritative district governors' scheme; and the press highly disliked the total state control over the printing world and the newspapers.⁸⁷ Prior to the Fourth Amendment the enactment of the Special Powers Act, Presses and Publication

Act and the like were the clear indications of undermining the freedom of the citizens and arbitrary use of power by the government of Sheikh Mujib. The transformation of the politico-governmental structure that followed the Fourth Amendment, not only destroyed the principles of the constitutional state but also assumed to a great extent the character of a totalitarian state featuring 'everything for the state and nothing outside the state'.

The political observers are of the opinion that the overnight change from parliamentary framework to an autocratic system was inevitable outcome of the following major factors: contradiction in political thinking and activism of the supreme leader; option to sustain his personal power; and ineffectiveness of the existing institutions to handle the problematics of governance and ongoing grave crises in the country's society, economy and the polity.

Despite the above fundamental change, steering the wheel of the state through the same bunch of stalwarts proved illusory as evidenced by their continued poor performance and subsequent rise of popular dissatisfaction and alienation of the major state instruments, the bureaucracy and particularly the military.

In 1974 Sheikh Mujib employed army in the anti-corruption and anti-terrorist expedition and within two months the army recovered essential commodities including food items worth of 5 crore taka from the smugglers and black marketeers. More than 8 thousand fire arms were also recovered from illegal possession.⁸⁸ But soon the army was withdrawn from this government sponsored programme and such withdrawal was allegedly made to safeguard the corrupt leaders and workers of the ruling party. Major S. H. M. B. Noor and Major Shariful Huq Dalim, during their operation, discovered a large number of illegal establishments and

business of the top ranking Awami Leaguers. "The two officers went beyond their authority when they reportedly tied the legs of one of the arrested Awami Leaguers and dragged him through the streets of Comilla."⁸⁹ In retaliation Sheikh Mujib terminated both these two over-zealous army officers. It may be mentioned here that of the four who pioneered the 15th August *coup*, two were Noor and Dalim. It was known that the sudden withdrawal of the army from the anti-smuggling expedition agitated the military officials who considered such withdrawal greatly insulting for the army in general.⁹⁰

Despite the feeling of discontentment among the army against the corruption of the ruling party and the concentration of extra powers in the hands of the prime minister, any drastic measure could not be possible to contain the culprits who happened to be close relatives of Sheikh Mujib. It was alleged that his brother Sheikh Abu Naser was nearly an assetless person in 1971 but only within a period of four years, he became the owner of huge property. Some army officers who had protested such misdeed were punished and this in turn inspired them to take part in the 15 August *coup*.⁹¹ Two nephews of Mujib - Abul Hasnat and Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni turned into owners of huge opulence and became enormously moneyed through distributing licences and permits. In the Motijheel commercial area of Dhaka city, Moni forcibly occupied a costly printing press and from there published his own daily newspaper and weekly magazine. Government patronization in these publications was abominably evident.⁹² Another nephew of Sheikh Mujib, Sheikh Shahidul Islam was appointed as a minister only at his 24 before the army *coup*. Against him there were serious allegations of bank robbery and student killing.⁹³

The above facts gave rise to grave apprehensions whether Bangabandhu had been trying to establish a ruling family in

independent Bangladesh. If at all true or false, the army was influenced by such rumours which widened the scope of military intervention in politics. The case of Mujib's second son, Sheikh Jamal may be worth mentioning. Jamal had allegedly little merit or qualification to be selected for higher training at the Sandhurst military training centre in England. Nevertheless he was sent there and this led to another rumour that in future he would be made the country's chief of army staff. Sheikh Mujib himself allegedly strengthened the rumour by expressing similar wishful desire.⁹⁴ Another instance of mixture of rumour and facts which greatly alienated the army from Mujib was the formation of a para military force called the *Rakkhi Baliini*. Army's dissatisfaction stemmed from authorizing the *Rakkhi Bahini* with some special powers including arrest and search any suspected person. Equipping the *Rakkhi Bahini* with arms and ammunition was not inconsistent in the process of building a newly formed para military body. But there were rumours that regular armed force would be abolished in course of time and replaced by the *Rakkhi Bahini*. Consequently, the ordinary soldiers in apprehension of losing their jobs became annoyed with Mujib government. Chief of army staff Shafiullah ,however, ruled out the above rumours as base less while commenting on possible replacement of the armed force by the *Rakkhi Bahini*.⁹⁵ But a number of army officials opined that the conceptions or ideas regarding *Rakkhi Bahini*'s possessing special privileges with better quality arms and ammunitions compared to regular army had not been totally baseless.⁹⁶ It was commented that since the AL government could not be certain of loyalty of the armed forces, it created a new para-military force as an adjunct of the state.

The very formation of this paramilitary force had been viewed by the members of the regular army as a serious threat to their own existence. Such apprehension was in fact an outcome of a number of steps taken by the then government in

building of the force as a parallel to the Bangladesh army. First, the training of the JRB officials was organized outside Bangladesh in the Indian territory of Dehradun, second, providing of a huge allocation for expenditure on the JRB, and third, there was speculation that recruitment of man power in the army would be greatly curtailed in the event of government's plan to annually increase the JRB units 'so that by the end of 1980 the total strength of this paramilitary force would be 130,000'⁹⁷. Because of such a policy on the part of the government, the nation's army was relegated to the background producing worsening relationships between the civilian regime and the military strata. On this aspect Shaheed President Zia's words are worth mentioning 'we wanted to keep the army absolutely professional, it was disorganized, there was a lot of pressure on us not to have a big army, we did not have uniform or clothes, for the soldiers'.⁹⁸ Hossain noted that 'on several occasions General H.M. Ershad also publicly accused the Awami League/ BAKSAL government of gross neglect of the military'⁹⁹. Moudud Ahmed mentioned that with the formation of JRB as a paramilitary force the social status of the army was further downgraded. The special significance of this force in the form of training, equipment materials, and logistic facilities proved preferential nurturing of JRB 'in relation to the army and it became clear that it was being built up by the Awami League leadership as a counter force to the army'.¹⁰⁰ The armed forces found themselves totally isolated because of overall policies of the AL regime, particularly on matters of defense policy. Seemingly, development of the country's armed forces as a professional body was not in the agenda of the Awami League government in the backdrop of the euphoria of the victory in the liberation war and on going Bangladesh-India friendly ties where no kind of external threat had been perceived.

Indifference of the policy makers went a long way to confuse the members of the armed forces regarding performing their professional duties in a new environment. On proper role-playing by the army in the post-liberation situation nothing was reflected in the policy decisions of the government although it was expected to maintain civilian control over the military and the military should only comply with the directives of the civilian authority keeping its organizational conservatism.

There were other reasons behind the pessimism and wrath of the armed forces. One major complaint had been that the formation of *Rakkhi Bahini* affected the resource allocation of the army. In 1972 Mujib government allocated only 13% of the total yearly expenditure for the armed force¹⁰¹ which alienated the army commanders. Moreover the repatriated senior army personnels from Pakistan got disappointed with the promotion of their junior colleagues who fought the liberation war. It was quite natural that the freedom fighters were rewarded with honour, promotion and prizes in the post independence period. But such unconventional promotion and upliftment created discontent within the repatriated force and indiscipline swayed the upper ranks of the army. The repatriated officials held the view that they were also the supporters of the liberation struggle but could not participate in it owing to geographical reason and suffered a lot while under custody in the then West Pakistan.¹⁰² With a feeling of humiliation through indirect demotion these officials had withdrawn their sympathy and failed to cooperate with the civilian regime.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also contributed to heighten the on-going anti-government sentiment through a number of measures engineered by him. After his assumption of state power almost all the members of bureaucracy apparently

extended their support to Mujib. But only within a period of two years the anti-government bureaucrats began to assert themselves while witnessing that the anti-liberation officers had not been dealt with by the regime and were not debarred from promotion and other facilities. Contrary to bureaucratic ethics they failed to act as non-partisan servants of the Republic. They had not only withdrawn their allegiance from Sheikh Mujib but consciously remained dysfunctional in implementing state policies or programmes.¹⁰³ As noticed, Bangabandhu appointed in responsible positions a number of pro-Pakistani police officers who had been allegedly collaborators and *razakars*. Bangabandhu perhaps wanted to involve them in suppressing the anti-government extremists and terrorists; in which they failed miserably. Moreover, they indulged themselves in anti-government activities by misusing their official powers.¹⁰⁴

The leader of the 'Z' force of the liberation war, Shaheed Ziaur Rahman had seniority in service compared to K. M. Shafiullah. But Sheikh Mujibur Rahman selected the latter as the chief of army staff while the former was made the deputy chief. This was disliked in the army quarters who considered that Shaheed Zia had been relegated to the background and his contribution to the liberation war was underestimated.

During this time an untoward incident required the interference of the prime minister and embarrassed Sheikh Mujib. At a wedding ceremony at Dhaka an altercation between Major Dalim and some Awami Leaguers took a serious turn. At one stage the Awami League supporters forced Dalim and his wife to move to an unknown place. In order to prevent his probable killers, Dalim warned them about large number of invitees at the ceremony would stand witness and suggested them to take him directly to Sheikh Mujib. The kidnappers agreed and a hot altercation occurred

in front of Bangabandhu who controlled the situation by assuring justice.¹⁰⁵ But once again Sheikh Mujib ignored the significance of the above incident and failed to punish the miscreants. This incident agitated some sections of the army and their discontentment against Bangabandhu became more intense. As mentioned earlier, Major Dalim was one of the plotters of the 15th August *coup* and had been directly involved in the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It is difficult to guess whether the above incident had any impact on the brutal killing of Bangabandhu. But it goes without saying that personal grudge provoked Dalim to assassinate him. The killing of Sheikh Mujib was a product of international conspiracy and it dates back to 1971 at Calcutta where the anti-liberation 'gang' comprising the foreign minister of the provisional government, Mushtaque Ahmed and his supporters like Taheruddin Thakur remained all along active. Both before and after Bangladesh's independence¹⁰⁶, this 'gang' was allegedly patronized by some external elements. Inside the country, the Mushtaque 'gang' was aided supposedly by the pro-Chinese extremist organization, fundamentalist forces and their sympathizers within civil-military bureaucracy. During the 15th August *coup*, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 14 members of his family were mercilessly killed. Within few hour of this atrocity, Pakistan recognized the new government of Mushtaque.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, the Pakistan Government declared that a quick supply of 50000 tons of rice and 15 million yards of cotton would be sent to Bangladesh as a gift.¹⁰⁸ On the next day of the *coup* the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognized the new regime in Bangladesh. It was observed that in support of the *coup* China created tensions along the Indo-Chinese borders perhaps to prevent Indian interference in Bangladesh affairs.¹⁰⁹

Regarding the 15th August 1975 military intervention Talukder Maniruzzaman writes, "The circumstantial evidence thus, gives some credibility to the thesis that the 15 August *coup* was preplanned and Mushtaque and Thakur had collaborated with the disgruntled officers of the army to bring about the *coup* with the knowledge and support of certain foreign powers".¹¹⁰ Both Rehman Sobhan and Qamruddin Ahmed have unhesitatingly accused the United States. Sobhan wrote that when famine like situation was prevailing in Bangladesh and committed help was not available from the USA then in November 1974, the Prime Minister paid a visit to America. After difficult diplomatic efforts he had a chance to meet the then U. S. President Gerald Ford that too was only for a few minutes. Afterwards he was given a cool send-off. But unlike the contemporary leaders Mujib expressed his reaction in a bit different manner. In order to face multifarious odds and challenges both in and outside the country he came up with a programme of thorough radical changes. But within a few days of declaring his authoritarian plans he was assassinated. Following his killing his associates who had been more pro-West assumed state power and Khandker Mushtaque became the President."¹¹¹ Qamruddin Ahmed explained that during the mid-1970s when the Soviet Union was endeavouring to frustrate American influence in the Middle East and North Africa, the United States also employed similar diplomatic pressures to negate Soviet influence in the Indian Ocean. According to this view the change of government in Bangladesh in August 1975 was a part of that process and consequently, martial law was declared and army rule followed.¹¹²

Many of the political observers are of the opinion that the leaders of the bloody 15th August *coup* perhaps were oblivious regarding the impossibility of staging a violent *coup* with a

small force consisting of only five or six low ranking officers and a few hundred jawans. This fact again manifests Sheikh Mujib's over self-confidence and his negligence to allow even a simple security measure for the head of the state. The deputy chief of staff of the army, Shaheed Ziaur Rahman remained all along aloof and in no way interfered with the process. He thus remained indifferent and perhaps did not like to be involved in the *coup* attempt.¹¹³ After the violent overthrow of the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government when Mushtaque became the president, Shaheed Zia was made the army chief replacing Shafiullah. Shafiullah was then appointed as a diplomat. The terrible mixture of national and international conspiracy which influenced Bangladesh politics in the pre-*coup* days continued to prevail even after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and overthrow of his government. The new regime projected that Bangladesh obtained her real freedom after the overthrow of the puppet government of Indo-Soviet axis.¹¹⁴ But, in reality, the sympathizers of religious fundamentalism and killers of Sheikh Mujib ascended to state power through this political change.¹¹⁵ It had been these vested interests who even during the liberation war tried to sabotage the struggle through a compromise with Pakistan. Their solidarity was revealed by their appointment in the top administrative positions by Mushtaque once he became the President.¹¹⁶ But a handful of junior army officers who directly led the killing of Mujib ostentatiously projected themselves as the deciders of Bangladesh's destiny. As a consequence, factionalism and acute indiscipline penetrated the ranks of civil and military administrative hierarchies.¹¹⁷ Few army officials like Khaled Mosharrof called upon to control and neutralize the self-confessed killers of Sheikh Mujib but initially did not command much support.¹¹⁸

While leading the army regime President Mushtaque

Ahmed through promulgation of an ordinance disbanded the single party BAKSAL and stopped the functioning of political parties. He also reinstated the country's original 19 districts by dropping the 61 district governorship scheme. In another decision the *Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini* was integrated with the armed forces and the P.O.9 concerning insecurity in bureaucratic structure was annulled. Mushtaque's declaration also involved the process of restoration of parliamentary system from the mid of 1976 followed by the holding of general polls in early 1977. But it had increasingly been difficult to control the situation by a single command owing to conflicting relations prevailing in the ranks of the army hierarchies. Ahmed described that the *coup* influenced the military forces in a number of ways. 'The chain of command under a unified command structure, which characterizes any disciplined force, was grossly violated by this putsch and the lines of communication among the different units became drastically affected.'¹¹⁹ At this crucial juncture the senior officers of the Bangladesh armed forces emphasized the inevitability of restoring discipline within the army ranks. With such an urge at this stage it had not been difficult for a senior official like Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf to trigger a counter *coup* on November 3, 1975. As an outcome of this *coup* Brigadier Mosharraf became the new Chief of Army Staff promoting himself to the rank of Major General and Shaheed Zia was taken under house arrest. The assassins of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and the plotters of the August *coup* had to quit the country under a dealing with the new leadership. But before fleeing they allegedly killed the four detained top Awami League leaders under intimation to Mushtaque Ahmed. These AL leaders were Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam, A.S.M. Qamaruzzaman, and Capt. Mansur Ali. Among them, Mansur Ali while detaining refused to accept a

post in the Mushtaque Ahmed's cabinet. These leaders while working for the Bangladesh's provisional government during 1971 resisted the anti-liberation performances and activities of Mushtaque 'gang'. In order to prevent their release and the possible revival of the Awami League, the plotters of the 15th August *coup* had them killed in jail on the night of November 1975".¹²⁰ This atrocious killing unveiled the mask of the national and international conspirators and the Mushtaque 'gang'. After the 3 November *coup* Mushtaque Ahmed was removed from the presidency and on November 6, Justice Abu Sadat Md. Sayem was installed as the country's president.¹²¹ This fact exposes the failure of the Mushtaque 'gang' and other conspirators to consolidate their position in state structures.

Within a very short time the forces opposing the counter *coup* became active to foil the attempt of consolidation. As such the *coup* was described as externally induced and backed by the Indo-Soviet axis and Khaled Mosharrof was branded as an Indian agent. Leaflets containing such explanations were circulated among the jawans of the army with a call for rise in rebellion against the foreign agents. Zaman mentions in this regard the connection of the JSD and Sammobadi Dal maintaining cells within the army ranks. 'The jawans belonging to these cells- *Biplobi Shainik Sangsthas* (Revolutionary Soldiers Associations)- took the lead on the night of November 6 in organizing the Sepoy (Soldiers) Revolt'.¹²² The military front (*Biplobi Gana Bahini*) of the JSD and retired Colonel Abu Taher infact played an instrumental role in inspiring the common soldiers and staging the Sepoy revolution of November 7. Colonel Taher was earlier released from his service and given a civilian job because of his vehement criticism of the government. In the liberation war, Col. Taher's organizational plan and capacity of contriving military strategy though unrealistic are worth mentioning.

Unlike other fighters Col. Taher was reluctant to accept any external help including India in organizing the people's liberation war. He was staying inside Bangladesh territory and was inclined to organize the base of a long term people's war. Taher wanted his force to turn into an ever expanding people's army standing side by side with the masses in the production process without reducing their surplus production. The people's army would adopt various techniques of guerrilla warfare including hit and run, treat and retreat, and arming itself by snatching enemy's ammunitions. Such strategy would therefore help build a self reliant army without any foreign assistance. In this manner, he believed, by successfully organizing a people's war, an exploitation-free socialist society would be built.¹²³ Taher's endeavours to found an exploitation-free state had two philosophical bases. One is the tier of idealism and Utopia for which he deserves honour and respect. The other tier can be called functionalism which had not been clearly specified. His conceptions that successful people's war must lead to exploitation free socialist state were more humanistic than axiomatic. The events of China, East Europe and Soviet Union during the decades of 1980 and 1990 made the above ideas nothing but unrealistic.¹²⁴ But even in 1970s there was no practical reason to consider these conceptions as infallible or accurate. Taher must be aware of the events of the Soviet Union during Stalin era which proved his notions terribly unrealistic. Nevertheless if Taher is forgiven for his Utopian thoughts regarding long term people's war on the ground of rectitude, still then the question remains that it might take decades to realise his ideas which would resultingly throw the neighbouring Indian states into unbearable political crises. The Indian government thus considered that possibility as completely contrary to their national interest and security. That is why when an air attack

was made on the Indian territory from West Pakistan, the Indian government unhesitatingly and hurriedly mobilized its armed forces to East Pakistan. Such move revealed India's retaliatory action against Pakistani aggression and uncovered her undeclared military assistance to the Bangladesh's freedom-fighters.¹²⁵ Subsequently on 16th December 1971, about 93,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered at Dhaka.

Colonel Taher considered that the Indian involvement in the liberation war would not be conducive to achieving his objectives. While fighting against the Pakistan army, Taher lost his limb which made him nearly inactive. After having long medical treatment in the military hospital at Pune he recovered with artificial limbs. Despite such help Taher maintained his opposition against India's role in Bangladesh war. During the 7th November 1975 soldiers' uprising, Taher exploited his anti-Indian stance. He and his companions gave the people around to understand that Khaled Mosharraaf, the leader of 3rd November *coup*, was an Indian agent which greatly frenzied the ordinary soldiers. The uprising of the sepoys on 7th November was successful and Khaled Mosharrof had been killed. As a result of 3rd November *coup* Shaheed Zia was taken under custody. Through the Sepoy revolution of 7th November he was freed from captivity and as a gesture the new regime promised that it would realise major demands of Taher and *Gono Bahini* including the formation of a classless production-oriented mass army. Through continuous voicing and propagation of their demands Taher and JSD organized a strong revolutionary *Shainik Shangstha* and a revolutionary *Gono Bahini*. After independence when Taher became the commanding officer of the Comilla brigade, he undertook a number of steps to transform the general soldiers into a production oriented force. All such initiatives, however, did not corroborate with

the conventional practices of the armed force. The deputy chief of staff of the army, Shaheed Zia did not interfere with Taher's unconventional moves. Thus, during Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's regime when Taher, as JSD leader, established revolutionary *Shainik Shangstha* he did not find obstruction. There were thus enough reasons for Taher to go ahead with his plans in realizing his goals through the formation of a strong people's army.¹²⁶ His political calculation proved wrong since in spite of JSD's terroristic actions against Mujib government during 1974-75 and its contribution toward the political change, the 15 August *coup* only marked the victory of the rightist forces and their foreign supporters.

Colonel Taher, one leader of the 7 November *coup*, was all along anti-Mujib and he never collaborated with the government. When the sepoys freed Shaheed Zia from captivity the commitments made to him by the latter included among others, releasing political prisoners, freedom of press, and rights of political parties to openly propagate their views. It may be mentioned that since the time of Sheikh Mujib thousands of JSD workers were detained and they remained in prison under the Mushtaque interregnum.¹²⁷

Soldiers uprising of November 7 aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the masses all over the country. The general soldiers while confirming their victory moved quickly to free Shaheed Ziaur Rahman from custody and as a mark of celebration marched through the major streets and roads of Dhaka city riding on tanks, trucks and other vehicles chanting slogans as 'Long live Bangladesh', 'Long live Sepoy Revolution', and 'All sepoys unite'. Jubilant people from all walks of life joined the procession and greeted spontaneously the sepoys echoing the above slogans. It was reported that 'millions of people surged out into the streets like a flood tide to greet Ziaur Rahman and extend their total support to him

as their man of destiny in that critical hour. He was immediately saddled into the responsibility of steering the nation'.¹²⁸ The uprising of the Sepoys and the general masses that brought Shaheed Zia in the limelight as the country's leader marked the efforts at defending the nation's sovereignty by the nationalist forces. As the JSD and its military front led by Colonel Taher played an instrumental part in organizing the soldiers' revolution and installing Zia, some commitments of fulfilling the demands of that organization had been extended to Taher by Shaheed Zia. After the 7 November Sepoy revolution Shaheed Zia, as part of keeping his promise, released the top leaders of JSD including Retired Major M.A. Jalil, ASM Abdur Rob, and Hasanul Huq Inu. Subsequently to go ahead with the JSD's planned 'second phase' of the soldiers' revolution, its military front placed Taher's Twelve- Point demand in front of Zia for quick realization. The Demands incorporated the following: measures for changing the structure of the Armed forces; release of all political prisoners; confiscation of properties of all corrupt officials and individuals; demand for ending all sorts of discrimination between the officers and sepoys in the Armed Forces; demand for ending recruitment of officers from privileged classes; demand for changing existing colonial practices; demand for enhancement of salary of sepoys; demand for abolition of Batman system; call for establishment of a Revolutionary *Shainik Sangstha*; role of the *Sangstha* as the central policy-making body for the Armed forces; coordinating role of this Central Body in maintaining links with different cantonments and other segments; and the revolutionary army's prime role in bringing about a social revolution of the people.¹²⁹ During this critical hour Shaheed Zia thus encountered a fresh move by the JSD to organize a class war between the officers and the general soldiers. JSD this time emphasized upon the demands

for withdrawing of gaps between the soldiers and their superiors, identifying the officers cooperating with the anti-revolutionary forces and keeping of ammunitions by *jawans* until the above mentioned demands had been met by the authority.¹³⁰ The newly founded government of Shaheed Zia apprehended general breakdown of discipline and agitation moves within the military forces while facing the strong propagation of the above demands by the JSD. Zaman described that the radicalization of the demands of the soldiers had been unprecedented and the '12-point demand was too revolutionary for Zia and he had to join the anti-JSD forces within the army to counteract the *Biplobi Shainik Sangsthas*'.¹³¹ As such taking tougher and coercive actions against the JSD activists remained the only option in front of the government. Those top JSD leaders who were earlier released had been taken into custody once again. The adherents of Col. Taher in Dhaka, Bogra, Comilla, and Rangpur cantonments faced similar consequences. Reinstatement of order within the ranks of the armed forces was therefore given the first priority by Shaheed Zia regime and that had been realized within a short span of time. As observed, Shaheed Zia received tremendous public support in favour of the actions taken by him.

With the bloody military *coup* of August 15, 1975 and brutal assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman a significant chapter of Bangladesh's history was closed. It is beyond doubt that this nation owes a great deal to him. As a champion of the people's rights he organized and led the Bengali autonomy movements that culminated into a national liberation war. Mujib's charismatic appeal, activism, and unchallenged authority aroused a great hope among the populace in turning Bangladesh into a prosperous nation which, however, did not come true. In the post liberation period once he assumed the state power he had to bear the ultimate responsibility of state management and could not remain above criticism. In the

context of not properly handling the delicate dynamics by his government a great gap continued to prevail between the promises he made to the public and the overall deteriorating conditions in the socio-economic and political sectors. His policy programmes and politico-governmental arrangements and rearrangements had disproportionate effects upon various segments of the political system. As a consequence, alienation among the conscious quarters especially among the army became more intense and ultimately leading the ambitious army officers to take over state power in a very notorious and brutal manner. With the demise of Sheikh Mujib, the future course of Bangladesh's history and politics had been directed in a completely different fashion. As noted earlier, although Shaheed Zia was not involved in the political change made through the 15th August bloody *coup*, he had been the beneficiary of the subsequent *coups* and counter - *coups* which elevated him to the apex of the state power. Thus unlike any other military leaders of the developing world 'Zia's rise to power was spectacular and happened in an unorthodox manner. It was not a take-over by a military person by means of bloodbath, or a blood less *coup*. Zia's rise to power was a result of a conscious political action on the part of a section of the people and the troops. He took over power as a hero both of the troops and the people. Very few military men in the third world have assumed power with so much personal popularity and through such an uncommon political upheaval.'¹³² After Sheikh Mujib's downfall the nation found in Shaheed Zia charismatic appeal, great leadership and statesmanship to lead them and it was President Zia who set a new vision with missionary zeal guiding the destiny of Bangladesh. The rise of Zia marked the beginning of a new era characterized by pragmatism and a great journey towards people's democracy and overall national development as explained in the following chapters.

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SHAHEED PRESIDENT ZIA'S RULE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Shaheed Zia was not a born politician. The preceding analyses confirm that his rise to the rank of national leadership had been the result of national crises caused due to the establishment of authoritarian rule by civilian leadership, overthrow of that rule by violent army *coup*, counter *coup*, and the unprecedented sepy revolution of November 7, 1975. It had been the sepoys and the general masses who brought valiant freedom fighter Zia to the fore to take up the leadership and state power at a very critical situation of the nation remaining in a state of total darkness and uncertainty. Shaheed Zia's rise to power and all his subsequent moves and attempts signified the process of the end of an undemocratic rule and a transition towards establishing a true democratic society characterized by sovereignty of the people. The gargantuan task of steering the wheel of the state in the midst of great odds and turning a society branded as a 'bottomless basket' into a self-reliant one had been accomplished by Shaheed Zia through his back- breaking endeavours and enormous dedication. As the savor of democracy and master of development, Shaheed President Zia is to be remembered by the millions as long as Bangladesh remains.

This great leader of the Bangladeshi people was born in 1936 at the district of Bogra, Bangladesh. Zia came out of a middle-class family background and his father Md. Mansurur Rahman was a government servant. Of the five brothers, Zia was the 2nd eldest. He spent his childhood in a rural area of Bogra district and a certain part of his early life was spent in

Calcutta where his father was posted as chemist in a public enterprise. Denis Wright while describing Zia's nature during his early life quoted the following remarks: 'He was a quiet boy!- a good boy! He didn't run about the place. When you spoke to him, he looked at you intently; he was taking it all in. Serious! He was so often serious about things...He expected you to tell him the truth. And he liked to be told things, plain and simple- or, he was quite happy to find them out of himself...He sometimes played, but more often than not he would wander off somewhere, squatting down away from others... he often seemed to find other things he liked doing better than playing." Wright thus sketched Zia's nature in the following manner: He was 'reserved, shy, quietly spoken, intense in many respects, not entirely comfortable with flippancy, frivolity and games, interested in natural phenomena, determined and proud, displeased that any one should try to mislead him. He was trying to understand the structure of things in the natural and human world... and these principles he would later apply to military life and politics, and to his dealings with those around him.."¹ Zia's school life started in Calcutta in the Hare School. Subsequently he was admitted to Karachi Academy School of Pakistan after his father had been transferred there following the partition of India. Zia passed the matriculation examination in 1952 from the Academy School and started his college life in the same city. 'As a child who imposed a discipline upon himself, a youth whose approach was tactical and strategic,' the idea of building army career had been consistent. Thus he began his professional career as an officer cadet and joined the Pakistan Military Academy. In the year 1955 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and in 1957 he was posted in the East Bengal Regiment. For the next four years he served in the department of military intelligence. Shaheed Zia's diligence, thoroughness,

reliability, strong determination, respect for superiors, scrupulous, and dedication proved his sincerity to his own profession and love and affection for his country. With all these qualities Zia soon impressed the seniors in the hierarchy and had been given important responsibilities in crucial positions. In 1965 India-Pakistan war broke out and in that war Zia being the only Bengali commander of a company posted in Khemkaran proved his extra ordinary military skill in that western sector and accordingly was given army honour and promoted to the rank of Major. During his career, he developed high professionalism and gained experience through successfully completing various military command courses and higher training both within the country and abroad. He had also been an instructor in the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul and the Staff College, Quetta. He served as second in command in Second East Bengal Regiment and in 1970 he was transferred to the newly raised Eighth East Bengal Regiment at Chittagong in the same position. It is well known that the Eighth East Bengal Regiment under Major Zia performed a heroic role in the liberation war of Bangladesh. Shaheed Zia after the fateful night of 25th March 1971 and army crack down ordered his regiment to revolt against the Pakistan authority. Following the crack down and fleeing of most the political leaders across the border, the people of this country remained without leadership or guidance and at this critical time Shaheed Zia moved forward to declare Bangladesh's independence. He thus made the first historic announcement on March 26, 1971 from the Chittagong radio, the first ever broadcasting unit of what was described as "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (independent Bengal Radio Centre) declaring: 'Here is Major Zia speaking to you from Chittagong and I declare independence of Bangladesh'. To many national and international political observers, 'these few

sharp and fiery words ignited a nation which was without any political leadership at that particular moment of history and virtually shaped the subsequent course of Bangladesh War of Liberation.' "Major Zia with his band of patriotic nationalist forces fought back the advancing Pakistani army and blared out the stories of struggle over his independent radio unit of Kalur Ghat, a small industrial township near the port city which electrified the other wise dazed bewildered people without leadership along the path of hope, courage and struggle.² Ahamed mentioned that Zia's troops were in the forefront of the war of independence keeping the Chittagong and Noakhali areas under control for certain days and then crossed the border to organize united move against the occupied army.³ During the nine-month long liberation war initially up to mid of 1971 Shaheed Zia served as a commander of the Sector 1. In August 1971 Shaheed Zia was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. While in Roumari, Zia formed the First Brigade of Bangladesh Army with the jawans of First, Second and Eighth Bengal Regiment and became the leader of the same, more popularly known as the Z-Force. Through his courageous and crucial role- playing both at preparing war strategies and execution Zia was known as a great freedom fighter. As such he was given the military gallantry award called *Bir Uttam*. After the independence of Bangladesh through liberation war Shaheed Ziaur Rahman became the Commamder of the Comilla Brigade and subsequently he was made the Deputy Chief of Army Staff in the middle of 1972. He became a Brigadier in the mid of 1973 and at the end of that year he was promoted to the rank of Major General. After the sepoym uprising of November 7, 1975 Shaheed Zia became the Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator and later, on November 19, 1976 he assumed the post of Chief Martial Law Administrator.

After the sepoy revolution of November 7, 1975, Shaheed Zia ascended to state power and moved ahead to fulfill the gigantic task imposed upon him by the nation. He thus kept constant vigil over the whole situation in order to ascertain his newly acquired authority. In matters of taking decisions ranging from selecting the proper persons for proper jobs to governance issues, Shaheed Zia performed cautiously but very intelligently to meet the need of the time. Thus the persons who had been invited to join his government were older people like Justice Sattar, Kazi Anwarul Huq, Hafizur Rahman, Md. Shamsul Huq, Shafiul Azam, Dr. A. Rashid, Dr. Md. Ibrahim, Akbar Kabir and others, most of them having broad spectrum and in- depth experience in respective areas during their service at the higher professional levels in erstwhile Pakistan. They represented the professions like legal service, military, teaching, medical science, social work and civil service. Zaman noted that the advisers were fairly advanced in age, the average being fifty, they had long administrative experience with an average of thirty- one years, together the advisers had a total experience of 465 years.⁴ 'It was a unique example of combining vigour with experience and it brought a sense of maturity and traditionalism to the administration'.⁵ Zia's council of advisers during November 1975 till the mid of June 1976 was characterized by its responsiveness to the requirements of the people that contributed to legitimize the process of governance. It was not at all surprising to watch the inclusion of a number of retired bureaucrats as the members of the council of advisers since 'the elderly people are generally respected and accepted by the people because age is a value in Bangladesh culture'. Besides age factor their acceptability stemmed from specialization in respective fields, bureaucratic impersonality and neutrality with no strong political affiliation. Not only they performed

routine administration but within reasonable limits they also contributed to delivering goods and services needed by the general masses.

Shaheed Zia opposed the views of those who for political purposes tried to create artificial division within the populace more specifically in the name of pro and anti liberation forces. He believed that when unity and collective wisdom are badly needed to achieve the objective of overall socio-economic progress through a process of state and nation building, such a dichotomy being counter productive and impeding need not be encouraged. As such for the sake of national cause and in order to strengthen his hands in the above immense task he welcomed the support of all the forces and sections including centrists, left and rightists, keeping their mutual opposition. Zia considered it improper and undemocratic to deprive certain sections of their right to assembly, organization and political participation in the name of secularism. Consequently measures were taken to withdraw the on going discrimination against the rightist forces. Thus sub-clause 2 (e) of article 66 and article 122 of the 1972 Constitution were omitted through a proclamation and restrictions imposed on the rightists belonging to Islamic fundamentalist political parties to become a candidate for parliamentary elections and to enroll their names in the voter list were withdrawn. Moreover, the existing bar on the formation and functioning of religious parties under article 38 of the Constitution was withdrawn through second proclamation order in May 1976. It was therefore no wonder that like the other sections a considerable number of pro-Islamic politicians and rightist organizations joined the hands of Shaheed Zia and created a strong support base in his favour.

While exercising ultimate state authority Shaheed Zia did not forget the necessity of legitimizing the actions of his

regime. He therefore applied well thought out strategies that obtained exclusive support from the conscious quarters and general citizenry. At first, his regime categorically mentioned that it had no petty partisan interests and thus President Justice Sayem explained that the regime was non-political, neutral, interim and power would be transferred to the people's representatives through a general election by February 1977. In the same manner Shaheed Zia reiterated that the interim government was totally non-partisan, the armed forces kept their neutrality and his ultimate goal would be to restore democratic order in the country.⁶ Considering the on going socio-political atmosphere Zia, however, rightly emphasized on the creation of a conducive political environment before realizing the desired objective. On this matter, Shaheed Zia received total support and cooperation from the veteran NAP (National Awami Party) leader Moulana Bhashani and pro-regime personalities like Justice Sattar.⁷ Although Zia was the supreme leader and central figure exercising de facto authority of the state, assuming a formal position was required at this stage to expedite the process of transition towards democracy. Consequently, Shaheed Zia was installed as the Chief Martial Law Administrator through a proclamation on November 29, 1976 and subsequently Justice Sayem relinquished and Zia assumed the presidency as per proclamation of April 21, 1977.⁸ Thus holding of the strategic positions was consistent with streamlining the state activities and at the same time quickening the process of establishing the promised democratic society and polity.

With the consolidation of his governance Shaheed Zia expanded his governmental set up at the top and brought a number of persons who had been bureaucrats, university professors, technocrats, army officials and subsequently

politicians. Zia was interested to accommodate within his government trusted associates and thus the office of the vice-president was created and Justice Abdus Sattar was made the Vice-President.⁹ Shaheed Zia's significant move was invocation for establishing popular democracy in Bangladesh. As such on 28 July 1976, he took a crucial step in this direction and formulated the Political Parties Regulation or PPR. Unlike other military rulers of the Third World Shaheed Zia was not a power snatcher that had been proved by his building and nurturing democratic political institutions without which the democratization process could not have been possible. In practicing democracy, the prime ingredient is the existence of an appropriate political party structure. Unlike a single and centralized structure Shaheed Zia was in favour of pluralism where different political parties with different manifestoes and programmes would be functional in the political process. He therefore prepared the necessary ground through the above directives for introducing multi-party system in Bangladesh. Under the above Political Parties Regulation, the party organizations were required to place their constitutions, programmes, and party manifestoes for scrutiny in order to be active in the political process. The proposed party constitutions were supposed to spell out their goals, sources of finance, structure of component bodies, and detail planning for socio-economic development including feasibility of proper implementation. The measure was no doubt innovative and unique in the sense that it introduced a process of demanding responsibility, accountability and transparency within the political organizations. With the introduction of PPR, all the interested parties were asked to apply for their necessary registration. It was known that by the end of 1976, as many as one hundred applications were placed before the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs and seventy- two

of them had been given government permission to operate. These organizations, however, were not initially permitted to do out door politics in the form of organizing public rallies or movement. Since the political situation was not still conducive these registered parties were allowed to do parlour politics only for the time being. For creating a platform of democratic competition the regime of Shaheed Zia also initiated a process of political dialogue with the political parties as the major actors of politics. The impact of PPR had been the revival and rejuvenation of parties and the creation of a large number of political organizations in the country.¹⁰

Shaheed Zia while restoring the democratic order in a step- by- step process remained careful to consolidate what had been achieved. He thus adopted the strategies of ensuring the responsiveness of his government in delivering necessary goods and services to the public, keeping political party activity within the framework of multi-party system, preparing the ground for free political activities and holding of general elections. For materializing these objectives Shaheed Zia gained support from the cross sections. Marcus Franda mentioned that so far his political mission had been endorsed by the various categories of actors, for instance, supporters and admirers of Shaheed Zia within the armed forces and civil bureaucracy, a considerable section of radical politicians opposing the erstwhile Sheikh Mujib regime as represented by the NAP Bhashani leadership, and the rightist groups especially the right wing Muslim League and other Islamic fundamentalists whose operation had been declared banned during the Awami League rule.¹¹

The political parties and factions that supported the regime of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman included among others National Awami Party (Bhashani) led by Mashiur Rahman and S.A. Bari A.T., Shah Azizur Rahman group of the Muslim

League, and the United People's Party (UPP) led by Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Captain Abdul Halim Chowdhury.

With regard to holding of elections the politicians and supporters of Shaheed Zia opined that unnecessary quickening of the process would bring a chaotic situation hampering the democratic transition. Thus arguments were forwarded by NAP (Bhashani), Islamic Democratic League, and pro-Chinese left parties led by Bangladesh Communist Party (ML), Sammobadi Dal, and United People's Party to postpone the proposed February 1977 polls. The politicians of these organizations thus pleaded to strengthen and consolidate the hands of Shaheed Zia against the opposing forces including internal, and external. Accordingly the Zia regime declared that February 1977 election would be held in December 1978. On April 22, 1977, Shaheed Zia over television and radio addressed the nation and proclaimed that he and his government believed in full democracy and were determined to restore in due time the government of the people's representatives elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.¹² Zia also announced that for the time being he would remain in the presidency for the purpose of expediting the above process. While endorsing this move the above parties and political sections commented that early polls would create confusion in the political order and would ruin the unity affecting the sovereignty of the nation.¹³ However, the anti-government political parties, disarrayed through their internal factionalism had lost moral courage to forcefully criticize the government. During this time Shaheed Zia made an extensive tour all over the country. In numerous public meetings and unlimited street gatherings he propagated his policy programmes creating enormous public enthusiasm and great inspiration among them.

Shaheed Zia thus adopted an appropriate strategy of

restoring democracy in the country in phases from local to the national level. His plan had been first to hold Union Parishad elections in January 1977 to be followed by presidential and Jatiya Sangsad elections. At this stage it was considered more important to obtain public confidence in Shaheed Zia's political schemes and initiatives. Consequently, a national referendum was arranged on May 30, 1977 where the members of the electorate were asked to give their opinion on the question: 'Do you have confidence in President Major General Ziaur Rahman and in the policies and programmes enunciated by him?' In the referendum the public confidence in Shaheed Zia was formally reiterated as he won a massive vote with an affirmative vote of 98.99 per cent from the electorate, the voter turn out being more than 88 percent.¹⁴ Out of the enlisted voters, 88.05 per cent voters' casting votes had been unprecedented. This figure was a significant departure from the voting behaviour of the previous general elections in the country. In the 1973 parliamentary election the voter turn out was 55.62 per cent and in 1970 election the figure had been 55.09 per cent. Through the referendum the electorate by giving their verdict legitimized the Shaheed Zia's overall political and governmental actions and a deep sense of public support regarding Zia's authority had been established. As observed, through the referendum Shaheed Zia established the foundation of his political career.¹⁵ Excepting the fervid supporters of erstwhile authoritarian government almost all sections recognized that it had established Shaheed Zia as a genuine democrat.¹⁶ Since his rise to state power in November 1975 till his occupying the presidential position in 1977 Shaheed Zia endeavoured to restore normalcy and discipline within the armed forces, maintain law and order, find a people-oriented governance through responsive council of advisers, maintain regular contacts with the general masses,

withdraw ban on Islamic and fundamental political parties, introduce the process of establishing multi-party system in the country, civilianize his regime, maintain relations with politicians and political parties other than JSD and authoritarian BAKSAL , initiate a process of political dialogue with the parties and groups and expand his support base in his noble mission of restoring the rule of people's representatives in phases.

After obtaining overwhelming public approval of his actions Shaheed Zia moved further and undertook a number of crucial steps to reach the goal. All his measures encompassing wide spectrum of constitutional, legal, political, administrative and developmental programmes rendered a significant positive impact on the transition towards multi-party democracy along with a far reaching imprint on the country's society, economy, and the entire political system. This can be observed in the following sections where detail analysis and explanation of the constitutional measures and multifarious reforms undertaken by Shaheed Zia since his assumption of state power have been made.

Constitutional Changes and Reform Measures

Bangladeshi nationalism

One significant action during Shaheed Zia's rule had been the amendment and alteration in the fundamental state principles of the 1972 Constitution through martial law proclamation.¹⁷ Some of those principles Shaheed Zia believed, were not consistent with the sentiment of the people of Bangladesh and perturbed the masses.¹⁸ Thus article 6 of the Constitution was altered by the proclamation amendment order of 1977. Thenceforth the people of this country who were known to the world as 'Bengalis' had been given an appropriate identity i.e., 'Bangladeshis'; and nationalism that was espoused came to be known as Bangladeshi nationalism. It is no doubt a fact that all over the world, nationality of a country has a geographical connotation and therefore territorial boundary of an independent state is considered as the major factor of defining its nationhood. As such having similar dialect, linguistic source, ethnic composition or race, the residents living in different countries have different national identities. For instance the British and American people with their significant similarities in language, race etc., are not alike regarding their nationalism. In the same manner citizens with same racial and cultural background living in different countries of Europe have been described differently in matters of their nationality. Needless to mention that such an argument is equally applicable in the context of Bengali speaking people living in the two independent states of Bangladesh and West Bengal province of India. It can be mentioned that for a 'considerable period of recorded history Eastern Bengal has been tagged with Western Bengal although both had different names in different stages living together under a common ruler with a common name'. Despite this

phenomenon there are a number of areas where the former remained significantly different from the latter in terms of political history (Vanga and Gauda respectively) and political culture. With the partition of India in 1947 West Bengal preferred to be a part of Indian union while Muslim majority East Bengal was integrated with Pakistan. Within a short period of time alienation of East Bengal from Pakistan began to develop owing to internal colonialism. During the 24 years of Pakistani rule, East Bengal organized autonomy movements and fought for its due rights that culminated into a national independence movement of her people. During the liberation war of Bangladesh its territorial framework was reflected in the national flag signifying her separate national identity. In the post liberation period of Bangladesh describing her citizens as 'Bangalees' was rejected by those groups who were not Bengali-speaking for instance, the tribals, immigrants and other ethnic groups living in Chittagong Hill Tracts and dispersed all over the country. It is well known that the nomenclature of nationalism became an issue of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts demanding their rightful national status other than 'Bangalee' in independent Bangladesh.

For the above reasons Shaheed Zia tried to integrate all the citizens living within the geographical domain of Bangladesh irrespective of language, race, and culture by giving a new nomenclature of their citizenship. He believed that ethnic explanation of nationalism is by all means an expression of parochial sentiment and an all-encompassing nationalism should not be defined only in terms of ethnicity or identical race but should be based more on territory and similar factors. Shaheed Zia's popularizing the concept of Bangladeshi nationalism stemmed from an attempt of broadening the description of citizenship. 'By propagating the new concept of

Bangladeshi nationalism based on the geo-political independence of the country, Zia received an overwhelming response from all sections of the people.' It was therefore greatly possible on his part to mobilize and inspire the millions of citizens with the new approach of nationalism in implementing the national plan, programmes and development projects initiated by him. Ahmed mentioned that 'Zia, till the last day of his rule, took Bangladeshi nationalism as the corner stone of his political philosophy.'¹⁹ Shaheed Zia reiterated that 'we are Bangladeshis' and Bangladesh nationalism is composed of the following significant elements: population; territory and geo-political entity; language; religion; culture; national liberation war; external threat perception; self-reliant economy; popular democracy; social justice; and a feeling of separate existence. He emphasized upon the relevance of nationalism to the aspirations and hopes of the people and the strength of the spirit of nationalism was greatly related to the war of independence of the Bangladeshis. Zia always tried to point out the distinctiveness of the culture of the people of this land in the following manner, "Our culture is based on Bangladeshi nationalism...the art and culture have a role to play to arouse the sense of values in our national life...We want to have a distinct culture of our own, based on the ideals of Bangladeshi nationalism...for evolving a cultural pattern which would be meaningful and which would reflect the life of the people. We want to see the flourishing and growth of our culture, art, poetry and literature."²⁰ Shaheed Zia expressed that 'This is our country, this is our land....This soil has been polluted by so many conquerors. Now is the opportunity, we dig the soil and make it more productive. We build up industries and raise our heads with dignity...We must rely on our strength...no foreignism. If Bangladesh has its own destiny, it must develop

its own way... this has been colonized for many centuries. So it is only to correct to develop the spirit of nationalism to consolidate nationhood.²¹ Scholars opine that Shaheed Zia's new approach of Bangladeshi nationalism was a synthesis intelligently balancing between the two opposing nationalistic sentiments of 'Bangalee' identity and Muslim religious fanaticism. This has been the reason for wide acceptability of Bangladeshi nationalism. Through this approach Shaheed President Zia established the fact that the citizens of Bangladesh are neither supportive of that secularism, meaning a polity without any religious basis, nor do they endorse the rule of religious extremists. The notion of Bangladeshi nationalism propounded by Shaheed Zia in course of time got institutionalized as evidenced by the growing popularity of this concept and the victory of the nationalists under the banner of BNP in the successive general elections.

Alteration of secularism and socialism

The above two fundamental principles of state policy were changed by Shaheed Zia considering the realities of Bangladesh society and polity. In the independence movement of Bangladesh in order to search for a separate identification from the Pakistanis more emphasis was placed on linguistic and socio-cultural aspect. The people of East Bengal also resented the Pakistani rulers' strategy of exploiting and repressing the Bengalis in the name of Islam. The ruling elite clung to Islam as the basis of national identity and adopted various measures to destroy the linguistic, and cultural distinctiveness of the Bengalis in the very name of religion. As such Islam turned into a vehicle of perpetuating West Pakistan's rule over East Pakistan. The use of religion as a cementing bond between the people of then East and West

Pakistan remained without any significance in the event of exploitation by the western wing creating a system of internal colonialism. The people of East Pakistan being the majority were denied of their due share in the central decision making process and resource allocation for development purposes. It was commented that religious bond began to weaken when the realization dawned that one part of the country was being converted in a gradual manner into a colony of the other, and Islam was being used in that process.²² As a consequence, a negative sentiment developed regarding the political use of religion and Islam and the cause of Bengali linguistic nationalism gradually gained momentum. The independence movement of the Bengalis and their nationalist struggle had been projected as secular nationalist movement and secularism was adopted as a principle policy of the state by the Awami League government in the post independence period being quite aware of the fact that the great majority people of Bangladesh are firm and convinced adherents to the faith in Islam. But the concept of secularism lost its significance once independence was achieved since it did not 'reflect the spirit and attitudes' of the Bangladesh society and people at large. Shaheed Zia understood the minds of the majority people and in order to project the sentiment of the masses secularism was replaced by 'absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah' and Islamic tenet was included in the preamble of the Constitution adding 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim' meaning 'in the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful'. A new clause 1A was thus included in the article stating that trust in almighty Allah shall be the basis of all activities. Under the same proclamation article 12 of the original constitution was deleted resulting in withdrawal of all restrictions on religion- based politics. Article 25 was renumbered by the proclamation as clause (1) of that article

and a new clause (2) was added which defined "The state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve, and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity." In a similar manner, the ideal of socialism was given an appropriate definition and through the amendment that was substituted by "economic and social justice". This redefinition was made in the article 8. Originally in article 10 of the Constitution, there had been the commitment for establishing socialist economic system that became redundant with the above constitutional alteration. With the discarding of secularism by inclusion of Islamic tenet in the highest law of the land Shaheed Zia greatly satisfied the mass of the citizenry who have been religious and believers in Islam. He wanted to place Islamic faith as a countervailing force against socialism and Marxism. His assertion had been that 'today what is necessary is to establish social justice and Islam teaches us to establish social justice'²³ Later it was explained that "Religious belief and love for religion are a great and imperishable characteristics of the Bangladeshi nation. The long mass struggle against the cruel and unscrupulous foreign rule and domination has given most sublime and tolerant character to and stabilized our religion. The vast majority of our people are followers of Islam. The fact is well reflected and manifest in our stable and liberal national life."²⁴ A number of scholars believed that changing of the meaning of socialism also proved pragmatic as the country 'had a lot to gain from the West by jettisoning Soviet type socialism. Zia thus moved the state from left of centre to the right in economic, political and social issues.'²⁵ In the Constitution article 42 that provided for nationalization without compensation was also amended by Shaheed Zia through the proclamation of 1977. Through the amendment of article 42 it was ensured that 'no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save

by authority of law. In addition to this, modification of article 47 and amendment empowered the legislature to formulate rules with only a simple majority regarding denationalization of state property or increase of compensation for nationalizing of private property.

Judicial Independence

Shaheed Zia initiated a number of changes which were democratic in nature. For instance, one party system was disbanded and replaced by multi-party democratic structure and enlargement of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. 'Partly this was in response to the increasing demand for undoing the unpopular changes implanted by the Mujib regime through the Fourth Amendment²⁶ to the Constitution in January 1975. In the same year the powers of the Supreme Court to safeguard the fundamental rights of the citizens were curtailed. Preserving the rightful status and powers of the Court had been one crucial policy of Shaheed Zia and that was restored through the above proclamation of 1977.

It goes without saying that an independent judicial organ that functions without the control of the executive is regarded as a sine qua non of any kind of democratic rule. Scholars point out that if this organ is weaker than either the executive and legislative organs, it will not be possible on its part to safeguard the fundamental rights of the ordinary citizens. Since the earlier times one significant objective of formation of state was to protect individual freedom and the means of such protection was the judiciary and as such it is seldom conceivable that a democratic state functions without judicial independence. It implies that in a democracy there should be high esteem of judicial department 'to ascertain and decide rights, to punish crimes, to demonstrate justice, and to protect

the innocent from injury and usurpation'.²⁷ For properly performing their designated role, the tenure, terms and conditions of office of the higher courts are safeguarded by laws in the constitution in a democratic state. An independent judiciary cannot be guaranteed if the judges are to function according to the pleasure of the chief executive. It is for this reason unlike the members of the permanent bureaucracy the judges' tenure is related with good behaviour. C.F. Strong noted that the holding of the office of judges is not dependent upon any electoral mandate as applicable in case of the executive or legislature.²⁸ Broadly it can be stated that in a modern democratic country judicial independence is secured by detail constitutional measures providing for proper terms and conditions including permanent tenure and other securities. In our country the independence of the judiciary is greatly cherished with high esteem by the masses who were deprived of their fundamental rights during the colonial rule of the British and 24-years of Pakistani internal colonial rule. People's aspirations to have a free judiciary had been reflected in the independence movement of Bangladesh. It was stressed that a democratic constitution should incorporate the following to ensure independence of the judiciary. "1. The security and permanency of positions in the higher courts, i.e., the high Court and Supreme Court, is guaranteed. In other words, a confirmed judge could not be removed unless impeached in Parliament, or by a forum constituted by judges themselves. 2. The appointment and promotion of judges are to be made in consultation with the Chief Justice. 3. All authorities, executive and judicial, are to act in aid of the Supreme Court. 4. The Supreme Court and the High Court are to have extraordinary jurisdiction to issue writs of mandamus, certiorari, habeas corpus and quo warranto and such orders to protect the rights of citizens and intervene to check the

excesses of the executive. The High Court is generally empowered to exercise original jurisdiction for the enforcement of the fundamental rights of citizens. 5. The judicial officers and magistrates are guaranteed independence in the exercise of their functions. 6. The appointment of persons in the judicial service or even as magistrates appointed to perform a judicial function is to be made by the Chief Justice or in consultation with the Chief Justice. 7. The Supreme Court supervises and controls the functioning of the subordinate courts. The control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising a judicial function is vested in the Supreme Court."²⁹

In the Bangladesh Constitution framed in 1972, there was reflection of the above points and under article 22 the independence of judicial organ had been emphasized. There was provision in the articles 95 and 96 that the Chief Justice and other judges were to be appointed by the president and their retirement age would be 62. It was stated that 'A judge shall not be removed from office except by an order of the president passed pursuant to a resolution of Parliament, supported by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of Parliament, on the grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity'.³⁰ Articles 101, 102 and 103 laid down the jurisdictions of the superior courts consistent with the democratic system. But contrary to visualization soon the process of judicial independence was greatly disrupted by the acquiring of arbitrary powers by then government and ultimate blow was the imposition of a one-party authoritarian rule in the year 1975. Through the introduction of one-party dictatorial system in the name of BAKSAL the decline of a democratic order was complete and any chance of upholding

an independent judiciary was totally gone. Under the authoritarian set up the constitutional provisions in Part IV drastically altered the privileges and securities regarding tenure, rights and responsibilities etc., of the Supreme Court. Now under the new rule the president need not consult the Chief Justice in appointing the other judges. Moreover, the Fourth Amendment removed the permanent tenure of the judges under article 96 and made provision that 'a judge may be removed from his office by the order of the president on the grounds of misbehaviour or incapacity.' In place of the Supreme Court the president was empowered to control the discipline of the judicial people in matters of posting, transfer or promotion and the like. In a similar manner the power to protect the fundamental rights by issuing writs of the Supreme Court was taken away through the Fourth Amendment. All these provisions only marked the death of independent judiciary in this country denying the spirit of the liberation war.

As noted earlier, Shaheed Zia removed a number of authoritarian constitutional provisions enacted through the Fourth Amendment by the erstwhile Awami League government. Through the second proclamation order no.1 of 1977 Shaheed Zia restored articles 94 to 113 of the original sayings of the 1972 Constitution relating to judiciary. Thus the president alone would not appoint the Chief Justice or other judges. The power of the High Court to enforce the citizens' fundamental rights had also been restored through article 44. Shaheed Zia made provision for creation of 'Supreme Judicial Council' consisting of the Chief Justice and the next two senior judges to prepare a code of conduct for the judges and advice the president on judicial matters. It can be said that under Shaheed Zia's political order the judicial branch of the government regained its lost prestige as envisaged in the

original Constitution through the removal of the restricting clauses made through the Fourth Amendment and thus the judiciary was kept free from the interference of other state organs.

President Zia's 19-Point Programme

Very soon after the declaration of above proclamation initiating constitutional reforms Shaheed Zia, on April 30, 1977 adopted a significant measure in the process of establishing good governance. He thus presented his 19-Point Programme. Contrary to authoritarian prerogatives the programme was characterized by the combination of wide ranging development commitments and aspirations of different sectors. The 19-Point as follows upheld the interests of all sections of society.

1. To preserve the independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of the country at all costs.
2. To reflect in all spheres of our national life the four fundamental principles of the Constitution, i.e., complete faith in and reliance on the Almighty Allah, Democracy, Nationalism and Socialism meaning economic and social justice.
3. To build ourselves into a self-reliant nation through all possible means.
4. To ensure people's participation at all levels of administration, development programmes and in the maintenance of law and order.
5. To strengthen rural economy and thus the national economy by according priority to development of agriculture sector.
6. To make the economy self-sufficient in food and ensure that nobody has to starve.

7. To step up cloth production so as to ensure supply of at least coarse cloth for everybody.
8. To take all possible measures so that no one remains homeless.
9. To rid the country of the curse of illiteracy.
10. To ensure minimum medical care for everybody.
11. To ensure due honour for women and place them at their rightful position in the society and to organize and inspire the youths for nation building.
12. To give necessary incentives to the private sectors for the economic development of the country.
13. To improve the condition of the workers and develop healthy employer-worker relations in the interests of increased production.
14. To create an urge for public service and nation building among the government employees and improve their financial condition.
15. To check population explosion.
16. To build up friendship based on equality with all countries and especially strengthen the relations with the Muslim countries.
17. To decentralize the system of administration and development activities and strengthen local government.
18. To establish a social system based on justice and fair play and free from corruption.
19. To safeguard the rights of all citizens irrespective of religion, colour, and sect and consolidate national unity and solidarity.

Scholars noted that the 19-Point of Shaheed President Zia was not really a 'philosophical document' but it indeed reflected pragmatism of state leader and 'became catchy and popular because it was concise and covered almost every

thing that the major sections of the people were looking for. The main thrust of the programme was self-reliance and rural development through people's participation in the administration.'³¹

A detail analysis of the 19-Point would reveal that it incorporated both policies providing the principles and guidelines for proposed activities, and programmes indicating more specifically the nature of activities to be implemented under different headings. The following table shows the break up of the 19-Points.

Table-1

Shaheed President Zia's 19-Points as broken down into Policies and Programmes

Category	Policies	Programmes
Item numbers	1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 15
Total	12 Policies + 7 Programmes = 19	

Source: President Zia's "Programme for Progress", *The Bangladesh Times*, 26.5. 1977 Quoted in M. Anisuzzaman, *Bangladesh Public Administration and Society*, op.cit., p.62

President Zia's started with the vital point, that is, to protect our independence and sovereignty without which the existence of the state is not possible. Only a state that can ensure its security and sovereignty can safeguard the fundamental rights of the citizens and embark upon

implementing of all sorts of development policies and programmes on the basis of the constitutional ideals. This is very much consistent with the democracy theorists' conception that the state comes into being so that three basic rights viz., right to life, liberty and estate are protected. These are also explained as crucial for the *raison d'etere* of a state. The 19-Point therefore reaffirmed President Zia's pledge on this aspect. After assuring the fundamental responsibility of the state, Zia's programme looked into the basic needs of the people providing them with necessities and through various action projects making them self-reliant leading to build a prosperous nation. Through 19-Point President Zia prioritized his actions to deal with the basic problems. Priority was therefore given on agricultural production, food autarky, production of cloth, building of houses, elimination of illiteracy, providing medical facilities, and controlling population explosion through proper family planning measures. Prior to his launching 19-Point Shaheed Zia in his speeches mentioned the above problems that received uppermost attention. In an address to the UP chairmen President Zia stressed upon ' forming of food committees for facing the food situation, eradicating illiteracy, inspiring the people to voluntarily accept family planning, increasing textile production through optimum use of looms and increasing cotton production, building up of houses in the rural areas, strong enough to withstand the natural calamities, and building up of mills and factories in the village by taking electricity from nearest connections'.³²

Shaheed President Zia repeatedly recognized the significance of the people's strength. He considered the people as the source of all power and as such a government can only become legitimate if the common masses have due share and effective participation in the policy formulation process as

well as implementation of government policy programmes.

Such a belief had been reflected in Point four of the 19-Point that refers to Zia's pledge to 'ensure people's participation at all levels of administration, development programmes, and in the maintenance of law and order.' He put emphasis on the need to involve local populace in matters of identifying local requirements expressed through formal local development planning. Such recognition of people's initiative and their direct association in development administration by the country's president had indeed been unique. During Zia's rule, efforts were made seriously to include rural people in local affairs and thus they were involved within the structure of Union Parishad especially through the Union Education Committee, Union Law and Order Committee, Union Food Committee, and the like.

The 19-Point was indeed comprehensive incorporating policy guidelines and programmes in social, political and economic sectors. It had a great vision of making this country self-reliant and prosperous having a well balanced foreign policy. The 19-Point of Shaheed President Zia has been categorized in to four broad headings as can be seen from the following table.

Table-2

19-Point Policies and Programmes of President Zia shown as falling under four major outlines

Outlines	Independence and rights of all people	Principles of state policy	Basic programmes	People's participation
Item numbers	1 and 19	2, 3, 12, 13 and 14	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 15	4, 11, 17 and 18

Source: M. Anisuzzaman, *op.cit.*, p.63

The 19-Point highlighting the above outlines of people's independence, state policies, basic programmes and mass participation became the central focus of Shaheed Zia's administration and it represented the 'President's consistent thinking, experience and choice.'³³ The 19-Point Programme as such had been used as election manifesto in the subsequent presidential and parliamentary polls and received a wide public support as evidenced by the victory of Shaheed President Zia and his political organization, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Nationalist Front

The major steps like constitutional amendments, holding of referendum and the formulation of 19-Point programme signified Shaheed Zia's preparations for entrance into the domain of politics. When a military leader initiates democratic process it gives rise to different interpretations. But as observed, Shaheed Zia's becoming the country's head of the state and fundamental changes in the constitution had been

acclaimed by the people at large. The process was indeed consistent with the ideals for which the people of this country fought the liberation war and translate those in their national life. The holding of the referendum led Zia to consolidate the gains acquired through the innovative plans and programmes of his government. As observed, besides the centrist and middle of the road organizations the rightist groups not only welcomed the constitutional amendments but also supported Zia in the referendum.³⁴ Shaheed Zia also counted the support of the pro-Chinese political organizations as mentioned above. Despite the revival of the political parties through PPR, a sort of political vacuum continued to persist in the country owing to the effect of earlier ban on party activities, army *coup* and counter *coup* and martial law regulations. Shaheed President Zia as such started discussions with the political parties and decided to fill the country's political vacuum through democratic process.³⁵ But he was still undecided about political party – whether to join an existing party or float his own organization.³⁶ He possibly could not make up his mind whether his direct association with a political association would hamper his neutrality and strategies in the process of democratization. Due to this reason, when in February a new political party namely Jatiya Gonotantrik Dal (National Democratic Party) or JAGODAL was floated on February 23, 1978, Shaheed President Zia did not join it. It may be mentioned that the then Vice-President, Abdus Sattar was the chairman of JAGODAL and ten out of sixteen Zia's advisers were the members of the central convening committee of the party. Subsequently some known lawyers and medical professionals, 'one former minister and another former Minister of State of the Mujib cabinet, some industrialists and a trade union leader' had been included in the convening committee.³⁷ Hossain mentioned that it had been a clever

move on the part of President Zia to talk to most of the political parties because he understood the failures and limitations of the leaders and groups and kept them guessing before launching a political organization.³⁸ Soon the JAGODAL, favouring Zia's political framework of presidential system of government, formed numerous committees in different parts of the country and tried to expand its base of support. The formation and activism of JAGODAL led to the creation of an environment to produce a larger platform with other political organizations. Ahmed observed that 'although a large number of opportunists and deserters joined the bandwagon, the general response to the party among the common people showed a high degree of support for Ziaur Rahman's new political line. This was to provide the basis for negotiations to build his future 'political front' and political party'.³⁹ This process therefore contributed to the development of a much broader political base for President Zia.

The President on 18 April, 1978 proclaimed an Election Ordinance regarding the regulations and rules concerning the presidential polls. While the political parties and the JAGODAL were getting organized for their participation in possible electoral politics, Shaheed Zia announced on April 21 that the presidential election would be held on June 3, 1978 on the basis of universal adult franchise. From May 1978 all other restrictions on political parties had been withdrawn and a great number of political prisoners had been released. In the mean time all necessary preparations for the formation of a Bangladesh *Jatiyatabadi* Front (Bangladesh Nationalist Front) were complete. As noted earlier, although JAGODAL obtained the blessing of the government, Shaheed Zia did not join it as he was in favour of organizing a much broader political base for himself. Shaheed Zia thus became a presidential candidate

of the electoral alliance called the *Jatiyatabadi* Front. The Front consisted of five political parties besides JAGODAL. The other parties were NAP (B), Muslim League, United People's Party, Bangladesh Labour Party, and Bangladesh Schedule Caste Federation. In this Front on the one side there was rightist Muslim League (Shah Aziz group) and on the other, there had been pro-Chinese National Awami Party (Mashiur Rahman group). Coexistence of political leaders from opposite platforms proved that their previous ideological considerations did not pose any problem in forming an electoral alliance. The political parties opposing the government formed their *Ganotantrik Oikkyo Jote* or Democratic United Front consisting of Awami League, NAP (Mujaffor), Krishak Sramik Party, Janata Party, Gano Azadi League, and Bangladesh People's League. Against Shaheed Zia, the opposition alliance nominated the chief of Janata Party General (Retd) M.A.G. Osmani as their candidate. In the presidential election there were ten candidates but the real contestants had been Osmani and Shaheed Zia. In the polls Osmani used Awami League's previously used symbol, 'boat', while Shaheed Zia used 'sheaf of paddy' as his electoral symbol. During his electoral campaign Shaheed Zia vigorously traveled all over the country and raised his voice in favour of 'people's democracy' and a self-reliant economy. He reiterated the significance of Bangladeshi nationalism and his 19-Point Programme. While pointing to the Awami misrule characterized by corruption, inflation, famine, deterioration of law and order situation, and a subservient foreign policy, he promised to establish a stable political order free from these socio-economic and political ills. In the electioneering the following achievements of the government were highlighted: bringing down the prices of essentials; improving law and order situation; defending the country's sovereignty; and

emphasizing on economic self-reliance with an objective to develop and depend on country's own human and material resources. Unlike election under military rulers in other Third World countries, presidential election under Zia had been free and fair and conducted in an open congenial political environment. It was thus explained as objective situation for holding election on the basis of direct vote and this ensured electorates' full liberty to choose their national leader. As per statistics of the Election Commission, of the total 3,84,86,247 voters about 53.59 per cent cast their vote. In the polls Shaheed Zia won a landslide victory obtaining 76 per cent of votes cast and was declared as the nation's president for the next five years.

The major causes that led to the victory of Shaheed President Zia include the following:

1. The instances of corruption which were rampant during the erstwhile Awami League rule were arrested by Shaheed Zia and this led to a growing public confidence in favour of his government.
2. Overall improvement of law and order situation since the sepoy revolution induced the people to elect a capable leader like Shaheed Zia.
3. The mass of the people welcomed greatly the steps taken by Zia's government to embark on development works and self-reliant projects.
4. The 19-Point Programme created a great enthusiasm among the citizens to achieve desired socio-economic progress.
5. There was bumper crop production and fall of the prices of essential commodities after Shaheed Zia assumed state power and there was substantial economic growth in the country.
6. The masses liked the constitutional changes made by

President Zia in accordance with the sentiment of the majority of the population

7. The process of democratization initiated by Shaheed Zia and his introduction of multi-party system obtained wide public approval.
8. Shaheed Zia received all out support from the people on the question of Farakka issue and his efforts towards increasing national prestige in the international comity of nations.
9. The opposition remained highly disorganized and faction ridden to pose any serious challenge against Shaheed Zia.
10. Shaheed President Zia's honesty, integrity, dedication, sincerity and charismatic appeal played an instrumental role for his landslide victory.

After the polls as the country's president, Shaheed Zia appointed his council of advisers which included mostly the leaders of the above *Jatiyatabadi* Front. Thus 13 were taken from JAGODAL, 3 from NAP (Mashiur), 2 from Muslim League (Aziz), 2 from United People's Party, 1 from Topshili National Federation, and 7 from technocrats.⁴⁰ Although no one was appointed as prime minister, Mashiur Rahman Jadu Miah of NAP was installed as senior minister with the rank and status of a prime minister. The newly appointed council of advisers gave Shaheed President Zia's administration a democratic semblance. But it had been a bit uncomfortable to keep the integrity of the cabinet and run the state of affairs by the heterogeneous cabinet members representing various political parties with divergent ideologies. It therefore became evident that Shaheed President Zia in association with his political associates would float a new political organization strong enough to perform interest aggregation and other political input functions.

Political party building: Formation of the

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

With the above objective Shaheed President Zia initiated the move and through his public utterances and contacts indicated to form a broad-based political party for uniting the nationalist democratic forces to achieve national development. Consequently Shaheed Zia in August 1978 prepared the ground to found the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) by abolishing the *Jatayatabadi* Front. Zia in a public meeting at Chittagong declared that with the formation of BNP, *Jatayatabadi* Front did not have any existence.⁴¹ Before floating BNP Shaheed President Zia was convinced that the Front with 'widely differing beliefs and ideologies could neither adhere together nor move in one direction' and could not be transformed into a single political organization.⁴² Zia's launching of BNP was thus made after consolidating his political power through massive victories in the referendum and presidential election and consideration of factors like country's political vacuum, disagreement within the *Jatayatabadi* Front, and most importantly, the massive factionalism within the opposition forces which became divided houses. In this backdrop it was chalked out to formally launch BNP on September 1, 1978 to further strengthen Shaheed Zia's political support base through propagating his ideology and programme and contest the future parliamentary elections. The formation of BNP not only ensured a pure civilian rule but also acted as a counterweight to opposition political parties in the political process most notably the Awami League and the supporters of BAKSAL. Scholars regarded the creation of BNP as unique comparable to the formation of such organization namely, Republican People's Party by Turkish charismatic leader Kamal Atatürk.

The BNP in the words of Shaheed Zia would be 'nationalist in character, modern in outlook and balanced in composition'. He was of the opinion that in the post independence period the past attitude, approaches, slogans, and actions as followed by the major political parties had been proved inappropriate in the changing circumstances creating enormous socio-economic and political crises in the country. BNP's responsibility would therefore be to bridge the gap by initiating a new form of politics characterized by people oriented political philosophy and activism. With a grass root linkage participative democracy can be practiced and overall socio-economic progress can be achieved. As such since its inception BNP had been geared to translate the above ideology of Shaheed President Zia in Bangladesh's national life. It therefore helped institutionalize Zia's political order and increased his image not only within the country but also outside. It was thus no wonder that people from different professions, groups, political organizations started joining the Zia's party. Initially after its formation, Muslim League (Aziz), United People's Party, and a section of Labour Party joined the BNP while JAGODAL and NAP (Mashiur) merged with the same. BNP as such was a conglomeration of various political forces and social groups and became an umbrella party to attract wide- ranging public support as well as mass confidence in the leadership of Shaheed Zia.

In both the presidential referendum and presidential election Shaheed Zia won massively for his on going policy programmes and after floating his own political party much had to be processed through effective political means. It therefore required BNP to assume this great task. As supreme leader of BNP, Shaheed Zia called upon to build this institution properly and emphasized on broadening its mass base. In order to win required support mobilizing the public

was taken as a strategy and thus party branches had been set up in numerous localities to prioritize local needs for planning and implementation. The branches were given the responsibility of integrating interests of different local politico-economic and social forces and associational groups. Shaheed President Zia popularized such approach by visiting remotest corners of the country every now and then accompanied by his associates and party stalwarts. Such way of doing job proved a significant departure from the hitherto party politics as evidenced from the objectives and programmes of the BNP discussed below.

The party emphasized upon preservation of sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh at any cost. It was stated in the party *ghoshonapatra* that the forces that act as the savoir are:

- unity, integrity and consensus based on Bangladeshi nationalism;
- people-oriented democracy and politics;
- national economic emancipation, self reliance and progress.

The 31-point manifesto of the party spelt out the following:

1. Preserving independence and sovereignty - it is indeed impossible to preserve national independence or state sovereignty from the forces of imperialism, expansionism and neo-colonialism unless there exists overall consensus and economic self-sufficiency. Lack of agreement on state fundamentals and dependence on external help in post independence Bangladesh produced penetration of the above forces in the country controlling the economy, polity and decision-making on crucial matters. As a consequence, Bangladesh lost its autonomy of action with a chain negative impact on the country's agricultural and industrial production and there was anarchic situation prevailing in the social, economic, political, and educational sectors creating

significant erosion of values. The events of Sepoy revolution of November 7, 1975 and the subsequent rise of Shaheed Zia and the popularity of his policy and 19-Point programme as expressed through people's verdict in the referendum and presidential election proved that the people of this country believe in Bangladeshi nationalism and are against any negative development or keeping dependency relations with self seeking foreign forces. The party therefore endeavours to unite all the patriotic forces and individuals in its struggle to obtain political stability, economic self-sufficiency and overall development of Bangladesh.

2. Strong People's unity based on nationalism - People of this country have historically maintained their separate existence from other races. Geographical position, historical experience, linguistic and cultural unity and tradition have founded the base of the spirit of Bangladeshi nationalism. On going struggle of the people against external threat posed by imperialism, colonialism, and expansionism has strengthened this spirit. The liberation war of 1971 had given a concrete shape to the sentiment consolidating the Bangladeshi nationalism and uniting all irrespective of religion, caste, creed, and region. The nation has been able to establish its independence and sovereignty through a sustained struggle. Belief in religion and religious faith are long lasting characteristics of Bangladeshi nation. The movements against the foreign forces have rendered a stable but liberal religious out look of the people who are mostly Muslims. As such they have been able to keep themselves free from communalism or religious extremism and are united to protect their national independence. One major objective of the party is to strengthen this unity and integrate the whole nation.

3. Politics of Production and People-oriented Action - For ensuring overall development and progress most essential

ingredient has been national unity and people-oriented politics. Owing to centuries old exploitation and misrule there exists poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition in public life. Large section of the population, about 90 per cent are poor and live below poverty line and remain without modern facilities of life. Their per capita income is so less that they have to lead an inhuman life. About 80 per cent of the population are illiterate and suffer from ill health and malnutrition. This vicious circle has been exacerbated by the prevalence of growing population, unemployment, and social malaise. Great many people, the have-nots, have hitherto not taken any meaningful part in the country's development process. In this context people-oriented politics must be geared towards obtaining economic growth, social justice and national progress. In this struggle all patriotic sections must practice politics of development on a concerted manner. The efforts of BNP would be to transform politics into a mechanism of nation building, national progress, and create a strong stable economy. There would be continued efforts to keep this people-oriented politics free from the clutches of palace politics and conspiracy. The party thus would take necessary steps to make politics as a force of production and would encourage infra-structural development by actively taking part in the process. This will contribute to reduce people-distancing from politics, build effective dedicated leadership, and eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy, ill health and malnutrition.

4. People's Democracy - An important mechanism of establishing production-oriented politics is mass participation. The so-called democratic structure that is meant for the rich, aristocrats and urbanites and an instrument of exploitation of the poor has to be discarded. The objective of the party is to build a people-oriented structure and state system so that the

majority of the population can take part in the socio-economic and political decision-making process and bring prosperity in their lives. The party believes that in order to establish fundamental rights at the national, group and individual levels, self-reliance in economic sector is the prime condition. To accomplish this self-sufficiency, conscious organization and people's participation in planning and implementation is necessary. It is the people who will select their own leadership and accordingly democratic structure will flourish in each and every level solving respective problems on the basis of self-help. In fact source of all power is the organized people. The party as such will endeavour to organize the people to assume the responsibility of formulating development planning and proper implementation of development projects. The philosophy of people's democracy will take its firm roots once the masses are made participative in politics and development.

5. Political Stability as a major public demand - People's determination has been expressed to safeguard national security and sovereignty. Maintaining stability, peace and security has therefore become mass demands. They want a definite but dynamic socio-political environment to uphold the cause of people's democracy and economic advancement. They are the active agents to rise against terrorism and promised to destroy the disruptive activities of the armed cadre based political organizations working in Bangladesh soil.

6. Eradication of Social Injustice and Inequality - Removal of age-old social injustices and economic inequalities through appropriate measure has been included in the agenda of the party. For augmenting the process honest, far-sighted and effective administrative system is to be ensured. Simultaneous efforts will be made to eradicate corruption and exploitative structures which are still remaining as a legacy of the colonial rule.

7. Stable Presidential Democracy - In order to accomplish the great task of maintaining national sovereignty, building socio-economic justice and achieving overall national progress, the appropriate form of government will be presidential democratic system. The President will be elected on the basis of universal adult franchise. The party thus believes in publicly supported, undisputed, stable democratic leadership and upholds a multi-party presidential system of governance.

8. Methodology of Democratic System - The party advocates for a democratically-elected president to act as an effective safeguard to keep democratic stability and meet the demand of the time. Such system has also been endorsed by the presidential polls of 3rd June 1978. Multi-party presidential democracy will prevent the scope for developing any autocratic rule as the national policy formulation will be the responsibility of the popularly elected national legislature having sovereign authority to make laws and regulations. Moreover the parliament will be empowered to approve budget and all international treaties, impeach the president and amend the constitution if necessary.

9. Fundamental Rights, Judiciary and Rule of Law - The party in its programme pledged to restore fundamental rights of the citizens. Its important political philosophies included the independence of the judicial organ of the government protecting the rights of the citizens and establish rule of law ensuring equality of all individuals before the law.

10. Revival of human values - The fundamental objective of all efforts of the party is to revive the humane and social values in our national life. There has been significant erosion of values most particularly among the educated and higher social classes due to cleavage and conflicting relations. Inhuman behaviour, injustice, immorality and corruption

engulfed our society leading to the degradation of our younger generation. Over the last two and half years there have been efforts to get rid of this situation and the party is determined to keep the pace of such move. It also shares the similar sentiment with the majority of the people who are hopeful to bring about a positive change in this respect.

11. Local Government and Decentralization of Power - Decentralization of political power is greatly necessary to establish and strengthen people's democracy and politics of development. The party will try to replace centralization of power by practicing people-oriented politics and gradually increasing the power and effectiveness of the local government. The party will take constitutional, organizational and administrative measures to ensure decentralization so that the local government sectors play an important part in local life. It will also involve the landless people, destitute women, and illiterates in local administration, development, project planning and implementation process through proper organization. The party will keep a vigilant eye to keep the local governance free from the control of rural rich and influentials.

12. Economy based on Social Justice - The party strongly supports proper economic distribution system based on social justice as a source of people's participation in development ventures. It tries to abolish internal exploitation by initiating an effective economic development process that can bring national self-sufficiency. Through proper distribution and social justice both the farmers and labourers will have their right to work and meet basic human needs. Basically the party emphasizes on humanitarian aspect of national economic and development efforts. As such the party is of the opinion that the fundamental economic and security- related industrial bases will be owned by the state while the rest industries and

production sectors will be open for private ownership. In this regard both Bangladeshi and foreign investments will be encouraged without hampering national interest. The party will also assist and encourage public and private productive ventures in generating wealth through medium and small-scale industries.

13. Overall development and use of Human Resource- In the context of development- oriented politics the party's one prime goal is to frame proper policies for effective use of vast human resource. Major section of our population despite being hard-working remain unemployed due to illiteracy, lack of skill and the like. The party policy is to make these people self-supporting economically by involving them in cottage industries and vocational process. The party will also take steps to export man- power with a plan of providing jobs to 60 to 70 lakh unemployed persons and creating skilled man-power through training and rapid expansion of rural industrialization.

14. Emancipation and progress of Women - Half of the population of this country is women who so far remained incapable to contribute to national development because of superstition and social regulations. A positive change in this regard has been initiated through the establishment of Women's Department, and associating the women folk in the sectors of social welfare, local government, rural development, cottage industries and medium and small- scale industries. The party will continue to provide necessary impetus for making these governmental efforts successful.

15. Use of Youth in national development - Out of Bangladesh's total eight crore population about one and half crore are young men and women belonging to age group of 20-25. Of them ninety per- cent are rural residents and a major section remain outside the education and other related

facilities. The party will make endeavours to engage this huge youth section in nation building, social service and wage earning programmes. Vocational training, skill development projects and national youth service will be taken up in various parts of the country for the purpose of organizing the youth to make them self-supporting. They will also be involved in the fields of cooperative movement and rural development for self-reliant services and thereby augmenting the process of socio-economic development of the nation.

16. Rural Development - About ninety per cent of Bangladesh's population are rural residents. As such over the last two years priority has been given on ameliorating the overall conditions of these needy majority rural people. An environment of progress in this direction has therefore been created and that has to be consolidated. The party is determined to bring about a revolutionary positive change in the rural lives of the people and in order to improve the poverty situation and economic underdevelopment will take the following steps: organize wider production process through rural cottage industries, agricultural education, fishery and vocational training; extension of literacy programme; ensure better housing system; take appropriate measures for the development of health care and nutrition; develop rural communication system and rural electrification scheme; introduce modern administrative system based on justice and adopt proper land reform measure.

17. People oriented Agricultural Policy - Most of Bangladesh' people are involved in agriculture and as such the party will formulate proper agricultural policy with the aim of increasing agricultural production and achieving food autarky. The movement that has been initiated to double the production of food grains will be further strengthened through consolidating agricultural projects, developing the farmers by

providing them with agricultural equipments, inputs and training, and assisting the poor through objective land reform and distribution system. All these measures will make the country not only self-sufficient but more production will lead to export of surplus food grains.

18. Cooperative Movement - The party is quite aware regarding the significant role of cooperative movement involving the masses in overall national development, more particularly, rural development. The major constraints in this respect are domination of bureaucratic organization and involvement of intermediaries, people's general ignorance, and lack of knowledge on cooperative approach. Keeping an eye on this the party will eradicate the corrupt elements, touts and intermediaries and will make an end of the cumbersome bureaucratic process, encourage cooperative development through extension of institutional education and campaigning, and develop cooperative-mentality among the masses through strengthening social welfare programmes. Moreover the peasants, workers, small traders, and professionals will be effectively organized as productive force for the purpose of economic growth.

19. Productive Labour Policy - It is greatly essential to properly coordinate between the interests of the workers and the national labour policy. The party will therefore take steps to provide the labourers with all facilities regarding pay and allowances and the like. Due emphasis will be placed on the development of production-oriented ventures and organizational attempts. The rights of the workers and labours to create and organize trade unions will be maintained and the trade union movement will be regarded as the safeguard to uphold the cause of labour interests.

20. Health and Family Planning programmes - The party believes that mechanisms to all other development are

successful health care and effective population control programmes. Past attempts in such sectors could not become successful mostly because of separating these issues from social and economic spheres. Parochial professional theorem is nothing but a process distancing itself from the real life. The programmes like health and population can only become successful once these are related to the process of human standard of living. The party is determined to keep such realism and do the needful to organize and strengthen health and family planning programmes at the national level. Side by side it will also try to consolidate social unity and consciousness through social welfare activities.

21. People-oriented Education programme - The party supports the recent steps taken by the government to reconstruct and reorganize the colonial type of education system. It is of the opinion of introducing a constructive education sector that leads to national consensus, increased production, and ensures social and individual prosperity. The party with necessary support from the government will introduce a system based on scientific, technical and vocational education so that no educated youth remain unemployed. In fact one main objective of the party is to establish a life-centered and production based education system in the country.

22. Better Communication System - Without a proper and well-organized communication system any developing country like Bangladesh can- not prosper. The party as such will strengthen the efforts of developing rail, road, air, and water transport system to improve rural economy and create productive human resource.

23. Use of Natural Resource - Many of Bangladesh's natural resources still remain undiscovered and are not properly exploited. Development of natural resource and its

proper use are key elements of national economic development and progress. Bangladesh's multi-faceted natural resources like stone, coal, gas, water, solar energy, forest and animal products will be exploited in a proper manner by formulating pragmatic policies and their effective implementation.

24. Development of Disadvantaged Groups - A section of people and backward areas have not been involved in the ongoing national development process of the country due to historical and communication problems. Consequently they remain comparatively undeveloped. The party will involve these areas and the people in the process of developing their overall psychological, social and economic conditions. Tribal areas and disadvantaged hill people who are lagging behind owing to legacy of colonialism and exploitation will be brought under development policy programmes initiated by the party.

25. Armed Forces - The Armed Force of the country is the defender of sovereignty and national independence. The party will advocate the following measures for development of the Armed Forces: meeting all the necessary requirements including armoury, training and other facilities; creating organizational capability; developing defense system; and building professionalism.

26. Freedom Fighters - the freedom fighters are the central figure of our liberation movement of 1971 and their role as vanguard of national development can hardly be overemphasized. Means of freedom fighters' effective participation in the development process will include: organizing them in productive and constructive activities; making the disabled and handicapped freedom fighters self-reliant through proper training and engaging them in income earning activities; compiling the testimonies and other

documents on war of independence; identifying events and places of significance relating to liberation war; and preserving the true history of the liberation war for the future generation of Bangladesh.

27. Bengali Language and Culture - Bengali language and literature are great elements of our national identity. The language movements of 1948 and 1952 formed the basis of struggle for national independence. Every effort will be made by the party to develop, preserve and expand Bengali language and literature. As such proper steps will be taken at the school level and respective institutions will publish text- books and research papers for the purpose. Use of Bengali language at every sphere of national life will be ensured.

28. Development of Culture and Sports - For overall growth of talents, the party will promote cultural and sports programmes. In order to achieve this objective a significant number of cultural and sports centres will be created in every corner of the country. Concerned persons and groups will be given proper training and material assistance for the development of their talents and skills.

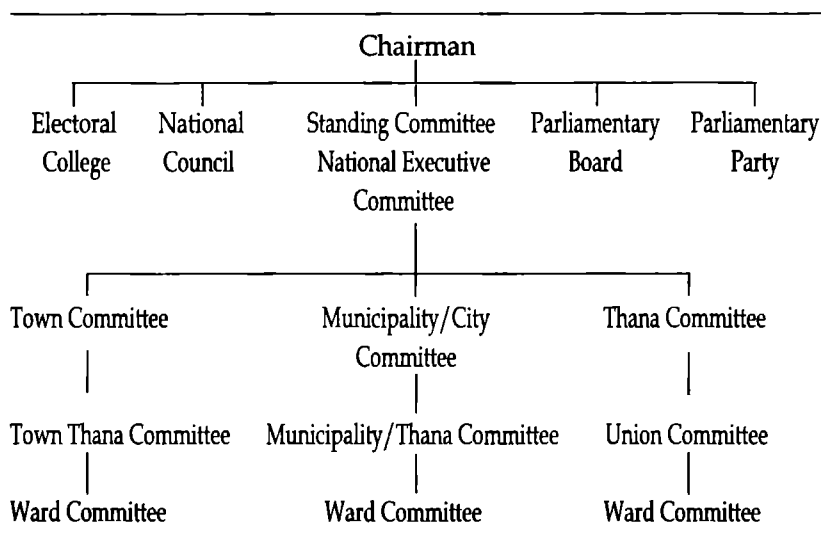
29. Religious Education - Religion is an indispensable part of our tradition. Islam is the philosophy of life of great many people of this country. As such measures will be undertaken so that teachings of Islam are reflected in the lives of the majority Muslim population. Similar assistance will be extended to the people of other religions to develop their own religious education.

30. Preservation of the Constitution - The party will support the government to preserve the desired changes made in the national Constitution as per demand of the people. The party considers the constitutional changes as symbols reflecting the sovereignty, independence and national development.

31. Foreign Relations - The party pledges for pursuing an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. Sovereign equality is the basis of maintaining international relations and non-interference in internal affairs of respective countries. The party has the following objectives in this regard: supporting the fundamental principles and charter of the United Nations; joining the efforts for bringing international peace; developing strong relationship with the countries of the Third World; keeping special and brotherly relations with the Muslim countries; supporting the Arab and Palestine cause; strengthening the non-aligned movement; maintaining friendly relations with the South Asian states; and extending all out support to the freedom movements of the people belonging to the Afro-Asian world struggling against the forces of imperialism and exploitation of the expansionist rule.

The formation of BNP on September 1, 1978 along with the above popular programmes and the party's commanding support of cross sections and involvement of great many individuals and political personalities in its structures created an environment of filling the country's political vacuum. The organizational structure of BNP was also unique for proper implementation of the objectives as laid down in its *Ghoshonapatra*. As per the constitution of the party any Bangladeshi national believing in its ideology and 19-point programme would be enrolled as a member by signing a declaration form and paying a minimal subscription. As observed, within one year of its inception local party branches had been formed in every part of the country and through membership drive there was a great enrollment of primary members. With regard to party organization, at the top level there is the chairman, and the other organs are the electorate, national council, standing committee, national executive committee, parliamentary board and parliamentary party as can be seen from the following table.

Table-3
Organizational Structure of the BNP



Source: Party office information

As per the constitution of BNP, all the executive committees at the grassroots level are to be elected by the respective prescribed members while the higher bodies at the apex of the party are to be nominated by the party chairman. The party electoral- college has been given the authority of electing the chairman who acts as the chief executive with the supreme powers of overall supervision, coordination and control of party activities. Similar to other political organizations the BNP also established the following affiliated bodies having their own manifestoes and constitutions: The Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (Student Front); The Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (Youth Front); The Jatayatabadi Sramik Dal (Labour Front); The Jatayatabadi Mahila Dal (Women's Front); and the Jatayatabadi Krishak Dal (Peasant Front).

Through the building of broad based political party of his own Shaheed President Zia tried to integrate the whole nation in his tireless mission of nation building and overall national development. Although the party constitution bestowed supreme authority on its chairman, Shaheed President Zia believed in participation of the stalwarts in party affairs and maintained a platform for open discussion and thus party decisions were made on the basis of consultation and agreement of all concerned. Hossain noted that cooption of members from the national council had been an important characteristics of the functioning of BNP in considering crucial national problems. There was also the practice of appointing subject committees to look after particular concerns. These committees 'dealt with the matters such as information, research and publicity, energy, political research, economic research, law and order, conduct and reconciliation. There were also sub-committees to deal with the problems of food, health and population control.' It was observed that through organizing seminars and workers' conferences major socio-economic and political problems were identified to find a solution on the basis of discussion and arguments. Shaheed President Zia 'used to consider all their recommendations carefully and take decisions after long deliberations.'⁴³

Democratic transition through parliamentary polls

With the formation of BNP, Shaheed President Zia moved another step forward in the process of democratic transition keeping an eye on the ensuing parliamentary election. Preparations were thus set to hold promised general polls. To ensure the participation of the opposition parties in the electoral game, on November 17, 1978, Political Parties Regulation (PPR) was repealed and the date for second parliamentary elections was fixed on January 27, 1979. Shaheed President Zia announced that martial law would be lifted as soon as the election was over and reiterated in his televisive address to the nation on November 30, 1978 that the Parliament would be a sovereign body with powers to formulate and amend all laws, approve the budget, remove or impeach the President and amend the Constitution. Shaheed Zia also called upon the political parties and all concerned to uphold a free fair election process. For ensuring a true democratic environment and opposition participation, within a few weeks, some of the undemocratic provisions as incorporated in the original Constitution through the Fourth Amendment were repealed by a martial law proclamation. The major characteristics of the proclamation had been 'the appointment of a prime minister who must be a member of the Parliament and should enjoy the confidence of the majority members of the House; provision for the inclusion of non-members of Parliament in the cabinet, their number not exceeding one-fifth of the total strength of the body; the president having no power to veto any bill passed by the Parliament; and the holding of a referendum for making major changes in the Constitution and the method of election of the president.'⁴⁴ In addition to this the government of Shaheed President Zia released a number of political prisoners,

extended the dates of election and submission of nomination papers, restored the fundamental rights that were suspended by the Emergency proclamation of 1974, and withdrew all remaining restrictions on press and publication and martial law provisions on political activities.

According to scholars and political observers, the second parliamentary elections had been the first general polls in independent Bangladesh largely participated and widely contested by the country's numerous political parties. A striking characteristic of the election was the presence of large number of candidates with 2125 individuals contesting for 300 general seats in the Jatiya Sangsad. Nomination process began as soon as the election schedule had been announced by the Election Commission. There was great rush in front of the BNP offices to obtain nomination. While referring to an estimate Chakravarty noted that 'about 3000 aspirants submitted applications for nominations. The party had no hard and fast rules for distributing party tickets. Of course, officially it was announced that the credibility of the candidates in the society would be the main criterion for nomination as party candidates. Ziaur Rahman also repeatedly advised voters to vote for honest, sincere and spotless candidates.'⁴⁵ In the polls, Shaheed President Zia's BNP placed the highest 298 candidates followed by two major factions of Awami League, JSD, ML-IDL alliance with 295, 184, 240, and 266 respectively. The following table shows the detail break up of the candidates.

Table-4
Party Nominations of Candidates

Name of Political Parties	Number of candidates
BNP	298
Awami League (Malek)	295
Awami League (Mizan)	184
JSD	240
ML-DL Alliance	266
NAP (Mujaffar)	89
NAP (N-Z)	37
NAP (Naser)	28
Bangladesh Gono Front	46
Bangladesh Sammobadi Dal	20
Bangladesh Jatiyo Dal	6
JAGODAL	29
Ganatantrik Chashi Dal	2
Bangladesh Democratic Party	5
BJL	13
Nizam-i-Islam Party	2
United People's Party	70
United Republican Party	2
Ganatantrik Andolon	18
Labour Party	16
JEP	5
Jatiya Janata Party	10
CPB	11
other parties	12
Independents	422
Total	2,125

Source: Election Commission, 1979

During the electioneering the BNP under its charismatic leader Shaheed President Zia, expressed its firm commitment to consolidate unity of the people and establish people's democracy based on the Bangladeshi nationalism. It advocated for sovereign legislature under presidential framework and promised to fight against the forces of imperialism, expansionism, neo-colonialism and racism. It emphasized upon obtaining food autarky and achieving economic self-sufficiency. The members of the electorate and the crowd present in the campaign meetings highly greeted Shaheed President Zia who in response 'jumped from the dias and embraced the people'. He explained his electoral victory in presidential election as the all out support given by the mass of the people to his policy programmes contained in the 19-Point. Organizing parliamentary polls was a part of the process of building political institutions and institutionalization of democracy in the country. It is known that Zia addressed numerous public meetings and roadside meetings in one day while advocating for the capable candidates of his party. The points on which he put major emphasis were: maintain law and order; political and governmental stability; speed up the pace of progress achieved by his government; people's consciousness regarding the ongoing conspiracy of both internal and external forces; people's unity against all sorts of hegemony; women's increased participation; a public nay to any form of foreign 'isms', and concerted effort to turn this country into a prosperous nation. In his appeal to the electorate Shaheed Zia advised them to select honest and patriotic persons having faith in Bangladesh nationalism and those who would follow the 'politics of development' as their representatives in the national legislature.

The elections to the country's second parliament were held

on February 18, 1979. Out of the 39 million registered voters, 54.09 per cent cast their votes.⁴⁶ Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party won massively in the elections by bagging 207 seats out of 300 parliamentary seats⁴⁷ as can be seen from the following table.

Table-5

Results of Parliamentary Elections of 1979

Party	No. of seats contested	No. of voters	% of votes	No. of seats won
BNP	298	79,34,236	41.16	207
Awami League (Malek)	295	47,34,277	24.55	39
Awami League (Mizan)	184	5,35, 426	2.78	2
ML/IDL	266	6,31,851	10.08	20
JSD	240	9,31,851	4.84	8
Other parties	420	25,42,614	6.49	8
Independent	422	19,63,345	1.01	16
Total	2125	1,92,73,600	100.00	300

Source: Election Commission of Bangladesh. 1979

The causes for the success of BNP in the second parliamentary elections can be attributed to the following.

a) The great victory of BNP underlined the continued support of the general masses in the capable leadership and guidance of Shaheed President Zia. Some analysts term this victory as a 'personal triumph' of Shaheed Zia because of personal and charismatic appeal to great many voters.

b) The members of the electorate in general were convinced by the electoral pledges made by the BNP candidates. The rural voters were especially attracted by the promises of land reforms and increase of agricultural production through large- scale state assistance in the form of agricultural inputs and loans for investors. Other pledges which made appeal had been industrial development with an emphasis on the private enterprise with a focus on export oriented growth mechanism. 'As the new programme was a contrast to the socialist policies of the Awami League which had adversely affected the middle class, it helped generate new hope and optimism in this group, which therefore supported the Zia regime.'

c) While giving verdict the electorate also considered the improved law and order situation, prevailing political stability, control of price hike and gradual increase of production in the country after Shaheed President Zia's assuming state authority.

d) Most Muslim voters were attracted by the Islamic tenets in the BNP's political ideology strengthened by Bangladeshi nationalistic sentiments.

e) The voters welcomed the governmental aids and assistances in the various local development projects that had been committed by Shaheed President Zia and his political associates.

f) The opposition political parties and alliances failed to

pose any serious challenge to the BNP of President Zia. It was commented that⁴⁸ mutual confrontation and lack of unity in the opposition side also contributed to the massive victory of BNP.

Functional Jatiya Sangsad

Although BNP obtained two-thirds majority in the second parliamentary elections, the Jatiya Sangsad then had the strongest ever opposition. The returning of as many as seventy opposition MPs with some season politicians and sixteen independents to the House led to the rise of expectation that unlike the First Parliament, the Second Jatiya Sangsad would not be turned into a non-functional legislature or a one-party affair. As mentioned earlier the representation of opposition members in the First Parliament was so minimal to demand governmental responsibility or raise any protest and put effective check upon the arbitrary actions of the executive. 'The arrogance of the brute majority crippled the value and function of Parliament'. But after the sitting of the Second Parliament 'the principle objective subjecting the political parties to democratic rules within the four walls of the Parliament , instead of allowing them to take politics to the streets and adopting extra-constitutional methods, was now achieved.' As such for the first time 'the attempt to turn Parliament into a centre of national politics was successful.'⁴⁹ As opposed to First Parliament the existence of a constitutional opposition was officially recognized in the Second Jatiya Sangsad. Thus Awami League parliamentarians Asaduzzaman and Mohiuddin Ahmed elected from Jessore and Bakerganj constituencies respectively were declared as the leader and deputy leader of the opposition in the Parliament. The opposition leader of the House was also accorded a

special position with the rank of a minister in the line of legislative tradition of other established parliamentary systems.

The actions of the Shaheed Zia's government like withdrawal of some crucial provisions of the Special Powers Act of 1974 under which fundamental rights had been suspended and the lifting of martial law in April 1979, paved the way for restoring full-fledged democracy in the country. The powers of the legislature were also enhanced to make the national representative body into an effective policy-determining organ of the state.

The Second Jatiya Sangsad commenced its first session on April 2, 1979 with presidential address. In his historic presidential address in the Parliament Shaheed Zia described the sitting of the Sangsad as a great transition towards people's democracy and progress. The following is the excerpt of his speech at the Second Jatiya Sangsad as published in national dailies.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh this one is the Second Jatiya Sangsad. I see here in this Sangsad many known faces. We all wish the welfare of our country. Despite differences in our opinions and ways the purpose and objective are the same that is economic emancipation of the millions and preservation of sovereignty of the country. Bangladesh since its very birth has moved ahead through various hindrances. Safeguarding of sovereignty of such a new country in the present day world depends on the moral of the people and policy of the government in power. After I took over the responsibility of the office of the president we have laboured timelessly for the last 23 months to overcome the constitutional crisis. The greatest problem was how to make the transition to the democratic process. From martial law we had to proceed step by step for the transition. Three objectives have become important in my life. I have succeeded in the first that was to associate myself with the war of independence. The second objective was to establish democracy in

the country that also has been successful in phases. The third objective was the economic emancipation of Bangladesh and it has not yet been fulfilled. The people had given their verdict in my favour in the presidential election of June 3, 1978 followed by impartial general polls. The first session of today's national assembly bears the testimony to my sincerity and my government in this regard. So my appeal to you is let the democracy consolidate itself. There is no scope for divided opinion that the role of the national assembly is most significant for the conduct of the democratic system and its development. The noteworthy aspect of the past general election was the overwhelming majority of a single party. But for the first time the people have elected to the parliament a healthy opposition and it is a happy augury for the development of the democratic process. It will help establish a proper parliamentary process based on tolerance and sense of mutual respect. The present parliament should become a guide for introducing proper parliamentary rules of procedures and tradition and MPs should remember that they are representing the whole nation and the issues of national interest are paramount to them. An MP should be fully aware of the national problems and have a clear vision regarding the solution. It is not the main thing whether an MP sits in the treasury or opposition bench or what is his party affiliation rather it will be a great success for him if he could perform his sacred duty to the nation with sincerity and determination keeping himself above narrow personal or group interest. The nation hopes that you will make visible contribution collectively and individually for the national response. We shall have to fix the priorities in all sectors of national development. The people you have been representing have one single identity that they are the common citizens of Bangladesh.

We believe in politics of unity and not of division, in politics of peace and not of chaos, in politics of construction and not of destruction. One easily notices the influence of this constructive and people oriented politics in a developing country like Bangladesh. New projects are being taken up in agricultural sector; new factories are being set up in all parts of the country; the quantum of export trade is increasing; communication system has

improved and our country today stands on a solid foundation. This has been possible because of on- going production oriented agricultural, industrial and trade policies. We believe in a policy of decentralization in both political and economic fields.

The people of this country are now imbued with their work potentials and the only need of the time is current leadership which will come from you. Overall development is the desire of all of us so we will avail of this opportunity to move forward with massive and total programme. I want to project before you a brief outline of the activities we have undertaken. Economic situation: During the last few years we have increased our development expenditure to maintain the trend of economic growth and the diversification of our economic cooperation with foreign countries. We have to increase our investment in the development sector every year and the expenditure on various welfare projects and on-going national infrastructure projects will also go up. Self Reliance: Gradual attainment of self-reliance is our aim by raising the ratio of domestic resources in the allocation of development expenditure. We have to restructure the taxation system and increase the realization of revenue through improvement of administrative machinery and do away with subsidies. We also need better management of commercial and other industries. Development Planning: In the last three years political stability, improvement of administrative machinery, increased production, appropriate utilization capacity, proper project implementation and promotion of export have helped in attaining a satisfactory growth of economy. We have adopted a short term Two-year plan (1978-80) and the implementation of Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) has been undertaken as a part of 20-year perspective plan keeping the guiding principles of 19-point programme. Rural Uplift: Above all an all- out effort will be made under the plan for all encompassing development in the rural areas and participation of the people will be ensured in the development activities. In this context introduction of village based organization is to be developed. Population Problem: Already population problem has been identified as the number one national problem. The family planning programme will be further strengthened and the rural health and

social welfare measures will be reorganized. Agriculture: We all know that agriculture is the back-bone of Bangladesh economy and as such this sector must be given due importance for making the economic development efforts meaningful. The government has taken every effort to double the food production for our survival. We have to change the conventional system and turn it into scientific method for producing more and more. At the same time we have to increase fish production and establish the factories of animal husbandry in all parts of the country. Textile: Its place is next to food. The aim of this government is to make the country self sufficient in cotton production and for this a full-fledged separate textile ministry and handloom board have been formed in 1977. Health care: We want to give more importance on preventive measures than curative treatments. We want to establish health centres in the rural areas and provide training to village doctors and ensure minimum retail price for medicines. Thana health complexes are being implemented very swiftly. In the next five-year plan health sub-centres at the union level and family welfare centres will be completed. Realistic Education System: Education is the basic element for people's economic, political, social and cultural growth. Allocation in education has been made nearly double and primary education is made universal by nationalizing 36,000 primary schools. The development projects for secondary and higher secondary education are being implemented now. The government in 1978 established a national education council with a view to bringing about a change in the education system suitable to the time. Science and Technology: During the last three years many fruitful research were conducted by Atomic Energy Commission and other bodies for development of high yielding jute and rice and advancement in science and technological sectors. We have also started a survey on the manpower engaged in scientific institutions for exploiting their skills properly. Development in other related sectors: Our government places particular importance on the appropriate investment policy, export promotion, jute output, natural resources, flood control, electrification, post offices, telecommunications, freedom of press, works programme, manpower, welfare funds, and the like. For implementing the various development

schemes what we need is capable leadership and organizer at every level to infuse inspiration in the minds of the people and their effective participation in the overall development of the Bangladeshi nation.⁵⁰

It can be mentioned that the tenure of the Second Jatiya Sangsad was 206 days and during this time this parliament held a total eight sessions with transaction of significant legislative activities. During the parliamentary jobs and deliberations there were effective participation of parliamentarians belonging to both the treasury and opposition benches. The members of parliament duly used the legislative mechanisms of question hour, adjournment motion, calling attention notices to matters of urgent notices, half-an-hour discussion, privileges and the like to effectively scrutinize executive activities for making the government responsible to the people's elected representatives. In the process of using legislative hours the notices that were tabled for discussion included: Indo-Bangla dispute over Farakka barrage; self-reliant pilot schemes; educational development, distribution of government plots; construction of health centres; food situation, flood control, infrastructure building, Chittagong Hill Tract condition, monetary policy, Bangladesh's security related issues etc. The members of the legislature had been seen eager to raise their constituency related development problems in the House and they also brought to the notice of the executive certain other important matters involving the nation's economy, political development, social affairs, industrialization, development projects and foreign relations.

During its tenure, the Second Parliament of Bangladesh functioned effectively and from the start there was initiative to strengthen the legislative scrutiny of the bills and examination of the performances of executive departments. As such the committee system was developed in a democratic manner

through the establishment of thirty departmental committees. The financial committees including the Public accounts Committee, Estimate Committee and Public Undertaking Committee were active as watchdog of the Parliament. The Public Accounts Committee's performance had been proactive. While the Public Undertaking Committee in the First Parliament never met, a great improvement took place with regard to its functioning in the Second Parliament. It is worth mentioning that the departmental committees were created for the first time by the Second Jatiya Sangsad during Shaheed President Zia's rule. The Rules of Procedures had been prepared by the country's First Parliament with a provision of setting up departmental committees but no attempt was made in this regard during 1973 to 1975. As noted earlier, in the Second Parliament, there was sizeable number of opposition parliamentarians and Shaheed Zia's government was willing to accommodate the opposition in the country's governance process. As such, elaborate scheme was developed regarding parliamentary procedures by the Second Jatiya Sangsad. The Sangsad thus made significant modification in the Rules of Procedures outlining that technocrat ministers would be not allowed to chair different departmental committees. Ahmed mentioned that the departmental committees in the Second Parliament 'were extremely active in scrutinizing the legislative proposals of the government. To be specific, of all the bills introduced in the Second Jatiya Sangsad, 44% were referred to various department committees. Nearly one-half of them were subsequently reported back to the House after scrutiny. Many committees only took a few days to report to the Jatiya Sangsad.'⁵¹

It can be said that the legislative transactions in the Second Jatiya Sangsad had been greatly fruitful for democratic consolidation. As observed, the legislature during its tenure

enacted 65 laws along with a consideration of more than seven thousand starred questions, more than eight hundred unstarred questions, 35 short notice questions, 52 adjournment motions, 133 notices of calling attention to matters of urgent public importance, 13 notices on discussion on matters of urgent public importance, and 6 notices on half-an-hour discussion. These statistics and legislative deliberations go a long way to register the significance of the Jatiya Sangsad during Shaheed President Zia's rule as an effective platform and capable institution to ensure parliamentary sovereignty, executive accountability and proper governance.

So far positive consequences of constitutional changes and reforms in the political institutions made by Shaheed President Zia have analyzed. In all his governmental, political and administrative efforts Shaheed Zia tried to popularize the concepts of national development and economic self-sufficiency. During his golden rule there had been no instances of any severe flood or drought in the country. It was under his administration the country's economy was stable. There was gradual increase of annual growth rate in per capita income. Government statistics showed 'an increase in GDP at an average growth rate of 4 per cent as against an estimated 5.5 per cent, while the Awami League government achieved only 2.5 per cent.'⁵² Similar success was also observed in the sector of agricultural production. Compared to 1974, food production during 1975-1976 increased by fourteen per cent and also the price of food items began to fall. There was bumper production of 'aus' and 'aman' paddy and consequent coming down of the price of rice.⁵³ These achievements of the government of Shaheed President Zia had a direct positive bearing on the country's society and politics. In order to have an in-depth examination of these aspects let us turn focus on other significant reform measures and innovative actions initiated by him.

Rural development and Local Governance

In the post colonial period, rural development and local upliftment issues have acquired great significance in the countries of the developing world. During the colonial era the huge population living in the countryside of these nations had been neglected by exploitative policies pursued by the colonists. In the post independence period a policy of urban bias continued to be observed in many of these countries. As such the urban places flourished at the expense of the rural areas and impoverishment of the poor was very much visible. These countries including Bangladesh at different times have initiated various rural development programmes but in most instances those did not bring about fruitful results. Mehta pointed out that 'the built- in social, structural, psychological, cultural and economic impediments in the social systems of these nations have proved to be major hurdles to the development of the rural populations, besides the lack of appropriate technology, inadequate trained personnel and regional and international imbalances.'⁵⁴ In Bangladesh the past initiatives, as observed, only benefited the richer sections and influential segments of rural society. Consequently, it had not been possible for the successive governments to reach the disadvantaged rural poor by passing the rural rich. A close examination of the previous rural development attempts reveal that among others the lack of effective institutional infrastructure and the non-participation of the national political leaders had been largely responsible to make the programmes with out any success. Much vaunted Comilla model and its replication through the Integrated Rural Development Programme all over the country proved illusory with virtually no attempt to protect the majority rural poor. One major reason for such frustrating performance had been

the lack of appropriate implementation structure. Until the time of Shaheed President Zia the country lacked proper planning to develop effective mechanism in the sector of development administration and launch mass oriented rural development programmes.

During the rule of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman the country's administrative structure had been properly organized. Because of the needful administrative system, during 1975-1976, the revenue income of the government went up to 1000 crore Taka while the figure had been 680 crore Taka during 1974-1975. The erstwhile Awami League administration could not do much headway in this respect owing to multifarious crises; to mention some of them were, large-scale political instability, factionalism in the major social forces, natural disasters, price spiral of essentials, non-availability of timely aid from the donors, massive corruption and the like. On the contrary the government of Shaheed President Zia from the start had been able to arrest to a great extent the above menaces and mitigate constraints that stand in the way of effective governance. Shaheed Zia while chalking out the details of rural development kept in mind the following classified approaches: rural development measures must be organized around activities and services that have well defined methodologies and objectives; rural development measures must be geared to utilize the relatively unskilled human resources that are available in the rural areas; and the effective implementation of rural development programmes is largely dependent upon the development of the institutional capacity to mobilize the limited economic resources in rural communities. It was a matter of realization on the part of Shaheed President Zia that rural people in their habitat are close to nature and there is a need to release the potential of these people by creating skills and appropriate knowledge so

that they can exploit their environment and can expand their resources for the better quality of their lives. With proper policy programmes as laid down in the 19-Point Shaheed Zia thus moved ahead to deal with the development issues of the country. The main objective of had been to achieve self-sufficiency.

Swanirvar programme: Building of a swanirvar or self-sufficient Bangladesh was the dream of Shaheed President Zia. Although the concept was not totally a new one in the country, it obtained a special significance at the time of Shaheed Zia. The programme particularly aimed at establishing self-reliant Bangladesh by ensuring self-sufficiency at the family, union, thana, sub-division, and district levels.⁵⁵ However, considering the internal resource constraints, its immediate goal was to achieve self-sufficiency in food as soon as possible.⁵⁶ In order to formulate the organizational structure of the swanirvar programme, self-reliant associations called swanirvar samities were constructed at the village, union, thana, sub-division, district, and national levels. The national samity was the apex body of swanirvar Bangladesh. At the village level, swanirvar samity was formed consisting of the representatives from various professions like peasants, landless workers, weavers, fishermen etc. The objective was to involve all sections of rural society in a newly founded community organization.⁵⁷ In 1976 Swanirvar samities were formed in 630 villages and at least one village was declared as self-sufficient in each thana. In 1977 intense self-reliant programme was introduced in 32 thanas of five districts dispersed over the then twenty districts. Four thousand villages were thus declared as self-sufficient by the government that had been an unprecedented phenomenon in the country.⁵⁸

In each self-sufficient village, the swanirvar samity was the

executive body but the *Gram Shava* consisting of all the adult village members was vested with ultimate power.⁵⁹ The activities of each village began with a socio-economic survey and on the basis of this survey its development planning was formulated for approval of the *Gram Shava*. As per rule, village based planning was coordinated at the union level and union plans in turn at the thana level. In this manner, thana and Zila development plans were coordinated at the zila and national levels respectively. Such bottom-up national planning had been the philosophy of development of Shaheed Zia and that was accepted by the national institutions like the Planning Commission.⁶⁰ The swanirvar workers conducted surveys in a number of villages and prepared plans. As observed, the progress of rural development activities in the swanirvar villages was balanced with a comprehensive guideline for the future course of action. In support of this statement findings of various evaluation reports can be furnished in the following lines.

Different research organizations like National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Bogra Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Village Education Resource Center (VERC), and Proshika conducted evaluations of the swanirvar villages. Their findings were: In most places the villagers obtained great benefits from self-reliant programme. For instance, unlike the past, the programme contributed to the creation of new type of organization specifically for the village people.⁶¹ In a number of villages new crops like wheat were produced and the village people were also encouraged to implement social forestry programmes. These success stories of the swanirvar programme had been possible owing to great labour given by

the concerned swanirvar structures and the village people. As per the guidance of the central leadership the members of the government bureaucracy, Union Parishad chairmen and members, and the autonomous bodies also extended necessary support and worked for the programme.⁶² The programme therefore involved a cross section of people⁶³ irrespective of their class, position, status, profession and residence.⁶⁴ Needless to mention that development programmes in countries like Bangladesh can only be made successful once such activities have great backing and active involvement of charismatic leader like Shaheed President Zia and engagement of a bunch of experienced organizers or people-oriented public officials.⁶⁵ The above surveys revealed that with a few exceptions most of the rural residents were the real beneficiaries and improved their conditions by actively taking part in the projects.⁶⁶ It was thus no wonder that mass involvement in the planning and implementing process had been made possible in the swanirvar programme initiated by Shaheed Zia.⁶⁷ As noticed, there was increase of agricultural production in a number of swanirvar villages including expansion of income generating activities like tree plantation,⁶⁸ fishery and poultry,⁶⁹ etc. All these contributed to ameliorate the general living standard of the poor⁷⁰ including the landless peasants and labourers.⁷¹ These vulnerable groups were found enthusiastic to participate in the income generating activities and offered their voluntary labour to implement the swanirvar project.⁷²

The largest project under the swanirvar programme was the Ulashi Jadunathpur canal digging project commonly known as Ulashi Project. Studies made on this much known project echoed similar findings of the above surveys.⁷³ Under this project, a lengthy canal of 2.65 miles was constructed by digging 16.6 million cubic feet soil. This canal provided

sanitation and irrigation facilities to 18000 acre of waterlogged lands.⁷⁴ Ulashi Project began on November 1, 1976 and was completed as per schedule on April 22, 1977.

At the inauguration ceremony of the Ulashi Project a large number of voluntary labourers was present. 4000 workers consisting of peasants, students and government employees and 10,000 stand by labourers participated in the canal digging.⁷⁵ Due to spontaneity and large scale participation from the mass of the peasantry and the above groups the project had been completed in time. Moreover there was active involvement of the government departments both at the local and national level in the project. Shaheed President Zia himself gave Ulashi Project a special priority⁷⁶ with his emphasis on its timely implementation and completion. From November 1, 1976 till April 30, 1977, the total number of working days had been 150 and besides the active participation of the local people, one deputy commissioner, 3 additional deputy commissioners, and 1 sub-divisional officer spent 145 days for its implementation.⁷⁷ The members of the armed forces, police and ansar also contributed a certain percentage of the work.⁷⁸ Such a project was first of its kind in this country where the white-collar members of the central bureaucracy had to go the grass roots in support of the need of the poor and materialize the project.⁷⁹ It was beyond doubt that production satisfactorily multiplied as a result of Ulashi Project and the consciousness of the common masses was vitalized to a considerable extent.⁸⁰

Scholars noted that the swanirvar movement as introduced by Shaheed Zia laid the ground work for developing village-based organizations with an emphasis on formulating village development plans and their successful implementation through local participation after a survey of available of resources. According to an estimate, swanirvar

villages were classified based on their accomplishments. Those villages achieving excellent results were grouped in category-A, while the other villages performing fairly well were placed in category-B. It was mentioned that in most successful villages, the average income increased by about thirty seven per cent, food production improved, the literacy rate went up, and population growth and crime rate showed a declining trend.⁸¹ 'The sponsors were drawing attention of the country to the most successful villages where the village resources had been surveyed, interest groups and functional groups had been organized, village disputes had been settled locally, the rate of literacy had gone up, the number of social workers had increased and planned development of the village had been encouraged.'⁸² There had been a cordial working relations between the organizers of the swanirvar programmes and the central government and even President Zia agreed to chair the National Swanirvar Bangladesh Committee during 1979. In July of the same year he visited Naldanga union of Rangpur district and declared that in thousands of villages of the country the swanirvar movements were successful and offered the willingness of his government to do the needful for implementing the programme. While reiterating his government's undertaking a huge plan for making the rural areas self-sufficient, Shaheed Zia mentioned that time had come to imitate the example of the successful swanirvar villages by rest of the country.⁸³

The success of the Ulashi Project illustrated the importance of the canal- digging programme initiated by Shaheed President Zia. The usefulness of canals for the purpose of irrigation was thus given priority since the country has vast water resources but no attempt so far had been there for proper use of this resource through scientific planning. One cause of deficiency in food was the absence of any mechanism

for proper use of water resource and the country suffered from recurring floods leaving destructive imprints on the landscape. After the government's embarking upon the canal digging programme, during the first phase, 193 canals stretching to 675.18 miles were excavated or re-excavated and during 1980-1981, about 1,800 miles of canals had been dug that brought sixteen lakh acres of new lands under the scheme of irrigation. In course of implementation of the canal- digging programme, thousand miles of roads had been constructed exploiting more than million man- hours.⁸⁴ While launching the national programme for doubling the food production through nation wide canal-digging, Shaheed President Zia expressed that the nation must achieve self- sufficiency in food through the revolution with spades in utilizing the water resources in the country. The country could not only be self-sufficient in food with doubling the production but it could earn crores of Taka in foreign exchange by exporting food grains. He remarked that only foreign aid will not develop our country unless we work hard for improving the lot of our people. Who-ever will not participate in the programme will be rejected by the people. We want to practice that type of politics which will feed and clothe our entire population, provide shelter, ensure education and medical facilities to all. Through the national programme of canal digging a work-oriented leadership particularly of youth would grow in the rural areas and they would act as sincere and honest cadres of the on-going revolution initiated by the government.⁸⁵

Gram Sarkar: The above mentioned swanirvar movement was organized by the government of Shaheed President Zia in such a manner that it could act as a guide to reforms in the local government sector. Since the rural economy of the country called for rapid development, Shaheed Zia was in

favour of involving the rural populace in this massive task. Huque⁸⁶ mentioned that the concept of village government and the nomenclature of gram sarkar was first used in 1977 after Shaheed Zia's coming to power.

In the village called Pashchim Sultanpur under the district of Chittagong, its swanirvar committee was turned into gram sarkar where the swanirvar workers as ministers of the village government had been given the portfolios of agriculture, education, cooperatives, health and family planning etc., for implementing the development projects. This became an imitative example and soon adopted in the adjacent Rangunia Union with distribution of similar portfolios among the members of the union parishad who in turn formed their own rural government in the respective villages maintaining linkages with the unions. In order to give the swanirvar programme a momentum, the government decided to establish a nation-wide system of swanirvar gram sarkars and in June 1980 an Act of the Second Jatiya Sangsad was enacted. Subsequently, *The Bangladesh Gazette (Extraordinary)* containing the Swanirvar Gram Sarkars (Constitution and Administration) Rules, 1980 had been published by the concerned authority. The rules spelt out the *modus operandi* of the formation of gram sarkar in each of the Bangladesh's 68,000 villages. After necessary preparations the *gram shava* comprising all the voters of the village took decision regarding gram sarkars and thus the members of village government were chosen by the rural residents in a meeting on the basis of consensus. The *gram shava* was in charge of selecting a *Gram Pradhan* and 11 other members including two women members. The selection was made in such a manner to ensure the representation of all rural people belonging to different occupational or functional groups. Thus two members would come from the landless classes, two would be women, two

from the land-owning classes, two from the business community, and two from the fishermen and artisan classes. The Circle Officer had the responsibility of declaring a rural place as a village and keeping the record of consensus decision regarding the selection of Gram Sarkar. It was designed that once organized the gram sarkars would be elected by the residents of the villages. The objective was to encourage the development of local leadership with some administrative and judicial authority and maintain constant relationship with the grass roots. Such a mechanism would contribute to effective translation of the decentralization scheme of the government. The above rules specified the following qualifications of the office bearers of the Gram Sarkar: be a citizen of Bangladesh; have attained the age of 25 years; be listed on the electoral roll of village; be a permanent resident of the village; and not be a sitting union parishad member or chairman. The government of the village people elected on a consensus basis was entrusted with the job of increasing food production, mass literacy, population control and family planning, law and order, settling local disputes and such functions as it considers necessary for overall development of the village.⁸⁷ It was also stipulated in the rules that 'save and otherwise provided in these rules or in any direction issued thereunder, the executive powers of a Swanirvar Gram Sarkar shall vest in and be exercised by its *Gram Pradhan*' and the source of finance of the gram sarkars will be the individuals' contributions, financial assistance from any local authority or organization including the *Gram Samabaya Samities* and similar income coming from other legitimate means.⁸⁸ There were provisions for establishing full-fledged *Gram Sarkar* offices where the meetings would be held as convened by the *Gram Pradhan*. The *Gram Shava* would be in charge of reviewing the overall activity of the gram sarkar and would meet every three

months. For properly performing their functions a Swanirvar Gram Sarkar Manual had been provided by the government that specified the details of the responsibilities of Gram Sarkar members. While the *Gram Pradhan* will deal with the subjects of finance, planning and coordination, the member-secretary will perform office management and religious jobs and the rest of the members will look after law and order, security, food and agriculture, fisheries and livestock, cooperatives, works, communication, education, youth, culture, cottage industries, health and family planning, and women issues. The Gram Sarkar Manual emphasized on the financial responsibilities and gave proper guidelines for managing of funds and preparing budget, and keeping audits and accounts. Huque noted that the government's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development identified food deficiency, illiteracy, improper family planning, poor law and order and weak cooperative system as the major hurdles in the process of achieving national development and asked the Gram Sarkars to arrest these problems through appropriate means and actions.⁸⁹ Moreover, a Swanirvar Gram Sarkar Training Guide containing detail subjects to be imparted to the members through training had been published by the National Institute of Local Government (NILG).⁹⁰

In order to carry- out the gram sarkar programme, Shaheed President Zia travelled all over the country and addressed huge gatherings at union, thana, and district head quarters. *The Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that Shaheed Zia was 'serious about creating a new power structure from the grass roots level and by installing union-level development coordinators and district level coordinators higher up'.⁹¹ It was pointed out by the government that once the rural development activities are administered by the locally based bodies, the mass participation would be

guaranteed through reaping the benefits of decentralization. Huque mentioned that 'all previous attempts at reforming local institution in Bangladesh had, somehow, stopped prior to reaching the villages; this was the first time that genuine village-based institutions were established. The government recognized that previously the people's representation in planning and decision-making through elected bodies had been practically non-existent.'⁹² While commenting on the Gram Sarkar institution American political anthropologist Harry Blair mentioned that such institution had been very essential for a resource poor country like Bangladesh. He admitted that 'the recognition of the different interest groups that make up village society and their inclusion within a structure of governance as a major advancement in the history of local government on the sub-continent. The poor rural majority had the opportunity to voice their demands.' Blair also realized that 'initially the poor villagers could probably be intimidated and dominated by the rural elite. But over the longer term, after a higher level of literacy and consciousness had been achieved, the mechanism could be used to serve the interest of the poor.'⁹³

Local Self-Government: Shaheed President Zia made necessary efforts to create viable local self-government so that local democracy could take firm roots among the villagers. The objective had been distribution of activities on a territorial basis facilitating use of knowledge of local situation in solving local problems and difficulties, speed up the decision-making system, better delivery system, and effective coordination among the different units working for overall local development. It was planned so that the mechanism could inculcate political education and increase the faculty of knowledge of the local citizens; develop effective local

leadership, two-way linkage between the organizers and the recipients, diversification of economic performance, and mass involvement in local affairs. In independent Bangladesh, it was during the rule of Shaheed President Zia that a systemic approach in local self-government sector had been observed for the first time. The attempts of the previous government in this respect had only been peace-meal with a general negligence on the part of central leadership. As a consequence, the local bodies were languishing with hardly any positive efforts towards rural development. With above objectives Shaheed Zia took a major step and promulgated in 1976 Local Government Ordinance and accordingly a three- tier local self-government system had been developed namely, Union Parishad at the union level, Thana Parishad at thana level, and Zila Parishad at district level.

Of the three tiers, the Union Parishad had been made truly representative entrusted with overall development activities and responsibilities of the union while the other two, Thana and Zila parishads, were a mixture of representative and official members dealing with the functions of coordination and infra-structural development respectively. With tenure of five years the Union Parishad consisted of a chairman elected by the people of the whole union on the basis of universal adult franchise, while the other nine members of the parishad were elected by the voters of the concerned wards. The 1976 Ordinance abolished the post of vice-president of the Union Parishad and made provision for two women members nominated by the prescribed authority from among the women of the union. Later, by an amendment of the Local Government Ordinance, 1976 in February 1979, a provision was made for nomination of two peasant members. 'The peasant members were to be genuine cultivators, owning at least one standard bigha of cultivable land and residing

permanently in the concerned union.'⁹⁴

The Union Parishad was given multifarious functions as many as forty. Most notable had been public welfare, revenue collection, development, adjudication, maintenance of law and order and the like. The Union Parishad could thus undertake not only civic functions but also responsibilities relating to rural police, revenue, general administration, and community development that had indeed been a significant departure from the past legislations on local governance. The Local Government Ordinance of 1976 made some important rearrangements with regard to local financing pattern. Siddique noted that every local government institution was empowered by the central legislation to have a local fund of its own to be constituted in the following ways: the proceeds of all taxes, rates, tolls, fees and other charges that the local parishad could impose; all rents and profits payable to the local parishads from the property vested in or managed by the parishads; the sums that the local parishads received in performing its prescribed responsibilities; all sums contributed by individuals, institutions, or by any local authority; the sums that the local parishads received from trusts managed by them; all grants made by the government and other authorities; profits obtained by investing parishad funds; and any fund or income placed at the disposal of the parishads by the government order. The financial sources of the Union Parishad were generated from taxes, fees, and grants from the government. Under the above ordinance the Union Parishad could levy taxes on twenty- eight items and of them the following were the common: tax on annual value of immovable property like land or permanent structures; rate for remuneration of the village police; tax on professions, trades and callings; tax on *jatra*, theater shows, and other amusements; and licence fee on vehicles including carts,

bicycles, and all kinds of boats.⁹⁵

In 1976 the government repealed the Council Courts Ordinance and constituted village courts in all the unions to settle minor disputes of criminal and civil nature. As such besides the above mentioned responsibilities the Union Parishad also performed judicial function under the Village Courts Ordinance (VCO) of 1976. Siddique mentioned that the village courts consisted of the union parishad chairman, two members of the union parishad, and two other members representing the two parties to the dispute. 'The court had the power to try petty cases, both civil and criminal. It could not pass sentence of imprisonment but it could impose fines not exceeding five thousand Taka. The idea was to provide quick and cheap justice to the rural people through the village courts'.⁹⁶

Like other rural based institutions Shaheed President Zia wanted to see Union Parishad as a capable body to implement development projects made through proper planning with local inputs. In the past there was the practice of unrealistic exercise of top-down planning approach which only created a gap between the elites and the masses with no positive change in rural lives. At the time of Shaheed Zia it was felt that the basic prerequisite of successful planning at the grass roots level 'is a mechanism through which participation of the people in general, rural poor and disadvantaged in particular, in the development process may be ensured so that they are not only mute beneficiaries but also involved in identifying planning and implementing development projects and programmes.' During Shaheed Zia's rule the Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) of the country made explicit reference to local level planning and put emphasis on the need for local development through appropriate mechanisms.⁹⁷ The focus had been on project preparation within sectoral programmes

for proper implementation of the targets as envisaged in the plans. The idea was to delegate autonomy to the Union Parishad as one important unit of local planning.

At the same time concrete measures were taken to restore law and order and security of rural people. As such another rural institution called the Village Defence Party or VDP was organized by the government in 1976 in each village of Bangladesh under the control and supervision of the Home Ministry. The VDP in each village consisted of up to 150 members with one controlling officer and was given the prime responsibility of maintaining law and order in the rural areas. Alongside the other bodies the VDP took part in national development programmes like family planning, adult education, road construction, canal digging and infrastructure building. Hossain noted that 'VDP used to patrol the villages at night by rotation. It was entrusted with the responsibility of exposing undesirable and corrupt elements in rural institutions.'⁹⁸ In order to perform their duties properly, the members of the VDP were given training on 'village defence techniques and development strategies. It was supposed to act as a strong force for defence purposes of the rural areas.'⁹⁹

Development of Cooperatives: One important agenda that was included in Shaheed President Zia's development reforms had been the building of cooperatives at the local levels. He believed that the solution of socio-economic problems of the community could not be handled singly and that must be addressed through collective endeavour. One significant precondition for improving the standard of living of the masses, as identified, was the use and employment of people's economic power through a viable cooperative system. In countries like Bangladesh that overwhelmingly depend on

agriculture, the concept of cooperative organization can bring about substantial increase of agricultural production and development of cottage industries. Such approach based on collective working can contribute to bring dynamism in the process of economic recovery involving all rural segments. With this objective President Zia strengthened the two-tier cooperative structure under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) namely, Krishak Samabaya Samity (KSS) at the village level and Thana Central Cooperative Association or TCCA at the Thana level. Earlier the cooperatives had functioned mainly as credit societies but TCCA/KSS system as strengthened under Zia rule, assumed a much broader role for the purpose of rural progress and thus the structure was able to increase its efficiency to a considerable extent to achieve desired goals. The following table shows the target and achievement of the programme during 1977-78.

Table 6

Item	Target for 1977-78	Achievement during 1977-78	Total achievement, cumulative
1. TCCA Formation (No.)	50	50	150
2. KSS Formation (NO.)	4,500	3,458	26,955
3. Member Enrolment (No.)	1,00,000	1,03,580	8,21,274
4. Capital Formation (Lac.TK)	85.00	89.15	521.30
5. Loan Issued (Lac.Tk)	1,175.00	992.15	3,717.84
6. Loan Realization (Lac.TK)	815.00	617.92	2,507.13
7. Training of personnel (No)	26,780	21,173	51,604
8. Construction of TCCA Buildings (No.)	16	6	131

Source: *Economic Review 1977-78*, Planning Commission, Feb. 1979, p.103

The members of the above societies had been provided with necessary agricultural inputs, credits and other extension services for the purpose of increasing production. In addition to this the IRDP undertook a programme for construction of workshop-cum-training centre to produce and repair agricultural implements. During 1976-76 two such workshops had been completed and construction of go-down and storage buildings had been started in a number of Thanas. By 1980,

642 TCCAs in more than 300 Thanas were established and till June of the same year about 39,619 KSSs had been formed. The total membership of the KSSs was 12,96,481.

Side by side the cooperative movement was further extended through the formation of supplementary bodies like Shirsha (Apex) Samabaya Samity, Kendriya (central) samabaya Samity, and Prathomik (primary) Samabaya Samity. Until 1980 the total number of primary societies was 83,497 and the share of the above three samities had been 3,05,08,196 Taka, 6,83,05,876 Taka, and 11,40,111 Taka respectively. The reserve fund of the above samities amounted to 6,23,52,687 Taka, 4,21,43,822 Taka, and 3,72,01,371 Taka respectively. Moreover, the societies received considerable amount of credit to implement their proposed actions. The apex samities included the bodies like Bangladesh Cooperative Bank, Bangladesh Shilpo Samity, Bangladesh Palli Unnayan Federation etc. Central samities were Central Cooperative Bank, Central Shilpa Samity, Central Matsajibi Samity etc. and the primary samities included Primary Multi-purpose Cooperative Samity, Matsajibi Samity etc. In order to be effective, necessary training programmes were also arranged for these samities and by June 1980, about 161 building had been constructed for the purpose. In 1978 the construction of headquarter building namely Palli Bhaban, was undertaken in Dhaka city and in the same year 33 warehouses were ready for storing and marketing the agricultural products of the samities.¹⁰⁰

The cooperatives under the IRDP made systematic mobilization aiming at developing the farming capability of the small and marginal farmers. The TCCA/KSS had been engaged in increasing production and stimulating productivity. Each TCCA was required to assist the farmers through primary cooperatives. Thana Training and

Development Center provided training in new technology and measures were taken to develop physical infrastructure. In order to modernize agriculture, a host of other supports in the form of training, irrigation equipments, credits, pesticides, and fertilizers were also provided. There had been simultaneous efforts to popularize the new agricultural inputs including High Yield Varieties (HYV) that inspired the farmers and in this way the cooperatives played a significant role in increasing food production and achieving food autarky during the time of President Zia. Since the cooperatives were instrumental in building up the country's rural economy, the integrated rural development programme was further expanded and in order to further strengthen the on going cooperative movement the government of Shaheed Zia took up numerous development projects all over Bangladesh.

It was commented by the analysts that 'President Zia, far from confining himself in to politicking in the capital city, pioneered what was called 'politics of production' outside the cosy drawing room debates into the wide expanse of fields among the teeming millions at the grass roots level. It was a familiar scene to see him undertaking frequent arduous tours in to the remotest corners of 55,000 square miles of agrarian Bangladesh. He traveled by helicopter, trains, jeeps, and every other means of transport and also walked on foot miles after miles under the blazing tropical sun or drizzling monsoon rains to reach the otherwise inaccessible areas and inspire the peasants with his down-to-earth programme of boosting production in fields. He launched the countrywide digging of irrigation canals which, like arteries flowing blood in human body, were vital for supplying waters for production of crops round the year. He never cared for security and protocol nor had the status consciousness when he joined the toiling masses in digging basketful of earth himself to create the lifeline of canals. He addressed vast public meetings, wayside

gatherings and even talked across his ideas in individual or group dialogues to inspire the people for self-reliant programmes in every nook and corner of the country.¹⁰¹

Rural Works Programme: The purpose of the Rural Works Programme or RWP was to channel the efforts of the rural residents for physical infra-structural development of rural Bangladesh and to generate employment opportunities through development activities. It was 'outstanding venture in grass roots planning and mobilization of energies of the people for projects of local importance.' The prime motive of this programme had been 'to use employed man power to work in labour intensive projects of development of rural physical infra-structure.' In such projects the Union, Thana, and Zila parishads identified their priorities and prepared necessary projects with the assistance and technical guidance from the government officials working at the local levels. During 1977-1978 RWP was under execution all over the country and the activities conducted during that period had been i) construction and improvement of village roads, irrigation and drainage channel, sluice gates, bridges, and culverts, embankments, II) reclamation and development derelict tanks for fish culture, III) construction of Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC), IV) construction of Workshops and Go-downs for pump and tubewell and financing of the cost of training of model farmers, irrigation group managers, etc., V) development of the physical conditions of government owned rural hats and bazars, and VI) improvement of the flood shelters from temporary to semi-permanent structures.' In order to implement these activities more than Taka 1526.00 Lakh had been earmarked. Progress of physical work under different components of RWP up to March 1977-78 can be seen from the following table. Much of the target had been achieved by end of the year.

Table 7

Progress of physical work under various components of Rural Works Programme in 1977-78 up to March against the total target of the whole year :

Item of work 1	Target for 1977-78 2	Achievement up to March 1978	
		Total 3	Percentage against target 4
1. Construction/ improvement of new and old kutchra road.	1,230 miles	984 miles	80.0
2. Construction/ improvement of new and old pucca roads.	49 miles	32miles	65.3
3. Construction/ improvement of new and old bridges and culverts.	6,600 rft.	4,290 rft.	65.0
4. Construction/ improvement of new and embankments.	120 Nos.	97 Nos.	80.8
5. Excavation/re-excavation of new and old irrigation and drainage channel		Many new and old irrigation and drainage channels were excavated/ re-excavated.	
6. Construction of TTDC	45	30	66.6
7. Construction of TIP workshops and godowns.	95 Nos.	62 Nos.	65.3
8. Farmers training	1000 Nos.	500 Nos.	50.0
9. Improvement of flood shelters	Ist phase of improvement of 100 Nos.	65 Nos.	65.0
10. Reclamation and development of derelict tanks.	1,200 bighas of water area	60% of work has been completed	60.0
11. Development of Government rural hats and bazars.	190 Nos.	40% of work taken up has been completed	40.0

Source : Planning Commission, 1979.

Similar to RWP, urban works programme had also been carried out by the government of Shaheed President Zia to develop physical infrastructure and modern amenities including roads, bridges, parks, play grounds, community centres in various urban places. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives sponsored this programme and had been executed by the municipalities.

Youth Development: During Shaheed Zia's rule another of his institutional innovations had been the National Youth Convention. In 1978, the Ministry of Youth Development was created followed by the holding of above convention. The major tasks that had been allocated to the Ministry included the following: matters relating to youth welfare and training, organization of the youth clubs, associations; recreation facilities; mobilization of the young people for voluntary participation in development works; coordination of youth services; administration of grants-in-aid; youth hostels and awards; programme to encourage confidence-building among the youth; research and study on youth affairs; creation of employment opportunities; liaison with international organizations on youth advancement schemes; and prepare statistics on any of the subjects allocated to the Ministry.¹⁰²

The youth development scheme was designed after considering the country's demographic situation. At the end of 1970s, at least 65 per cent of the population was under the age of 25.¹⁰³ It is known from the statistics of 1978 that during this time more than 22 per cent of the total population belonged to an age group between 15 to 25 years.¹⁰⁴ A great portion of this age group had been rural and urban unemployed youths. Youth Development Programme was therefore launched under state sponsorship with an objective of mobilizing the country's young generation by involving them in activities of

national progress.¹⁰⁵ Shaheed President Zia's strategy was to exploit the power of the youth and by engaging them in various socio-economic projects and community development, he wanted to further strengthen the nation building efforts. In mid February 1977, the first national youth convention was organized with gracious presence of President Zia who in his address called upon the young generation to join the patriotic forces in the immense task of national development. In the middle of June 1979, the President gave direction for training of the young people in four areas initially. Those had been: training of 1200 youths in livestock and poultry farming; training for 10,000 youths in agricultural activities; training for 1200 youths in fishing; and training of 1000 youth in maintenance and repairing of auto-mobiles. Subsequently, national youth services project as a pilot scheme was launched with active support from the government. Shaheed Zia allocated 20 million Taka for youth self-employment and approved an amount of 136.19 lakh Taka in the National Youth Services Pilot Project. After the formation of youth convention, he instructed the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives to materialize the 1316.50 million Taka project specified for youth development purposes. As part of the project, Youth Cooperative Complex was established to activate the unemployed young people and employ their potentialities in human welfare programmes including distribution of goods and services. Function and responsibility of the youth complex were outlined specifically by the concerned authority, so that, they can remain within their jurisdiction. "The complex had some noble ideas such as combating corruption, black marketing, and favouritism and ensuring proper distribution of consumer commodities"¹⁰⁶ As known, in 1979-80 Annual Development Programme, 10 crore Taka had been allocated for youth development purposes.

After the two-year plan period more than 9 crore Taka had been spent for implementing proposed development schemes. At the end of 1979, 13,000 unemployed youths were given training and by 1980, 40,000 youths were trained on agricultural farming.¹⁰⁷ Those youths receiving training on poultry, marine fishing, mobile and electricity had been provided with jobs and rate of their economic success was considerable. The government gradually enlarged its programme on youth and took a number of steps like social and economic projects for the youth, supporting the self-employment ventures, construction of youth hostel in 20 district towns, establishing youth academy, and bringing 800 registered voluntary youth associations under government patronage.¹⁰⁸ One analyst commented that the above initiatives contributed positively towards active participation of the young people in community and national development; the projects gave the youth a sense of pride and their feeling of giving service to the nation was indeed unique and unprecedented.¹⁰⁹

Development of Women: Of the total population of Bangladesh nearly half are women but their marginal presence had all along been observed in the building of the nation. Prior to President Zia no planned development for women had been undertaken by the previous regimes. Shaheed Zia expressed his concern since the women in general remained deprived of all opportunities to participate in constructive economic works excepting doing their traditional household jobs. It was a matter of great disappointment as the country's half portion had not been included in the development process. In the First Five Year Plan (1975-80), no definite role of women in national development was mentioned other than rehabilitating the war- affected women. The government of Shaheed President

Zia recognized the unfortunate peripheral status of women and made an all out effort to improve their condition by providing equal opportunities to them. In fact integration of women in all spheres of national development was on Shaheed Zia's 19-Point programme. A bunch of innovative measures were therefore taken for mainstreaming women. Initially in 1976, a Department of women's affairs was created under the president's secretariat and subsequently in 1978 a separate full-fledged Ministry on Women's Affairs was established marking a significant departure regarding state policies on women. The Ministry was entrusted with the following specific tasks of looking after the well being of the women population: matters relating to women's status, shariat and other legal rights; attending the problems of women; looking after employment opportunities for women; organizing women so they become effective citizens of the country and participate actively in its socio-economic development; motivating women to carry out their responsibilities towards themselves, their families and society at large; and formulating policies on women affairs and taking measures for children welfare to concerned authorities and agencies. During 1978-80 Two-Year Plan period different Women in Development (WID) projects had been taken up thus transforming the women issue into a national issue. Besides this initiative, the government adopted a comprehensive programme of motivating women at all levels. Jatiya Mahila Shangstha was in charge of coordinating the activities of the voluntary agencies and organized vocational training for women. There was also the formation of National Women Development Academy which also supervised the training on non-formal education and other training programmes. As such women were trained in tailoring, sericulture, weaving, poultry etc. Similarly, groups of women

were given training in different vocational skills, and secretarial courses by the Bangladesh Women's Rehabilitation and Welfare Foundation. There were also different women development projects funded by the IDA and the World Bank. The Ministry of Women's Affairs had an advisory service on nutrition and family welfare with the objective of giving advisory services to the trainees and their children. As part of the government's women related projects, during 1980-81, a hostel with 500 seats for career women was constructed in Dhaka city. Side by side feasibility studies concerning women in textile and food processing industries had also been conducted. As known, during the time 79 Thana level cottage-cum-production centres had been functioning in the country.

In addition to the above development initiatives, the government of Shaheed President Zia made decisions to remove the existing discrimination against the women and as such 10 per cent of the vacancies in government and non-government services had been reserved for women. The government also decided to keep the following quota for women in different sectors: all vacancies in primary schools; 50 per cent in secondary schools; one-third of lecturers in government colleges; 50 per cent of the clerks and typists in government and autonomous bodies; all posts of telephone operators and receptionists; 30 per cent seats in the medical colleges; 20 per cent posts of Thana Family Planning Officers; and 20 per cent of junior officers in nationalized industries.¹¹⁰ As part of government policy, women had already been included in all local government institutions, namely 2 seats in Gram Sarkar, 2 seats in Union Parishad, and 5 seats in Dhaka Municipal Corporation. For greater representation of women in the national parliament, women's reserved seats in the Jatiya Sangsad had been increased by the government from 15 to 30. They were also not devoid of contesting in the polls with

men for the general seats in the parliament. Compared to 1973 parliamentary elections the candidacy of women increased in 1979 polls. In the parliamentary by-election two women candidates came out successful. During 1972-75 there were 2 women ministers in the cabinet and the figure rose to 6 during 1976-80. In 1977 Union Parishad elections 4 women had been elected as chairman.¹¹¹ During Shaheed Zia's time metropolitan police force was established where women had been incorporated and a separate women police force was created.

The government of Shaheed President Zia remained conscious regarding oppression against women in the form of dowry demands and to mitigate such social menace a Bill prohibiting dowry was passed in the Jatiya Sangsad in 1980.

Side by side, measures had been taken to develop the children sector and to this end, Shishu Academy was established by the Zia government in 1979. In the same year, Bangladesh Voluntary Children's Welfare Federation was formed comprising 16 children bodies like Mukul Fauz, Chander Hat, Surja Mela, Ful Kuri, Sabuj Mela etc. Shaheed President Zia continuously encouraged the children to build their career as the future citizens of the country and emphasized on extra-curricular activities including recreation and playing. Under his initiative various children welfare programmes had been taken up and children parks were constructed in the capital and other areas of the country.

Mass Literacy: For eliminating the curse of illiteracy from the country, the government of Shaheed President Zia embarked upon a massive education programme all over Bangladesh. Necessary resources were thus mobilized and an extensive programme had been undertaken to make primary education universal. The objective had been to educate ten

million people in each year and bring the rest within a period of five years. While launching the mass literacy programme in February 1980 Shaheed President Zia instructed the printing of ten million books as the first step and distributing those throughout Bangladesh. In this programme, both the government machinery and the party workers had been directed to participate alongside the members of the youth complex, village defence party, union parishad, local teachers, and family planning workers. In order to popularize the programme, mass literacy issue was incorporated in the school syllabi and wide publicity was made through print and electronic media and thus the government successfully propagated to transform the millions of illiterate masses into viable force in national development. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education adopted an emergency education project whose prime objectives were : printing of instruction manuals for the teachers; distributing 90 lakh booklets among the local 'volunteer squads' through sub-divisional officers, Thana Circle Officers, and chairmen of the Union Parishad; arranging training programmes for the education officers and volunteers on mass literacy; introducing a compulsory 50 mark course on mass literacy for the students at secondary and higher secondary levels; establishing mass literacy centres in all educational institutions; and supervising and evaluating the progress of the mass literacy campaign. The objective of the mass literacy programme was not only to sign names but also to prepare the target people with required knowledge to read newspaper, write letters and keep accounts. One statistics show that during February through December 1980, about 1,46,205 education squads remained functional with 3,91,791 instructors and ten million people in 345 Thanas had been brought under the mass literacy programme.¹¹² All attempts were thus employed to remove illiteracy from the country and the 'literacy rate was to be dramatically raised from 24 per cent to 80 per cent by 1985.'¹¹³

Rural Electrification: It was established that the government of Shaheed President Zia had been engaged in ameliorating the overall conditions of the majority of the country's population who live in the rural places. In mid-seventies it was estimated that more than forty per cent of rural agricultural labour force remained unemployed. These represented an average 130 unemployed or under-employed persons person in each of about sixty eight thousand villages of the country. Adequate avenues for employment for these large numbers of unemployed persons would not be possible only through increasing production or employing better agricultural inputs. Therefore in resource poor Bangladesh alternative methods need to be searched to effectively exploit underutilized resources and power that can absorb expanding labour force. While considering this factor President Zia referred to examples of China and Philippines where enough rural employment had been created by means of rural electrification schemes affecting both the productive and social aspects of rural lives there. As such his plan was to expand the distribution of electricity down to the grass roots where rural electricity would not only create enough employment but it would be used as a major source of energy for the purposes of irrigation, rural industrialization, commercial ventures, community services in educational institutions, rural health centres, and domestic use. In order to achieve the above objectives, the government of President Zia established the Rural Electrification Board (REB) on 31st October, 1977 and the Board started its operation in the beginning of 1978. The major functions of this Board were to establish electricity generation, transmission and distribution system in rural areas, ensure effective use of electricity to foster rural development, organize prospective consumers of electricity into formal and informal groups, create rural electric societies, and prompt

utilization of electric power for socio-economic benefits to the rural people. The Board thus organized rural electric societies called the palli bidyut samities or PBSs for supplying electricity in rural Bangladesh. To conduct the rural electrification activities, initially '13 geographical areas of 400-500 sq. miles with 7-10 hundred thousand population were chosen. Each of these areas composed of 3-7 thanas.' Electrification activities had been vested on the PBSs managed by a 10 to 15- member board of directors elected by consumer members of the area.

Since the formation of the Borad and PBSs there was extension of rural electrification and numerous villages were electrified where the wheels of mills and factories and irrigation pumps run by diesel oil had gained momentum by the use of electricity. In 1980, 840 miles of electrical lines had been built at five PBSs and of these 500 miles at Dhaka PBS-1, 130 miles at Comilla PBs-1, 90 miles at Rajshahi PBs-1, 70 miles at Jessore PBS-1, and 50 miles at Pabna PBS-1.¹¹⁴ For the purpose of transmission and distribution several sub-stations were constructed in different part of the country and the areas under the PBSs were energized gradually. For proper implementation of the scheme continuous training had been arranged by the REB and until the end of 1980, 95 training courses and seminars were organized imparting training to 1680 participants including PBS linemen. In addition, more than two thousand house wiring electricians, and 2100 village electricians were trained by the PBSs under REB's guidance.¹¹⁵

In an evaluation study made on the Dhaka PBS-1 it was noticed that compared to non-electrified villages the average cost of irrigation per bigha in the electrified villages was much less; Taka 500 in case of the former and Taka 250 for the latter. There was also a trend of diversification of profession other than agriculture in electrified villages. Besides increase of

paddy the rural electricity positively affected the way of life, security, working hour, leisure, health, and family planning awareness of the villagers. With regard to household income and employment a rising trend was discernible along with a growth of cooperative consciousness.¹¹⁶ Another study conducted on four PBSs of Dhaka-1, Comilla-1, Rajshahi-1 and Pabna-3 tried to assess the effect of rural electrification on the life patterns of the households, business enterprises and farmers. The finding of the study was the following: '91.3% of the electrified household reported decrease in fuel cost; 78.2% household reported increase in working hours; 62.7% reported increase in household income; 81% reported increase in reading habits; 93.7% reported increase in children's study; 92% reported increase in amusement as well as standard of living; and 94.7% reported improvement of security'.¹¹⁷

The Mass Media: During Shaheed President Zia's time freedom of the press as per spirit of the constitution had been ensured. He called upon the journalists and the concerned persons in print and electronic media to contribute their mite in respect of nation building and stressed his faith in the sense of their responsibility and dedication. For proper growth of journalism and freedom of the journalists, the government of Shaheed Zia took significant measures like 'repeal of the undemocratic clauses in the Printing Press and Publications Ordinance, cancellation of the Newspapers Annulment Ordinance of 1975, decision to form a Press Council headed by a Supreme Court judge for the formulation of professional ethics for newspapers and newsmen and their execution, establishment of a Press Institute to enhance the professional efficiency of those engaged in the newspaper industry, and the declaration of Wage Board for journalists'.¹¹⁸ In order to implement the projects for the development of news sector

and radio more than 244 crore Taka had been allocated in the country's Second Five Year Plan.¹¹⁹ As powerful medium of mass communication the net works of both Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television were further expanded; there was installation of 250 KW capacity in Dhaka and construction of national broadcasting house at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital and two other centres in Sylhet and Khulna. Moreover thousands of radio sets were distributed under government auspices at low price for attracting wider audiences. Similarly the television relay stations were set up at Natore, Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur, Mymensingh and Noakhali. On December 1, 1980, President Zia inaugurated the colour television programme in Dhaka where he said that colour transmission opened a new chapter in the history of the progress of our television medium. He stressed that the T.V. should be of multi-cultural, multi-purpose use and attached with the life of the masses, otherwise our entire effort would be meaningless. He thus instructed the TV authority to employ this medium for effective growth of education, art, literature and culture of the nation.¹²⁰

It is noteworthy that like rural development efforts, Shaheed President Zia also endeavoured to promote efficiency of the public servants through administrative reorganization. The goal was to ensure effectiveness of civil bureaucracy suitable for implementing state policies both domestic and foreign affairs and achieve economic development. In the following paragraphs President Zia's initiatives with regard to bureaucracy, economic sphere and foreign relations have been analyzed.

Development of Bureaucracy

As observed after assuming state power Shaheed Zia had been greatly successful in 'bringing back sanity in officialdom. A perfect martinet, he attempted to introduce military-style discipline in the public service. He would frequently and without notice visit government departments/agencies to see for himself if everything was in order. He was meticulous in his attendance to files and detailed in his pursuit to understand an administrative problem'.¹²¹ Once Shaheed Zia had been able to consolidate his authority, he 'embarked on a program to streamline the administrative system. Zia knew how the Mujib regime had failed to make radical changes to the inherited administrative system because of its indifference as well as constraints beyond its control'.¹²² On September 1, 1980, President Zia formally inaugurated the reorganized civil service. The then Establishment Minister, retired Major General Majedul Huq declared that through administrative reorganization the special privileged class had been abolished to ensure uniformity and equality.¹²³ It was also expected that the reform would guarantee effective use of specialization of various cadres and sub-cadres and would expedite the process of economic development. The United civil service as introduced by Shaheed Zia in 1980 had fourteen cadres.¹²⁴ The Bangladesh Secretariat had 29 ministries with more than one division in late November 1975 that had been reduced by Zia 'by either regrouping portfolios or amalgamating divisions. The number of many subordinate public agencies was also decreased'.¹²⁵

In the past, the members of erstwhile Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) were often accused of obtaining special privileges that led to unjustified inequality within the bureaucracy. The complainants were the members of the

former central and provincial service of Pakistan other than CSP. In the post independence period when the provincial authority was turned into a central government, the members of former provincial service protested the amalgamation of central and provincial services. They also stressed on the abolition of on going discrimination with regard to promotion and demanded uniformity in administrative services. In this respect the example of Burma can be worth mentioning. In 1937 at the time of Burma's separation from British India, its apex service was Burma Civil Service Class I equivalent to Indian Civil Service (ICS). After Burma's independence in 1948, this service was abolished and merged with Burma Civil Service Class II,¹²⁶ the pre-1937 provincial service. The new amalgamated service was known as Burma Civil Service. However, various other cadres including administration, engineering, railway etc., were not integrated through this amalgamation. Resultingly, in Burma Civil Service the opportunity for promotion was greater than other civil service cadres.¹²⁷ Thus in one sense, Bangladesh Civil Service differed from Burma as all its services had been integrated in to one service. As noticed, after administrative reorganization the strength of the specialized services was increased with a demand for abolishing special privileges of the former CSPs.¹²⁸

In 1954, the rules and regulations relating to CSP were based on articles 1 and 2 of the government of India Act, 1935. The subsequent constitution of Pakistan approved the above rules and as such two-thirds of the senior posts of the secretariat ranging from deputy secretary to secretary levels were reserved for CSP officers. In Bangladesh, the introduction of Senior Policy Pool (SPP) on 23 August 1979 and establishment of an integrated civil service on September 1, 1980 abolished the above system of reservation. Thus the

senior posts including deputy secretary, joint secretary, additional secretary, and secretary had been included under SSP that created, as observed, a more open and equal structure in the secretariat.¹²⁹ Thus any official from the 14 cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service could become a member of SSP provided that with less than 45 years of age he or she must have at least 10 years experience in Class I post and the passed the Public Service commission examination.¹³⁰ Thus under President Zia's time the formation of SSP largely challenged the elitism of the former CSPs and the non-CSP central and provincial civil service members could hold 50 per cent of the senior secretariat posts and one-third of the posts outside the secretariat.¹³¹ After administrative reorganization any qualified person from any cadre could rise to the top secretariat post, but with the exception of 50 per cent of law ministry posts.¹³² It was therefore widely hailed and commented that the reorganization of services during Shaheed Zia rule was marked by innovative approaches leading to democratize the system.

As noted earlier, one prudent effort of Shaheed President Zia was to restore discipline within the civil service and reform of the service obtained greater preference. As such the government set up a body called the Pay and Services Commission (P&SC) to examine the whole of public personnel administration including both organizational and functional aspects including service conditions, staffing, compensation, training and the like. The government set the details of the terms of reference of the P&SC to design a proper reform in the civil service. Thus 'insofar as the civil service structure and personnel functions were to have any positive impact on administrative performance, the P&SC was to take the cognizance of the functional needs of the government, the need to attract and retain highly talented and trained as well

as technically qualified people, the educational requirements of new recruits and the prospect of their continuous availability, efficiency and equity principles in staffing process, and the demand and supply of professionals.¹³³

One major objective of Zia government was to reinstate the due position and status of the members of the bureaucracy that had been nearly lacking during the erstwhile regime. There was a feeling of insecurity among most of the bureaucrats owing to the regime's very critical stand regarding their past role and thus bureaucracy had been relegated to the background by the Awami League ruling elite. There was also dismantling of the position of the bureaucrats through the steps like the Presidential Order No.9. The Order provided for the bureaucrats' holding office during pleasure of the president and otherwise would lose their job. Besides 'dismissal of any government servant at any time without explanation, political authority over the bureaucracy could be and was extensively exercised in an unsystematic and ruthless fashion. Job security, the main privilege of government employees, was snatched away by amending, changing, superseding and truncating the normal terms and conditions of service on the basis of which they had been recruited.¹³⁴ There was also breaking of bureaucratic leadership by political appointments in upper positions in both the government and autonomous bodies. In addition to this monetary checks in the form of fixing the maximum salary up to two thousand Taka were made upon the bureaucrats through administrative service reorganization. In order to avoid the past discrepancies the government of President Zia remained very cautious and the Pay and Services Commission (P&SC) functioned with all efficiency receiving all kinds of assistance from the government. The five full time and eleven part time members of the Commission had been given every day support from the

experienced secretarial staff and research personnel. Khan and Zafarullah mentioned that the commission with its power to obtain any information and data from any government agency made best use of the resources that had been made available at its disposal. Thus bureaucrats at higher ranks, vice chancellors of the leading universities, heads of statutory bodies of public sector, representatives belonging to various public service associations, and well known reputed personalities were interviewed by the Commission. Besides, 'several public organizations were inspected to ascertain their methods of working; surveys were conducted; and overseas trips made by full time members to understand the working of the public services in several Asian countries.'¹³⁵ After detail scrutiny and examination of the information, facts, and overall administrative scenario the Commission headed by A. Rashid, a member of former Bengal Civil Service (pre-partition), placed its comprehensive report in May, 1977 before the government. The main recommendations as forwarded by the Commission had been the following:

a) The term 'civil service' should include all government functionaries except those in the defence services of the country.

b) The national civil service should consist of four broad tiers in hierarchical order: i). the administrative, top management and specialist group; ii) the executive and middle management group; iii) the inspectorial, ministerial, technical, and support group; and iv) messengerial and custodian group.

c) A number of cadres, for example, administrative service, police service, health service, engineering service should be formed at the top two tiers in major functional area.

d) Arrangement should be made to ensure equal opportunity for every competent and qualified member of any

of the cadre services to rise up to the top administrative positions.

e) Pay, status and other benefits or privileges of the functionalist/specialist groups should be equivalent to those of the top positions in the secretariat of Bangladesh.

f) A Senior Policy Pool (SPP) consisting of posts requiring all round experience administrative leadership and high level coordination should be constituted. It should be a new apex body of senior officers of proven quality drawn from all branches of the civil service on the basis of ability and merit to be tested in an objective way.¹³⁶

The report of the P&SC proved very objective and realistic; although it did not totally satisfy the ex-CSP officers, the contents of the report had been enthusiastically welcomed by majority of the government officials and employees. The government as such moved to implement the recommendations of the P&SC and the much wanted national pay scale. A presidential committee of advisors examined the suggestions and proposed the guiding principles for scales of pay. The Services (grades, pay and allowances) Order was published in late December 1977 and was made effective. The government later abolished the grading system with further modification of the scales of pay allowing more flexibility for an equitable adjustment of the earlier scales.¹³⁷

With regard to recruitment of government employees the age of entry was fixed at twenty- seven years and the age of their retirement had been extended to fifty- seven years. During the Awami League rule many employees of the government were recruited without systematic order and in a random manner. Zafarullah noted that within six years after independence more than 15,000 employees were added to already existing 454,450 employees in the public sector

and while recruiting no 'standardize procedure' had been followed by the then government. After assuming office Shaheed Zia made all efforts to systematize the selection process and recruitment procedures. By 1977 standard quality in the competitive civil service examinations had been ensured. 'Both merit and equity were crucial variables in the selection process. The regime was unambiguous in its stance to increase the level of administrative efficiency and considered personnel selection on the basis of merit and competence as one way of achieving that level.'¹³⁸ The government thus rectified the earlier un-represented reserved system by filling sixty per cent of the civil service posts from the disadvantaged groups of the country and as noted earlier, women's mainstreaming was made through quota and increased employment in public sectors, agencies and autonomous bodies.

As mentioned earlier, the government of Shaheed President Zia was not in favour of any administrative elitism and tried to iron out differences and schism among various cadres of bureaucracy. There was inter-cadre cleavage between the members of former CSP and East Pakistan Civil Service or EPCS. Past instances reveal that within the provincial civil service, the lower cadre won in such conflict. In January 1958, East Pakistan Junior Civil Service was integrated with EPCS (executive) class-I.¹³⁹ The EPCS cadres had been found unhappy regarding the special status and privileges of the CSP officers that had been continuing even after the post independence period. Such inequality was addressed while the Zia government formed the SSP. In 1979-80, the committee consisting of the vice-president, establishment minister, and planning minister appointed twenty officers for joint secretary and above levels to be included in SSP. Of these nine were EPCS officers which was

a manifestation of the government's ensuring their representation in SSP. The government also looked after the sentiment of the specialists and technocrats. All the senior posts of the specialists belonging to BCS (agriculture) and BCS (engineering) remained outside the secretariat but they were allowed to rise to the top secretariat posts. Exception was that 10 per cent of the deputy secretary posts were reserved for the BCS secretariat sub-cadre officers.¹⁴⁰ In regard to promotion, the officers of the specialist cadres could go to higher posts directly on the basis of their seniority in service. At the district level the generalist deputy commissioner so far enjoyed traditional higher ranks. But under the new pay scale his salary was fixed at 1400-2225 Taka while the scale of district superintending engineers was 2100-2600 Taka.¹⁴¹ Such difference in pay scales was balanced by more participation of the generalists in the SSP. Khan mentioned that SSP which was formed to serve as an apex policy pool consisting of highly talented, competent, and experienced officers from all services, came to be dominated by members of BCS(administrative), the largest generalist cadre within the civil service.¹⁴²

At the field level, since the Pakistan days, there was schism between the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police (S.P.) who represented administrative and police cadres respectively in the district. In the then East Pakistan till 1960, the Deputy Commissioner had control over SP in the form of sending the latter's annual confidential report to the divisional commissioner.¹⁴³ The report in turn was forwarded to the deputy inspector general of police by the Divisional Commissioner with his own comments. During the military rule of Ayub Khan in 1960 the above power of Deputy Commissioner (D.C.) was abolished.¹⁴⁴ Such authority of the DC , however, was

considered by many as not unjustified since he was in charge of overall law and order and development of his district.¹⁴⁵ In 1973 under Mujib administration this power was returned to DC but again withdrawn by Zia government.¹⁴⁶ In 1975 Shaheed Zia and his advisors decided in favour of DC's sending reports relating to SP to the government.¹⁴⁷ The government decided to reinstate the status of DC for proper coordination of Shaheed Zia's development programmes. DC was thus given the ultimate responsibility of supervising the actions of field level officers. In their areas, the DC, sub-divisional officer,¹⁴⁸ and circle officer were the coordinators who could inspect any irregularity in the process of coordination. Government notification was also circulated in this respect for necessary actions against the accused officers.¹⁴⁹ All these moves were thus geared towards strengthening morale and increasing participation of government officers in the rural development measures taken by Shaheed Zia. At the field level the Deputy Commissioner who had been entrusted with the overall responsibility of coordination and development had to organize the process by maintaining a cordial working relations of the generalist and specialist officers. While implementing development projects DC had to mediate among different departments and on technical aspects he had to accept the decisions of the specialists.¹⁵⁰ But in policy execution he had an added advantage over others because of his status and other logistic support and facilities.

It is not fair enough to accept the argument that generalist administrators are more capable of coordination compared to the specialists. However, it may be mentioned that unlike the technocrats, those university degree holders, who joined the administrative service, obtained coordinating competence through a prolonged process of training, status,

and experience. But there was no scope for under-estimating the quality of the specialists. They are no doubt technically skilled yet lack psychological make-up, experience, and required training for coordination. Thus the two levels of officials are trained in their respective jobs and that was intelligently applied in the development programmes initiated by Shaheed President Zia.

With the above restructuring of bureaucracy through administrative reorganization and reforms the government of Shaheed President Zia built the institution as an effective means to be utilized for overall national development. Bureaucracy which had been characterized by strict adherence to routine, precedence, and stereo type led to unsatisfactory service, red-tapism, delay in decision-making, inefficiency and the like. Such state of affairs had been altered to a great extent by the efforts of Shaheed Zia through the introduction of an innovative bureaucracy. He decided in mid April 1976 that the senior members of the bureaucracy ranging from the secretaries, additional secretaries, joint secretaries, to deputy secretaries would leave their headquarters and 'go down to the remote field' and 'get themselves acquainted with the problems at the grass roots level.' His purpose of sending the top-level bureaucrats was to obtain intimate and personal observation of the kind of problems and difficulties faced by the majority people in rural Bangladesh. They could check their information and data collected through personal observation against the information supplied by their staff working at the field level. As such the policy-making would be based on information taken from primary source.¹⁵¹ In addition to this President Zia also encouraged the senior bureaucrats to night halts with subordinate officers, employees and the people's representatives. It was arranged that the divisional

and district level officials 'must be on tour for 13 days with at least 7 night-halts.' In may be mentioned that during previous regimes, the members of civil bureaucracy used to go to the fields occasionally and did not stay there. But the example of senior bureaucrats' staying with local officers and members of public even in nights as set by Shaheed Zia greatly served to boost the morale of the local functionaries and the people. 'The roots of the people's acceptance of any administration may be found in the people's opportunity to see and meet the top persons of that administration directly' and this process contributed to take administration to door-steps of the common masses.¹⁵²

In order to develop people oriented bureaucracy and increase their professional standards the government chalked out a comprehensive scheme of imparting necessary training among the administrators. Such urge of the government to train the bureaucrats for performing challenging jobs of socio-economic progress of the whole country had been reflected in its two and five-year national plans effective during 1978-1980 and 1980-1985 periods respectively. As such there had been reorganization of the training institutes like Civil Officers Training Academy, National Institute of Public Administration and Bangladesh Administrative Staff College and these training bodies were equipped with all sorts of logistic supports and experienced trainers. The above training institutes were meant for newly entrant officers, mid-ranking officers and higher officials respectively. The curricula were redesigned to inculcate them with the realities of development administration, implementation of development projects and policy formulation and planning mechanism. The imposition of special responsibility upon the bureaucrats can be explained as the government's special concern for making this

institution as change agent and thus innovative reform measures redefined the value system of the bureaucracy, readjusted the structure and functions of the services commensurate with the needs of the common people, and vitalized the concerned organizations and personnel in the art of administration and development. Other important steps that were taken for promoting bureaucratic professionalism during the rule of Shaheed President Zia included: the national appointing agencies like the Public Service Commission and the Establishment Division 'were staffed with new managers who were considered by the government capable of implementing the changes it sought to achieve; the national secretariat was revitalized with the introduction of new codes of practice like rules of business and secretariat instructions'; and the National Economic Council was adequately authorized to approve development programmes and projects.¹⁵³ The government remained sensitive to the grievances and demands of the members of the bureaucracy and addressed those issues in its reform initiatives. The result had been the development of this body into a positive role- playing institution. Zafarullah mentioned that in its attempt towards establishing a new concept of 'development from below', the government of President Zia used the members of the bureaucracy and their efficiency in all the development programmes including the swanirvar or self-reliance movement in the rural Bangladesh.¹⁵⁴

In the sector of field administration another innovative measure added by Zia government had been the appointment of District Development Coordinator (DDC) for each district.¹⁵⁵ The creation of the post of DDC emanated from a systematic thought on mass oriented development administration and it came as a part of inducting popular

elements in administering development affairs. It can be mentioned that DDC was a political post filled by a member of parliament.¹⁵⁶ With the status of deputy minister DDCs were entrusted with the job of implementing development activities and also looking after the problems of the districts as the people's representatives.¹⁵⁷ They were supposed to strengthen mutual relations between the people and the bureaucracy and had the privilege of making direct communication with each ministry.¹⁵⁸ In an orientation-training course during May-June 1980, District Development Coordinators were briefed to dissociate them from day-to-day administration and concentrate their tasks on agricultural development, literacy, and family planning programmes.¹⁵⁹ The DDCs were not the administrators but their very presence acted as catalyst in ensuring prompt actions of the field officers and better delivery system as well as two-way communication between the people's representatives and the field level bureaucrats.

Ragarding Shaheed President Zia's reorganization of the civil service, there are strong opinions that it did arrest to a great extent the country's socio-economic ills which previously acted as major hindrances towards implementing state sponsored development programmes. Since mobilization of both human and natural resources in rural Bangladesh depend largely on state initiative, efficient bureaucratic apparatus is a prime requirement and this sort of mechanism had been developed during the Zia period. The members of the bureaucracy alongside the local initiatives thus mobilized and conscientized the poor people in involving them in income generating activities and thereby contributed to lessening rural poverty to a considerable extent.

Economic Policy

While analyzing the performance of Shaheed President Zia, questions are often raised regarding the nature of his economic development. From a comparative perspective it may be mentioned that whereas one significant feature of the economy during the Sheikh Mujib era was nationalization of industries, Shaheed Zia's economic policy was characterized by denationalization. The major contents of his economic management included patronizing the private enterprise, attracting foreign private investment, assuring non-nationalization and emphasizing privately arranged export-oriented industries. In order to promote the private sector, huge amount of loan was disbursed. The 'ceiling on private sector investment first raised from Taka 30 million to Taka 100 million and in September 1978, it was abolished altogether.'¹⁶⁰

Unlike the policy of the previous regime, a huge amount of state assistance was delivered to the private sector during Shaheed Zia period. While during 1973-75 the amount of average annual loan from the nationalized credit agencies to the private sector was 1.19 crore Taka, the figure increased to 24.35 crore Taka during 1977-80. About 18 per cent of such loan allocation was derived from the equity of the investors and the rest came from either from the equity of loan agency or from the state loan.¹⁶¹

The industrial policy of the government was geared towards utilizing the private sector's potential in industrial development. To this end the major measures that had been adopted included: deleting the moratorium clause on nationalization; declaring fair and just compensation; developing capital market for mobilizing private savings towards industrial development by reactivating the Dhaka Stock Exchange; allowing potential investors to have the opportunity to declare unaccounted money and undeclared

foreign holdings on liberal terms; gradual disinvesting of a number of abandoned and taken over medium and small industries to the private sectors; streamlining of procedures for approval of investment proposals and facility for providing equity support on liberal terms. Other initiatives in this regard were : 'reduction of import duty on capital machinery from 20 per cent to 2.5 per cent in respect of less developed areas; extension of tax holiday period from 5 and 7 years to 7 and 9 years respectively for developed and less developed areas; liberal import policy through widening the range of imports under Wage Earners Schemes and Export Performance License and introduction of OGL for raw materials.'¹⁶²

Besides the above loan facilities the following state incentives to the private sector had been introduced: non-nationalization policy for fifteen years; preferential electricity rate; simplifying the rules of sanctioning industrial units and the like.¹⁶³ As part of promoting export-oriented industries, during 1975-80, Shaheed Zia government sanctioned 119 such industrial units that involved a subsidy of 19,291.85 lakh Taka including 13,511.90 lakh Taka foreign exchange components.¹⁶⁴ As observed, private investment in industry increased from Taka 87.4 million in 1973-74 to Taka 2091 million in 1977-78 period.¹⁶⁵ For obtaining higher economic growth rate, Shaheed President Zia also took the following steps: establishment of an Investment Board, reorganization of the Investment Advisory Centre of Bangladesh, and creation of export processing zone.¹⁶⁶ There was enthusiastic response from the private sector towards the above industrial policy of the government. It was reported that during 1975-80 period about 3500 industrial units mostly in the sectors of agricultural machinery and equipment, ready made garments, drugs and pharmaceuticals, deep sea fishing, dairy products and dairy farming had been approved by the Investment Board 'involving an investment of TK. 10124.9 million, including a

foreign exchange component of TK. 4407.4 million. Top priority was given to export oriented industries'.¹⁶⁷

The goal of the development strategy pursued by Shaheed Zia had been to maximize GNP (Gross National Product) growth and initiate modifications in the plan targets of the on going First Five- Year Plan (1973-78) prepared during Sheikh Mujib's administration. The Two-Year Plan for the period 1978-80 was framed in the light of Shaheed Zia's 19-point programme with a focus on obtaining higher rate of economic growth. The First Five- Year Plan was followed by a Two-Year Development Plan 1978-80 and it tried to carry out the incomplete tasks of the former and also 'filling the shortfall of resource availability during the implementation of the previous plan'. Later the Second Five- Year Plan formulated for 1980-85 adopted a more realistic approach and altered the past 'rhetoric of socialism and emphasized the growth of income and employment in the poverty alleviation programmes'.¹⁶⁸

During the Awami League government, the country faced the crises of inflation and balance of payments because of a number of reasons like floods, droughts, in-appropriate economic policy, price spiral of oils, recession etc. Islam noted that 'by 1973 the inflationary pressure built up and by 1974 inflation and balance of payments problems mounted to a crisis point. As there was no foreign exchange reserves to finance even basic food and raw materials, the government introduced controls over prices and imports'.¹⁶⁹ But such moves brought no tangible results and encouraged black market activity and thus 'a vicious cycle took over; repressed inflation created the black economy, resulting in higher budget deficits, and inflation'.¹⁷⁰ Besides these problems there had been significant reduction in export earnings, less production, more and more food imports, rampant smuggling of raw jutes to neighbouring India, and flight of capital from the country leading to

mismanagement in economy. When Shaheed Zia assumed state authority he thus inherited an ailing and a near collapsing economy and as such one prime initial responsibility of his regime had been to bring about a healthy economy characterized by stability and growth. He employed all efforts to achieve the target and a positive change was in the offing with fruitful results. In this respect the following evaluations of the economists are worth mentioning: There had been an improvement in the standard of living of the people of the country; 'the incidence of absolute poverty decreased during Zia regime despite a marginal increase of income inequality'; real wages in agriculture remained constant but there was an increase in real wages in manufacturing; investment rate and domestic savings rate showed upward trend; government revenues and spending multiplied; the volume of trade increased considerably; and there had been a significant reduction in inflation.¹⁷¹

As mentioned earlier, denationalization of industries was one major aspect of Shaheed Zia's development strategy. In this respect, as Islam mentioned, a major move was taken in the year 1976 through the government's inviting tenders for a couple of industries those had been taken over by the state after abandoned by the entrepreneurs based in Pakistan.¹⁷² Later by 1979, about forty per cent of the nationalized industries had been handed over to the country's private entrepreneurs. Rahim stated that 159 of the 785 nationalized industrial ventures had been returned to the original Bangladeshi owners, and '200 were sold among the private bidders and the rest had been kept under the ministry of industries' management.¹⁷³ As part of government initiative the financial bodies like the Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Shangstha and the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank had been instructed to assist on a priority basis the private ventures and entrepreneurs. Moreover, required alterations were made in the

structures of administration so that the private sector could play a vital role in the national economic progress. Besides promoting private entrepreneurs, the government also wanted to encourage the flourishing of foreign industries in the country. The government's decision was therefore in favour of protecting the interests of foreign industrial units and declared that 'foreign investment shall not be expropriated or nationalized' and 'if any foreign enterprise is nationalized for a public purpose, adequate compensation shall be paid'.¹⁷⁴ As noticed, the new approaches in the economic sector generated an air of optimism among the interested quarters including the rising middle class. The emphasis on the establishment of import substitution and export-oriented industries through private entrepreneurs greatly encouraged the interested persons, industrialists and businessmen to take advantage of the government policies and strengthen the private sector both local and foreign. It was mentioned that during late seventies there had been 161 million US dollar foreign investment in 38 projects.

The government recognition of private sector's playing a significant role in country's development process led to its wider participation and as such the 'share of private sector in the Two-Year Plan (1978-80) was raised to 16 per cent with an allocation of TK.600 crore in the total plan size of TK. 3861 crore'. Side by side there had been larger and liberal monetary and fiscal concessions from the government as well as customs debenture, investment allowances, abolition of investment ceiling, preferential tariff and the like. Because of the improvement in performance the ratio of investment between the public and private sectors was 17: 83 during the first plan and two-year plan. The private investment during the First Five-Year Plan and Two-Year Plan period is shown in the table as follows.

Table 8

Private Investment during First Five Year Plan and Two Year Plan Period
(in crore Taka)

Sector	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	Total First Plan (1973-78)	Percentage	1978-79 (Estimated Actual)	1978-79 (Estimated Actual)	Total (1973-80)	Percentage
1. Agriculture	3.14	8.16	10.92	22.09	33.01	77.32	8.72	50.00	35.00	162.32	9.85
2. Manufacturing	8.24	13.32	19.80	62.00	97.50	200.86	22.65	120.00	105.00	425.86	25.84
3. Physical Planning and Housing (including other Private construction)	37.21	81.17	67.40	83.57	102.94	372.29	41.98	140.00	112.00	624.29	37.88
4. Transport, Trade and other services.	46.27	37.69	37.28	41.31	73.80	236.35	26.65	115.00	84.31	435.66	26.43
Total	94.86	140.34	135.40	208.97	307.25	886.82	100.00	425.00	336.31	1648.13	100.00

Source : Planning Commission, GOB, 1980.

The economic performance during the time of Shaheed President Zia manifested success in different sectors and of them some are mentioned here as examples. In the Annual Development Programme for 1977-78, on the basis of reassessment of resources, Taka 1202.94 crore was fixed and measures had been taken to reflect the 19-Point programme of Shaheed President Zia. During the period the country's economy made significant headway and the gross domestic product rose by 8 per cent compared to 2 per cent realized in 1976-77. It was mentioned that the 'good performance in 1977-78 can be attributed to higher growth rate of two major sectors, viz., agriculture and manufacturing. The value added in agriculture including livestock, forestry, and fisheries increased by 7 per cent. The output of the manufacturing sector registered an increase of 10 per cent. Trade and transport sectors achieved a growth rate of 7 per cent in line with the increase in the value of agriculture and industrial output.'¹⁷⁵ In 1977-78 the overall GDP stood at Taka 6,089 crore as against Taka 5,644 crore in 1976-77 and there had been 5 per cent rise in per capita real income to Taka 713 in 1977-78 from Taka 679 in 1976-77. Table-9 gives a picture of the growth of GDP during 1972-1973 and 1977-1978.

Table 9

Growth of GDP

1972-73			1977-78		Annual compound growth rate(%)			
Bench Mark		Actual	Plan target	Achievement	Plan target		Achievement	
					over bench mark	Over Actual	over bench mark	Over Actual
GDP	5,003	4,530	6,542	6,089	5.5	7.6	4.0	6.1
Per capita GDP	676	612	766	713	2.5	4.6	1.1	3.1

Source: Economic Review 1977-78, Planning Commission, GOB, February, 1979, p.15

During the two- year plan period, the financial management of Shaheed President Zia's government improved to a great extent because of better budgetary performance. There were also efforts of the regime to raise the additional domestic resources through strengthening the system of tax administration. A great number of sector corporations were able to 'overcome the deficit in their financial accounts' because of adoption of a realistic price and improvement in managerial skills.

Because of a pragmatic economic and industrial policy there had been an impressive growth rates in Gross national Product (GNP) and increased production in both agricultural and industrial sectors. As compared to economic sluggishness during the erstwhile Awami League regime, the economic performance of the government of Shaheed Zia had been characterized by sharp increase in production and growth rates. 'The average annual growth rate of GNP rose from 0.50% during 1973-75 to 6.40% in 1975-78.' The following table shows a comparison of economic growth during the first two years and last three years under First Five Year Plan.

Table 10

Comparative Growth Scenario under the Two Phases of FFYP

Item	First Two Years 1973-75	Last Three Years 1975-78
a. Average Annual Growth (%)	0.50	6.40
b. <i>Terminal Year Position</i>		
- Gross Investment as % of GDP at market prices	5.85	12.62
- Net Capital Inflow as % of GDP at current market prices	6.27	8.74
- Gross Domestic Savings as % of GDP at current market prices	—	3.88
- Tax Revenue as % of GDP at current market prices	4.25	7.95
- Current Budget Surplus (crore Taka)	118.50	356.70
- Food grain Production (Lac tons)	112.24	131.00

Source: The Planning Commission, GOB, 1980

Bangladesh's economic growth from 1973 till 1981 and GDP, income per capita, and growth rate from 1972-73 to 1980-81 can also be seen from the following tables 11 and 12.

Table 11

Economic Growth of Bangladesh

Year	Per Capita GDP (in 1987 US Dollar)	Per Capita GDP(TK.) (in 1987 local prices)	Index (1972-73=100)
1973	127	3885	99
1974	140	4285	109
1975	134	4115	104
1976	136	4179	106
1977	134	4104	104
1978	140	4283	109
1979	144	4410	112
1981	152	4655	118

Source: Compiled from World Bank, 1995, B.Sen, 'Growth, Poverty and Human Development' in R.Jahan, *Bangladesh Promise and Performance*, Dhaka: UPL, 2000, p.269

Table 12**GDP, Income Per Capita and Growth Rate**

	1972-73	1974-75	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
GDP (crore TK)	4530	5060	5644	6089	6334	6553	7050
Popula- tion (Lakh)	740	782	827	854	878	903	910
Income per capita (Taka)	612	647	622	712	722	745	775
GDP Growth rate (%)	-12.6	2.0	1.7	7.9	4.3	3.4	7.6
Per capita Income growth (%)		-0.6	(-)1.2	4.4	1.4	3.1	4.0

Source : Planning Commision, GOB, 1981

There was a record harvest of crops during 1977-78 and the production was estimated to be about 3.40 lakh tons compared to 2.60 lakh tons in the previous year. During 1980-81, the total amount of production of food grains was 149.96 Lakh tons of which 134.96 lakh tons rice and the rest 15.00 lakh tons wheat.¹⁷⁷ The production of agricultural and industrial products like rice, wheat, jute, cement, steel ingots rose considerably during the time of Shaheed President Zia as can be seen in table 13 as follows.

Table 13

Increase of Agricultural and Industrial Production

Item	1974-75	1979-80
Rice (in million tons)	11.32	13.55
Wheat (in million tons)	1.6	8.10
Jute (in tons)	450,000	522,000
Cement (in tons)	136,000	343,000
Steel ingots (in tons)	49,000	133,000

Source: Compiled from S.S.Islam, *op. cit.*, and *Bangladesh Economic Survey*, 1979-80, Ministry of Finance, GOB, 1980.

Islam mentioned that the 'higher rate of domestic production resulted in better export performance. Export earnings increased steadily from US \$ 337 million in 1974-75 to US\$ 785 in 1979-80. Exports of jute goods increased from TK.185.86 million in 1974-75 to TK.606.67 million' in 1979-80.¹⁷⁸

Similar increase had also been observed in the export of tea (from TK.16.26 million to TK.51.00 million), and hides and skin (from TK.19.02 to TK. 101.47 million). In 1979, export earnings as percentage of GDP had been increased to 6.09 per cent as compared to 5.69 over 1977-78 period. During 1972-75, the country's export was worth of TK. 880.0791 thousand and it increased to TK. 2840.5008 thousand in 1975-79. In the following table 14, increase of Bangladesh's export in some selected major countries has been shown.

Table 14

Bangladesh' Export in Selected Countries

Country	1973-76	(TK in thousands) 1976-81
U.S.A.	176.2926	598.9095
U.S.S.R.	56.0689	2825.464
U.K.	79.5410	322.1608
India	30.4449	75.4698

Source: Report of Bangladesh Bank, Dhaka, 1989-90

In order to carry out overall development and economic policies of the government of Shaheed Zia, there had been tremendous support from international sources and donors. As such foreign assistance increased considerably. Major assistance had been received from international agencies and western developed nations. Compared to the western world the degree of assistance from the socialist countries had been

much less. During 1973-74 and 1978-79 foreign aid received by the country was respectively 3 per cent and 8.5 per cent of the GDP. 41.6 per cent of the total government and private investment came from foreign aid during 1973-74 while the figure was 60 per cent in 1978-79. Foreign aid was also used in certain cases as a source of government income; for instance, during 1978-79, the money received through the selling of foreign assisted food grains contributed to income of the government.¹⁷⁹

It can be confidently said that Shaheed President Zia had been able to create a positive image both at home and abroad regarding economic growth during his rule. Compared to 2.5 per cent growth rate during the previous era, in Shaheed Zia's time the country's growth rate had been much higher as mentioned earlier. Shaheed President Zia obtained immense appreciations both from national and international circles for his better management of the economy under a stable political environment. *The Financial Times* published from U.K. remarked that 'General Zia's achievements ...have been considerable. He has not only brought relative stability but has lived by all of his political promises. He has won international respect for himself and his country; it would no longer be fair to describe Bangladesh as the "basket case" of the developing world, as Dr. Henry Kissinger did a few years ago.'¹⁸⁰ Khan mentioned that 'Zia's single minded concern for the achievement of self-sufficiency not only captured the hearts of his countrymen, but also convinced the leaders of the industrial world that perhaps external aid for massive agricultural-related industrialization of an LDC could become a useful model of development.'¹⁸¹ He uttered his commitments for supplying of government resources to numerous development projects while visiting all corners of the country every now and then. Shaheed Zia continuously

endeavoured to preach his slogan of 'politics of development' and greatly popularized the programmes like swanirvar, canal digging and industrial revolution. While embarking upon numerous socio-economic programmes he obtained support both from local and international sources. The masses of Bangladesh placed total confidence and trust in him because of his enormous dedication, sincerity, untiring moves and proper socio-economic policies to improve the overall conditions of the timing millions.

Foreign Policy

Like internal policy measures, the formulation of external or foreign policy has been a very crucial function of a modern democratic government. This is because foreign policy is related to pursuing a sovereign state's national interests while interacting with other states in international political and economic order. As such in world arena, nation states pursue their national goals and objectives through formulating foreign policy directives. Defending national sovereignty, and territorial integrity therefore become prime goals of a nation while dealing with external forces and probable threats posed by them. It can be mentioned that the formulation of foreign policy is conditioned not by any single element but by multifarious factors and thus it is greatly influenced by 'objective condition, security environment, national unity, resource strength, social values, domestic pressures etc.'¹⁸² Khan et al noted that 'foreign policy can be defined as a strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision-makers of a state vis-à-vis other state or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of national interest.' They further state that national interest is the fundamental objective and simultaneously the ultimate determinant that guides the decision-makers in making

foreign policy. National interest serves as a means of justifying, denouncing, or proposing policies including the foreign policy. In fact, foreign policy of a country 'is a projection in the international milieu of the domestic objectives and policies of that state'.¹⁸³ After Bangladesh's birth as an independent state in December 1971, the principles with regard to foreign policy that had been included in the constitution were: friendship with all and malice towards none; preserving national sovereignty; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; economic development; strengthening self-respect; peaceful settlement of international disputes; and the like. These principles were included in the articles 25 (1) and (2), 63 and 145 A of the country's constitution. Soon after independence Bangladesh's leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed a policy of non-alignment and desired to be neutral. In this respect it is worth mentioning that Bangladesh came into being at a time when bipolarity had been prevailing in the world political order and since she obtained direct and indirect support from India and the U.S.S.R respectively in her war of independence, it became evident that Bangladesh would remain within the orbit of Indo-Soviet axis. As such it was naturally conceived that the foreign policy of the new country would be guided to a considerable extent by the influence of that axis. One analyst noted that the 'main thrust of Bangladesh foreign policy during the Mujib era was clearly India-centered', arising out of the framework formulated in the treaty of friendship that institutionalized Indo-Bangladesh co-operations in a number of ways.¹⁸⁴ In this context, foreign policy postures of the Awami League government had been viewed as dependent and not in line with preserving national interests, sovereignty, territorial integrity, or forcefully pursue economic interests of the state. Bangladesh's total agreement with the views of the Indo-Soviet bloc regarding international issues had been interpreted as subservient attitude

of the government and gradually heightened anti-Indian and anti-Soviet sentiments among the people. Again, the Twenty-five year Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that was signed in March 1972 to strengthen the existing bond of cordial relations between the two countries had also been visualized as a design of Indian hegemony over this small nation. The gradual unpopularity of the foreign policy of the Awami League regime also stemmed from lack of solving the outstanding bilateral problems like the Farakka issue, trade deficit and the like. Dissatisfaction was observed regarding the lack of adequate financial and other timely assistance from Bangladesh's allies in reconstructing the war ravaged country and facing the grave economic crises like food shortage, flood, famine, and other natural and man made disasters. Because of the country's alignment with the Indo-Soviet block, the western powers, People's Republic of China, and the Muslim countries of the Middle East projected near indifference in offering their assistance to deal with economic menaces of Bangladesh. Under these circumstances it had not been possible on the part of Awami League government to make any major break through or diversify the country's foreign policy postures.

After the rise of Shaheed President Zia a significant change took place in the international alignments and external relations of Bangladesh. With the violent overthrow of the government of Sheikh Mujib in August 1975, a process of shift from the Indo-Soviet bloc began and a new direction in foreign policy under Shaheed Zia tilting towards the western alliance and the Arab world had been visible. Like the domestic policy President Zia formulated foreign policy in order to bring about Bangladesh's national progress and prestige. His foreign policy options were categorically mentioned in items one and sixteen of his 19- point programme. His approach was to diversify the country's foreign relations and maintain constructive bilateral ties with the

western developed nations particularly the United States, and other international actors like the People's Republic of China and the Middle Eastern Muslim countries. Such developing of relations had been consistent with the alteration of the constitutional principles of 'socialism' and 'secularism' as explained earlier.

President Zia placed highest priority to building 'the country's image of itself'. He was of the opinion that 'the people's self-esteem, its perception of itself was inextricably linked to its domestic lifestyle, its performance and purpose'. He therefore 'wanted Bangladesh to play an active role in the world, to prove that the country was not only capable of looking after its own interest, but could also make a positive contribution to international affairs. Zia's external policies were always developed with domestic society in mind.'¹⁸⁵

Since the military take over and change of government in Bangladesh in 1975, the cordial and friendly ties between Dhaka and New Delhi 'soon gave way to mutual apprehension, mistrust and acrimony'. A trend of mixed sentiment against India became more pronounced all over the country and that feeling had been heightened by the newspaper reporting regarding repeated border clashes between the Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Forces. 'Anti-Indian sentiment among the new leadership, recognition of the new regime by the People's Republic of China, and the major policy changes by Zia greatly hardened the attitudes of India towards Bangladesh. During this time Indo-Bangladesh relations were dominated to a great extent by politico-security issues.'¹⁸⁶ Because of Bangladesh's geo-political compulsion that demanded avoidance of any hostile relations with her big neighbour, the regime of Shaheed Zia tried to normalize bilateral ties without making any compromise with the vital national interests. Accordingly, President's special envoy and the foreign secretary

were sent to the Indian capital and in a joint communique, commitment for good neighbourly relations in order to achieve regional peace had been expressed. Zia's policy was to make normal relations with all countries but at the same time keeping away from the orbit of the Indo-Soviet axis. Uyangoda mentioned that 'Zia described his foreign policy as outward looking and claimed that he did not want to take side with any power bloc. The outward orientation of the post-1975 foreign policy of Bangladesh, of course, meant a basic position shift in Bangladeshi foreign policy, namely distancing from India and the Soviet bloc and the recasting of that policy to enhance closer relations with the US, OPEC countries and China'¹⁸⁷ Despite initiatives to normalize relations between India and Bangladesh, mutual differences became more pronounced as the outstanding problems, more importantly, the sharing of the Ganges waters, remained unsettled. Bangladesh expressed its great concern because of unilateral large- scale withdrawal of waters from the Ganges by India. Shaheed President Zia's efforts to solve the crisis did not receive favourable response from the Indian side and subsequently the regime had hardly any option but to internationalize the issue. Through diplomatic moves Bangladesh raised its cause at the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, Non-Aligned Summit, and ultimately at the United Nations General Assembly. Later with the victory of Janata Party in India in 1977 elections and change of government, there were signs of improving bilateral relations and subsequently an interim arrangement along with a guarantee clause regarding sharing of the Ganges waters was reached.

President Zia placed special emphasis on increasing ties with the People's Republic of China and his strategy was compatible with Chinese approach of supporting the small states of South Asia keeping them out of Indian influence. Thus Chinese support was available regarding President Zia's efforts

at 'neutralizing India's threat and pressure tactics' on Bangladesh affairs. Shaheed Zia also obtained Chinese backing on Farakka issue at the United Nations and both countries expressed identical views on international issues including denouncing Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. Shaheed Zia paid official visits to China to further strengthen bilateral relations and different economic, trade, technical, and cultural agreements had been signed between the two countries. Because of President Zia's successful 'diplomatic moves China offered interest free loan, food aid, and other assistance to Bangladesh' and she emerged as one of Bangladesh's 'major sources of military aid and thus it assisted in building up the country's defence sector' and time to time provided various military assistance in the form of training and equipments.¹⁸⁸ There had been return visits by the Chinese leaders to Bangladesh capital in early 1978. Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister of China visited Dhaka and there had been talks and agreements on political, economic and defence related matters. Again on January 1, 1980 a five-year trade agreement was signed that listed commodities to be exchanged and stipulated an each-way trade of US\$ 200-500 million. It also provided for 'most favoured nation treatment, and detailed the mode of payment, and included a mechanism for periodical review of the progress of bilateral trade.'¹⁸⁹

During the rule of Shaheed President Zia, there had been closer relationship with the United States and other western powers who favoured Bangladesh's coming out of the orbit of Soviet Union's 'collective security plan for Asia.' Shaheed Zia was aware of the great needs of the country for foreign assistance that could only be provided by the western world led by the United States. Bangladesh supported the US policy on international issues including Afghan and Kampuchean issues and demanded withdrawal of all foreign troops. There was thus convergence of opinions between the two countries at the UN resolution on settling international disputes. In the backdrop of growing relations

Bangladesh received more than five hundred million dollars from the USA for her different development projects during 1975-1981. Various innovative economic programmes and foreign policy measures of Shaheed Zia brought the USA and Bangladesh closer. 'The US concentrated on family planning, food production, rural employment, health, and rural electrification in order to bring the benefits of these developments within the reach of the common people.'¹⁹⁰ Choudhury noted that apart from mutually beneficial economic aspirations, Bangladesh and the US began to forge a common bond through political orientations and subsequently in 1978 Bangladesh signed a peace corps agreement with the USA.¹⁹¹ The United states also acclaimed the democratization process initiated by Shaheed Zia and praised his institution building and nation building efforts. There had been a marked increase in the volume of trade between the two countries. 'In FY 1975-76 exports to the United States increased to Taka 944.8 million (an increase of 52.32 % from the previous FY). Imports from the United states also increased, as did the flow of US economic aid, especially project aid.'¹⁹² During Shaheed Zia's time besides American assistance, there had been massive inflow of western aid to Bangladesh that enabled the government to carry out development activities of various sorts and initiate the process of good governance. It was mentioned that 'the average annual commitment of aid during Zia regime was US\$ 1,218 million as compared to Mujib's US\$ 828 million.'¹⁹³

One prime objective of the foreign policy pursued at the time of Shaheed President Zia was to nurture fraternal relations with the Muslim countries in the Arab world and identify with the cause of Islamic solidarity. Besides strengthening the Islamic bond the support of these countries were considered important for Bangladesh's economic development. Bangladesh extended its total support to the cause of the Arab nations and in all international forums she maintained that 'no just and durable peace in the Middle East was possible without complete and

immediate withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories including the Holy city of Jerusalem, and restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people including the right to their own independent state.¹⁹⁴ Bangladesh regularly participated in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and tried to play a meaningful role. The Bangladesh delegation at the Seventh Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in Istanbul sought support from the member states regarding Farakka issue. 'The inclusion of Farakka problem in the joint communiqué was the outcome of the successful projection of the case. It was the first Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference which gave special attention to a problem of Bangladesh.'¹⁹⁵ The government of Shaheed Zia always tried to strengthen the solidarity of Islamic ummah and solve the conflicts among Muslim countries through peaceful means. At the Third Islamic summit in January 1981 Bangladesh floated the idea of an Islamic common market and offered mediation to end the conflict between Iraq and Iran. Bangladesh's position in the comity of Muslim nations was further enhanced by 'election to the 15-member Jerusalem Committee, and to the 6-member Coordination Committee on Jerusalem at the UN, 3-member Al-Quds Committee and the 9-member committee on Iraq and Iran'.¹⁹⁶ The inclusion of Bangladesh in these committees manifested increasing involvement of the country with the Islamic world. President Zia himself developed very warm and intimate relations with the Arab leaders and statesmen and he was greatly welcomed while paying visits to Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait which not only provided economic assistance to Bangladesh but also recruited in greater numbers Bangladeshi manpower.¹⁹⁷ The following Tables 15 and 16 show the emigrants to the Middle East from 1976 to 1981 and country-wise breakdown of remittances in 1980. Table 17 shows the export of manpower, foreign exchange earnings and import under wage earners' scheme during 1977-78 to 1980-81.

Table 15
Emigrants to Middle East

Year	Number
1976	6,087
1977	19,725
1978	22,809
1979	24,485
1980	30,573
1981	55,787

Source: Statement of Labour and Manpower minister, Khan and Husain eds. *op. cit.*, p.24

Table 16
Remittances from Arab Countries in 1980

Country	Amount (in crore Taka)
Saudi Arabia	98
Kuwait	26
UAE	24
Iraq	21
Qatar	18
Libya	15
Oman	6
Iran	4
Bahrain	3

Source: compiled from Nurul Islam, 'Problems and Prospects of Bangladeshi Nationals Abroad', *Bangladesh Times*, November 1982, Khan and Husain eds. *op. cit.*, p.253

Table 17

Export of Manpower, Foreign Exchange Earnings and Import under Wage Earners' Scheme (WES) of Bangladesh

Year	No Leaving for abroad	Foreign Exchange million US dollar	Import under WES Million Taka
1977-78	16,908	102.00	1330.0
1978-79	24,160	124.00	1767.6
1979-80	27,610	283.00	2745.1
1980-81	38,456	381.00	5463.7

Source : Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Finance, *Bangladesh Economic Survey*, 1986-87.

Another very important success of foreign policy operations of Shaheed President Zia had been the election of Bangladesh to the United Nations Security Council in November 1978. Although belonging to the rank of small state, 'Bangladesh had the honour of being elected to it for a two-year term commencing on 1 January 1979.'¹⁹⁸ During its tenure at the Security Council Bangladesh contributed significantly to the negotiating process and played a credible role on the Arab-Israeli issue. It projected its potentialities of acting as ideal diplomatic broker between groups and among nations with conflicting opinions.¹⁹⁹

President Zia made all efforts to establish cordial relations with the smaller countries of the region and thus he paid official visits to Islamabad, Kathmandu, Colombo, and

Rangoon to cultivate good neighbourly ties. After his visit to Pakistan in 1977 a number of agreements were signed covering air services, shipping, double taxation and establishment of joint economic commission. President Zia's Kathmandu visit in December 1977 was followed by setting up of a joint economic commission and later, signing of a scientific and technical exchanges agreement in February 1978.²⁰⁰ In 1978 the refugee problem with Burma was solved through peaceful means. There were 'intensive diplomatic negotiations to solve Bangladesh-Burma dispute over unprecedented flow of Rohingyas from Arakan to Bangladesh territory.'²⁰¹ Shaheed Zia's handling of this crisis deserves mentioning. 'Following his vigorous efforts, an agreement was signed between the two countries on 9 July 1978 and repatriation began in less than two months and was completed by the end of the year.'²⁰² President Zia himself declared that the 'basic objective of the foreign policy of Bangladesh is that we wish to live in an atmosphere of peace and amity with everybody in the world. Because we think that we could enjoy the fruits of independence and devote ourselves to the task of economic and social progress of our people only in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. Towards this end Bangladesh has been earnestly following the policy of mutual respect for state sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and settlement of all disputes by peaceful means renouncing the use of force.'²⁰³

One significant initiative taken by Shaheed President Zia was inducing the South Asian countries to come closer and develop collective relationship in an arrangement of regional unity. Although South Asia had been referred to as a region of mistrust and its inter- state relations were bedevilled by political divisions, Shaheed Zia foresaw the potentialities of an institutionalized regional cooperation. Initially during 1977

and 1978 he paid exploratory visits to the capitals of South Asian states and undertook informal discussion on the matter with the leaders of these states. President Zia's formal letter of May 2, 1980 addressing the leaders of Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had been sent through envoys and the establishment of an institutionalized framework for South Asian regional cooperation was proposed. Shaheed Zia's argument was that 'while other regions had evolved institutional arrangements for consultation on matters of mutual interest and cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields on a regional basis and had consequently benefited immensely from such cooperation, the only region which lacked such arrangement for regional cooperation was the South Asian region.'²⁰⁴ The response to his call was indeed positive and subsequently a working paper on the proposal for regional cooperation was prepared and distributed by Bangladesh in November 1980. The proposal of Bangladesh emphasized on collective interaction beneficial to the people of this region by addressing the fundamental problems at the regional level like 'poverty, disease, illiteracy, and building regional structures conducive to confidence building, tension reduction and collective self-reliance.'²⁰⁵ On the basis of Bangladesh's working paper possible areas of cooperation began to be identified at the formal and informal level of talks. 'Integrated approach and different technical and economic action programmes which were chalked out by the countries of this region at later meetings marked Zia's hopes for collective wisdom.'²⁰⁶ In this regard scholars mentioned that 'as far as his pioneering role in mooted the idea of a regional cooperation forum was concerned, Zia can be regarded as a visionary'.²⁰⁷ The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation which later came into being had indeed been the brain-child of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

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4

CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRATIC ORDER AND DEMISE OF PRESIDENT ZIA

The question whether the system of rule at the time of Shaheed President Zia was characterized by total consolidation or not needs careful investigation. For such an attempt, it is imperative to take a closer look at the state of political parties and the armed forces during his period.

The steps taken by shaheed President Zia with regard to political process as the previous chapter shows did contribute to establishing democratic order and well-organized system of governance. The process of political institution building and the consequent moves of President Zia went a long way to fill the political vacuum in the country and strengthened the efforts towards overall national development. As analyzed earlier, legitimacy of the rule of Shaheed President Zia had been achieved through public mandate that was overwhelming and a credible political system was set up following the free and fair national elections namely presidential and parliamentary polls in 1978 and 1979 respectively. All such processes placed the regime in a strategic position to exercise state authority with enormous mass support expressed through electoral verdict. As a consequence, election as an institution regained its status and there had been public confidence in the process of healthy political and electoral game between the competing parties. Politics during this time was characterized by free play of political party building within the framework of multi party system. As noticed, after long subjugation the political

organizations sprouted and their rejuvenation began to take place. During the process of reviving, quite expectedly, there was surfacing of factionalism and ideological differences within the political organizations. This had been true in case of left, right and middle of the road parties. On the one hand a substantial number of politicians and parties had responded positively to the call of Shaheed Zia to forge unity of the nationalist forces and sided with him while quite a number of political parties played an anti-government role. A change was observed with regard to the activities of the radical pro-Chinese left parties that gave up their revolutionary approach under different political context and Bangladesh's new international alignment and many of them supported President Zia. Besides them the various forces opposed to the Indo-Soviet political axis were to be Shaheed Zia's political vehicles. In a broad sense, the Awami League was considered to be a pro-Indian party and together with this party, the CPB and NAP (Mujaffor) known as Soviet-backed parties maintained their opposition stand.¹

The emergence of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had been the result of Shaheed President Zia's continued endeavour towards achieving a broad based political platform and forge politics of unity in the political process. He had been the architect of the organization and prime mover of its affairs. BNP as mentioned earlier, was a conglomeration of different political forces and groups and thus there had been competition for power and position among its leaders or stalwarts with their divergent ideological and political background. As such being the party chief Shaheed Zia's role was crucial in resolving personal and group competition or conflict within the party ranks. In this respect President Zia played both hot and cold distributing patronages and favours and suppressing diverse opinions inside the structures of

BNP. In order to properly organize the party and strengthen its bond President Zia encouraged genuine criticism and detail analysis of his policy programmes but any sort of intra-party opposition was not at all tolerated. In this way indiscipline, disloyalty, irresponsible criticism, and dissidence were strongly dealt with. Shaheed President Zia's policy on management of party affairs had been regarded as careful but gradualism.² He believed in warm public relations and unhesitatingly granted discussions with the party stalwarts and welcomed their opinions on national issues and on various policy decisions concerning the party or governmental matters. 'He discussed important policy measures with the appropriate members of the National Standing committee, National Executive Committee and the leaders of affiliated bodies.' Sometimes he would consult his colleagues before coming to a conclusion on urgent matters and later got such decisions ratified by the party National Standing Committee or National Executive committee.³

During the Awami League rule, the opposition both over and underground had been severely dealt with and they often encountered repressive measures by the government. But Shaheed President Zia pursued a moderate policy while dealing with the political parties belonging to opposition camp. Unlike the high incidence of corrupt practices of the politicians of former government, President Zia tried to keep the extent of personal corruption of BNP stalwarts at a manageable limit.⁴ 'Moreover, Zia was concerned about personal as well as institutional legitimacy.'⁵ In order to create a broad based party organization the original JAGODAL had been replaced with the BNP and 'Zia legitimized new version of his party through parliamentary elections in 1979' winning a massive electoral victory.⁶ Khan explained that the BNP surpassed the Awami League in expanding its grassroots

support through a painstaking institution building process.⁷ In this respect the observation of a scholar is worth mentioning. 'General Zia's organizational genius for doing things effectively largely explains the BNP's origins and success. The BNP drew its workers and supporters from all strata of society and thus emerged as a multi-class party. It served therefore as a nationalist coalition like the AL in the late sixties. This was also an important cause of its undoing, since the party was frequently plagued by internal dissensions caused by factional infighting. Several political factions came under its umbrella and could only function cooperatively under the superb coordinating abilities of General Zia.'⁸ In building the party, Shaheed President Zia inculcated a sense of idealism among the members and workers of the organization. As such political education on Bangladeshi nationalism as well as ideology and aims of the party had been infused. Arranging occasional training programmes for the front line bodies had been the responsibility of the party's central research center. Top leaders both in government and in party hierarchy also had to attend these training sessions. Such procedure had been designed to minimize gaps among diverse elements including left and rightist politicians within the party ranks. Regarding conflict resolution mechanism within the BNP Hossain observed that Shaheed Zia managed and controlled the party affairs through a policy of 'checks and balances' between the party, government and the armed forces.⁹

As discussed earlier, one primary base of support of Shaheed President Zia had been his supporters and admirers within the armed forces. Development of this institution remained very important during his rule. Shaheed Zia remarked that 'we shall take all necessary measures so that the armed forces, the ever vigilant sentinels of national independence and sovereignty, are provided with modern

equipment to strengthen the country's defence. We shall make out efforts so that our dear armed forces get their due share and legitimate rights.¹⁰

Initially in Shaheed Zia's administration, three chiefs of the armed forces were included in the Council of Advisers. Later in the Council of Ministers, out of the full ministers six had been military officials as can be seen from the following tables.

Table 1

Advisory Council of Ziaur Rahman in 1978

Professional background	Number
Civil servant	7
Military bureaucrats	3
Professors	4
Business executives	4
Others	6
Total	24

Source: Emajuddin Ahamed, *Bangladesh Lok Proshashon*, Dhaka: Golden Book House, 1980.

Table 2**Cabinet of President Ziaur Rahman in April 1979**

Professional background	Number
Military bureaucrats	6
Civil bureaucrats	2
Technocrats	8
Political leaders	13
Total	29

Source: A.F. Huq, 'Bangladesh: Constitution, Politics and Bureaucracy' in *The Rajshahi University Studies Part-A*, Vol. IX, 1980 cited in Mahbubur Rahman, 'Socio-Economic Development Under Military regime: Recent Experience in Bangladesh' *The Journal of Political Science*, D.U. Vol. II, Issue I, 1985, p. 69

Along with the members of the civil bureaucracy, experienced personnel from the armed forces were included in important policy-making and policy implementing institutions. As such in the bodies like National Economic Council, Planning Commission and public corporations, President Zia employed military officials to effectively use their technical skills and organizational capabilities. It was noticed that during President Zia's time, the military officers held key positions in different sectors of administration. Thus out of 20 superintendents of police 14 were from the army; out of 20 top positions in the public corporations 10 had been given to the retired military officials and about 12 were included in the top secretariat position. Besides absorbing 16

army personnel into the civil administration, a number of army officers had been sent abroad in different diplomatic positions.¹¹

Shaheed Zia tried to install the status and prestige of the armed forces that had been lost during the previous regime. His government therefore took various measures for the purpose. 'The defence budget left over from the Mujib regime for 1975-76 was immediately revised upwards, with the original allocation raised from Tk. 750 million to Tk. 1109.34 million' and the budget concerning defence had been further raised in the subsequent years.¹² The following table shows the increase of defence budget since 1975.

Table 3

Defence Budget during Zia Rule

Year	Expenditure (million Taka)
1974	670
1975	1022
1976	1579
1977	1915
1978	2036
1979	2407
1980	2887
1981	3406

Source: *World Armaments and Disarmaments*, SIPRI Year Book, 1984 cited in Mahbubur Rahman, op. cit., p.68

In order to increase the morale of the members of the armed forces Shaheed President Zia raised their salaries, took up schemes for physical infra-structural development in different cantonments, created funds for buying modern arms, ammunition and equipments, provided logistic support to the military forces, arranged local and foreign training facilities, developed the army training institutes and research wings and the like. At the same time considering the existence of factional feuds within the armed forces President Zia 'attempted to diffuse the strength of different small groups within the military organization by raising new division and spreading the existing brigades, regiments and battalions in such a way that the loyalty of the officers and soldiers to the regime would be ensured' by careful distribution of forces.¹³ Thus with the increase of military expenditure there had been the creation of the new Ninth Division and the number of army was raised from 60,000 in 1974-75 to about 90,000 in 1976-77.¹⁴

While introducing popular democracy, functional parliament and politics of development in the country, Shaheed President Zia at the same time endeavoured to build an effective armed force characterized by high professionalism through the above- mentioned measures. It was, however, commented that although President Zia to a considerable extent met the financial and other grievances of the armed forces, political demands of certain army quarters could not be fulfilled. 'While martial law continued the military personnel enjoyed sharing of power and authority but a category of officers remained unhappy primarily for ideological reasons. There were the freedom fighters, who led the *coups* and mutinies and in the process alienated themselves from the army mainstream.'¹⁵

It is noteworthy that there had been rising expectation and high ambition among those young army officers who fought

the liberation war. Some of them correlated their craving for power with the goal of radical social revolution through sepyo movement. During Shaheed Zia rule, there were a number of major, and minor *coup* attempts; the last one led to Shaheed Zia's killing on 30 May 1981. Most of these attempts were organized by those officers and sepyos who actively participated in guerrilla operation in 1971 war.¹⁶ These freedom fighters can be classified into two groups : one represented those servicemen crazy for power ; the other group included supporters of the spirit of the liberation war and continued their struggle against the anti-liberation forces and collaborators.

Some of the above sporadic attempted *coups* had been trivial and bloodless. As observed, the common soldiers who were influenced by the sepyo uprising of 7 November 1975 made repeated endeavours to stage army *coup* with their slogan of social revolution. But the forces loyal to Shaheed Zia, nipped such attempts in the bud. In most instances, as noticed, the initiators of the *coups* were not severely dealt with by the regime. In 1976 one abortive *coup* was staged in Chittagong naval outpost.¹⁷ Shaheed President Zia showed his extraordinary magnanimity by not taking any sort of repressive measures against the persons involved in the incident. Apparently President Zia was quite aware of the attempted *coups*, but he tried to tranquillize the *coup* trends by remaining indifferent and compassionate towards the less harmful plotters.

However, pursuing a soft strategy by the government did not prove effective. As such, in dealing with the subsequent attempts Shaheed Zia took hard line and adopted severe measures. But even these steps of the regime did not prove effective to contain *coup* trends. This is because personal craving for power had not been the lone motive behind these

attempts. A number of *coups* especially the attempt of 30 May 1981, which killed Shaheed Zia, had a fundamental cause emanating from the strife between the forces with conflicting interests. Earlier the pioneers of the 15th August 1975 *coup* who engineered repeated intervention attempts against Shaheed Zia received compassionate treatment from the government. This had chain effect and encouraged other over-zealous aspirants to rise in rebellion against the Zia regime.

Some analysts maintain that Shaheed President Zia had grave apprehension regarding the future course of action of the Bengal Lancers, the Tank Force which played a crucial role during the 15th August 1975 *coup*. Out of such concern Shaheed Zia transferred the Bengal Lancers to a comparatively safer place at Bogra in January 1976. At this decisive phase, the two self declared assassins of Bangabandhu, Rashid and Colonel Faruk returned to Bangladesh from Libya. The Shaheed Zia government forced Rashid to leave the country, but Col. Faruk managed to arrive at Bogra in late April 1976. Subsequently, the Bengal Lancers organized an anti-Zia insurgency. The attempt was suppressed by President Zia's loyal commanders and soldiers during the first week of May. Following the incident, Colonel Faruk surrendered himself and at once was sent abroad. Yet within a *couple* of weeks in June 1976, the Bengal Lancers once again launched another revolt and raised demands of safe returning of Col. Faruk and the plotters of the 15th August *coup*. After quelling the revolt this time some of the conspirators received death sentence and life imprisonment while the others were imprisoned for different terms. Such exemplary punishment, however, could not prevent Faruk from initiating further collusive moves. Colonel Faruk who enjoyed unlimited power for few weeks in the post 15 August 1975 *coup* tried to regain his strength through these attempts. On January 3, 1977 Faruk once again

arrived Bangladesh but at once arrested in the airport premise and later was given five-year imprisonment by the military court.¹⁸

On 28 September 1977, another army uprising took place at Bogra cantonment leading to the killing of two military officials. Khan noted that most of the mutinies were seemingly uncoordinated and sporadic in nature without any proper leadership and consequently the mutineers were easily brought under control by the loyal officers and jawans of Shaheed President Zia's government.¹⁹

During 30 September- 1 October 1977 yet another significant *coup* attempt was undertaken at midnight in the capital, Dhaka. As noticed, a number of commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the airforce and army planned to overpower and topple the Zia government. The staging of the *coup* was deliberately coincided with the hijacking of a Japan Airlines aircraft by a few Japanese radicals who had been negotiating for releasing hostages in exchange of huge amount of ransom money at the Dhaka airport. One view maintains that the pioneers of the *coup* and a powerful external force had been involved in the above plane- hijacking incident. Khan elaborated that 'in collaboration with Japanese Red Army radicals, and possibly with the support of the Soviet Union, the Bangladesh Air Force sought to change the government in favour of a pro-Soviet regime'.²⁰ Side by side, a contrary opinion is also furnished. During the *coup* attempt one British military advisory group had been functioning in the capital. In this connection a rumour spread that the major aim of the advisory group was to collect secret information regarding Bangladesh's armed forces as part of western intelligence activism. In reality, however, the advisory group's presence was linked with the establishment of a military staff college in Bangladesh.²¹ It was not at all unexpected for the

Taher group and JSD to become suspicious about the British military team since the organizers of 7 November 1975 *coup* were not only opposed to western power block but were desperate to stage a *coup* with the aim of establishing a classless production oriented armed force in Bangladesh. It was therefore not impossible for them to contact the Japanese radicals for the above purpose.

Perhaps it may not be difficult to estimate the nature of the above rebellion without too much unnecessary emphasis either on the radical Japanese plane hijackers or the British intelligence force. Of the sporadic soldiers' uprisings invigorated by the 7 November *coup*, the climax was the revolt of 30 September - 1 October 1977.²² This attempted *coup* was frustrated near President's Zia's residence through a successful operation led by the chief of general staff and the officers and jawans belonging to 46th Brigade in Dhaka.²³ The rebels who killed 10 officers of the army and 11 officials of the air force captured the radio station for a while and declared one airforce sergeant as the country's head of the state.²⁴ Since the rebel failed to attract any sympathy from the rest of the armed forces, the regime's anti-uprising operations were successfully completed by morning of October 2, 1977.

Some political observers opine that one major reason of the 30 September- 1 October 1977 *coup* had been the favourable attitude of Shaheed Zia towards the rightist forces which alienated the socialist minded freedom fighters within the armed forces and provoked them to action.²⁵ But regarding the next significant attempted *coup* of 17 June 1980, both the rightists and the socialists had extended their collaboration towards that move.

The *coup* of 17 June 1980 was masterminded in Islamabad during May 1979. Those who participated in this conspiracy were the following assassins of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman :

Bazlul Huda, second secretary of Bangladesh embassy in Pakistan; Anwar Aziz Pasha, first secretary of Bangladesh embassy at Ankara; and Shariful Dalim, first secretary of Bangladesh embassy in Beijing.²⁶ It may be mentioned that, in the post - 15th August *coup* period, these persons were rehabilitated by the army government and given lucrative foreign posting. But such patronization could not repress their yearning for power.²⁷

Sheikh Mujib's another killer, Noor at that time, was the second secretary of Bangladesh embassy at Tehran. It was known that Dalim, while visiting Iran, successfully communicated with Noor. Both Dalim and Pasha maintained their linkage from the distance with Lieutenant Colonel Didarul Alam and Lieutenant Colonel of engineering crops Nurunnabi in Dhaka. Besides, they had also connections with one JSD worker and bank officer, Mosharrof and left student leader of Dhaka College, Munir. Dalim's intention perhaps was to integrate different left organizations and prepare them to jointly stage a *coup*²⁸. The purpose of the planned revolt of Pasha, Dalim, Didarul and Nurunnabi was to establish social justice and Islamic socialism in Bangladesh by dislodging and renouncing Shaheed Zia government.²⁹

In December 1979, all the conspirators assembled in Ankara and thus Pasha group was joined by Khandakar Abdur Rashid from Libya who was accompanied by an intelligence officer of Libyan government, Salim Ibrahim.³⁰ Apparently money was not a problem to undertake an army led *coup* in Dhaka under the alleged patronization of Libyan government. In the mean time Bangladesh's ambassador in Iran came to know about the conspiracy and at once reported back to Dhaka office. But he was intercepted by the conspirators and was physically assaulted by Pasha.³¹

As a part of the *coup* plan, Didarul Alam communicated

with certain JSD leaders and endeavoured to create a revolutionary force consisting of the general soldiers at Dhaka, Savar and Comilla cantonments. The plan of the take over was that while Shaheed Zia would be away on a foreign state visit, radio station would be captured and chief of army staff would be killed. A revolutionary council would be formed and steps would be undertaken to materialize the major demand of the sepoys made during the 7 November 1975 *coup*. But at the preparation stage the *coup* attempt was unfolded due to promptness of Shaheed President Zia's intelligence force. Despite hesitation of the plotters, the arrogant sepoys were desperate to strike. Because of interception they were undone and their attempt was foiled. Of the five who were accused of treason, Pasha and Munir escaped punishment as the Government Evidence. Among the rest three, Didarul was given ten years imprisonment and both Nurunnabi and Mosharrof got Jail term for one year each. The trial of Didarul and others was completed on 20 May 1981 and within ten days Shaheed Zia was killed by another attempted *coup* on 30 May at Chittagong. The main reason of the attempt, as the following discussion would reveal, stemmed from the on-going schism, lack of trust, strife, bargaining, intrigue and counter-intrigue within certain sections of the Bangladesh armed forces.

It was noticed that the freedom fighters within the armed forces in the post-independence period was given due status by Shaheed Zia who employed them in different positions in the land force whose size thus increased from five to eight divisions. At the time of Zia's death in 1981, the composition of the freedom fighters, repatriates from Pakistan, and newly entrants within the army was 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. In order to retain harmony within the armed forces besides keeping power and prestige of the

freedom fighters, the Zia regime followed a policy of non-discrimination regarding non-freedom fighters and repatriated officers. Thus after 7 November 1975 *coup*, to the dissatisfaction of many, Shaheed Zia installed repatriated Ershad as the deputy chief of staff of the army to assist him in restoring stability within the security forces.³²

Some observers argue that Shaheed Zia could have given the post to either of the two upright senior officials, Major General Manzoor or Major General Mir Shawkat Ali, both of them were freedom fighter generals and widely known for their intellect and competence. But Shaheed Zia perhaps had apprehensions of getting toppled by any powerful man next to him in military hierarchy. Shaheed Zia was also quite aware of the high ambitions of Manzoor and Shawkat and his evaluation was that compared to non-freedom fighter Ershad, both Manzoor and Shawkat might appear as potential opponents. It was hardly possible to surmise the political calculations of Ershad who allegedly influenced Zia's mind against Manzoor and Shawkat. Islam noted that President Zia, however, covertly used Ershad by wheedling the repatriated officers while at the same time consoling Shawkat and Manzoor.³³

Soon Zia's overestimation increased his dependence on his second-in-command General Ershad who was considered non-threatening largely because of his soft personality and apparent over credulous nature. But later developments disproved Shaheed Zia's evaluations.³⁴ In late 1978, Ershad was installed as the chief of army staff. Earlier as part of Zia's strategy of neutralizing the probable aspirants, Manzoor and Shawkat were made General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Chittagong and Jessore respectively and were sent outside the centre of power. 'Moreover, a vigorous process of fresh recruitment of officers and jawans was started and an attempt

was made to enhance the level of professionalism among the servicemen through intensive socialization and acculturation'.³⁵ Above diffusion of power through reshuffling of the army command and new recruitment was supposed to bring fruitful outcome³⁶ but the situation, however, brought significant opportunity for Ershad to gratify his military and political over ambitions. Ershad's obtaining the post of army chief undoubtedly caught many observers by surprise. This was unparalleled in the sense that the newly installed army chief had no experience of commanding any battalion, brigade or division excepting heading the 7th East Bengal regiment at Karachi.³⁷

Following Ershad's promotion, next sudden move of Shaheed Zia was abolishing the post of deputy chief of army staff. In the process of this decision Ershad played a crucial role who persuaded Shaheed Zia to keep his position safe from his over ambitious rivals and aspirants.³⁸ He was allegedly involved in a multiplex conspiracy using Shaheed President Zia, Manzoor and Shawkat against one another. Ershad tried to bank on the confidence of the repatriated officials from Pakistan while at the same time he regularly participated in the freedom fighters' welfare programmes perhaps to appease General Manzoor. Since both General Shawkat and Ershad were the disciples of the *Pir of Atroshi*, he also maintained links with Shawkat using *Atroshi* connections. Shaheed Zia while remaining extensively engaged in political party building, elections and other development activities, did not interfere with the activities of Ershad who took full advantage of Zia's oversight and naivete.

Seemingly Shaheed Zia's own style of maintaining equilibrium within the army did not prove pragmatic. This led to surfacing of cleavage and contention within the armed forces. This irked and irritated General Manzoor most who

appeared as an intrepid critic of the regime. In order to tame Manzoor, Shaheed Zia transferred him from Chittagong to Bogra as GOC in 1980. In the event of Manzoor's defiance of the transfer order, the government, as a retaliatory move, placed him as the principal staff officer at Dhaka removing his command. But Manzoor once again defied Zia's authority and continued to stay in Chittagong as GOC.³⁹

During this time the conspirators became greatly active and masterminded the assassination of Shaheed Zia. At this stage the relationship between Shaheed Zia and Manzoor deteriorated to the extent of perpetual enmity.⁴⁰ Zia's increasing involvement in internal and international politics and efforts towards further broadening his political support base were negatively interpreted and thoroughly disliked by some senior army officials. Being impatient to exercise power they started making malicious and calumnious statements regarding Shaheed President Zia's rule and tried to discredit him in the eyes of the servicemen. Their malevolence stemmed from growing success and increased popularity of President Zia as undisputed charismatic national leader. Such discontent of the top brass military officials was manifested during their meeting with Shaheed Zia on 20 May 1981. Among the army generals Manzoor remained very vocal and expressed his unambiguous aversion.⁴¹ The dissatisfaction of some of his fellow-servicemen was calculated by Manzoor as an indication of their tacit support in the event of his revolt against Shaheed President Zia.⁴²

However, in matters of Manzoor's alleged plotting of the revolt some observers believe that Ershad had a distinct albeit remote role to play.⁴³ By the end of May 1981 the conspirators intensified their moves and greatly encouraged schism among freedom fighters versus non-freedom-fighters, and infuriated Manzoor against Shaheed Zia. During this time, the two

warring factions of BNP in Chittagong had been waiting for mediation of President Zia who paid a visit there on 29 May. On the same day Manzoor received his transfer order as commandant of the Defence Service Command and Staff College at Dhaka. In a similar manner Mir Shawkat was also transferred from Jessore to a non-commanding post in the military headquarters. Since Manzoor's perceiving Shaheed Zia was filled with malice, he failed to comply with the directives of the government.⁴⁴ Under such circumstances, a message was dispatched from the headquarters forbidding Manzoor to receive President Zia at the Chittagong Air port. This was interpreted as a great insult and humiliating for Manzoor who became 'furious and he made no bone about his fury'.⁴⁵ Some analysts made their observation that as part of on going intrigue, mutual enmity and contention was shrewdly created between the two freedom fighter generals and the conspirators successfully instigated Manzoor to organize a violent *coup* attempt against Shaheed President Zia.⁴⁶ Needless to say that their real intention was to draw attention of the masses to Manzoor's repulsion against Shaheed Zia and thereby befooling one enemy by another and consolidating their position vis-à-vis the pro-liberation forces.⁴⁷

During the mid-night of 29-30 May 1981, 20 army officials of the ranks of Brigadier to lieutenant attacked the Chittagong government Guest House and within less than twenty minutes killed nine persons including Shaheed President Zia, his three bodyguards and a policeman. As many as 21 bullets (27 according to another view) stroke Zia's body. Some quarters are of the opinion that Manzoor himself was not with the above twenty rebel officers. Despite Zia's assassination, the duration of the *coup* was for 48 hours. The general soldiers of the Chittagong cantonment did not support the *coup*. Likewise

the officers and jawans of other cantonments did not come forward to back up the rebellion. Consequently, within 48 hours both Manzoor and his 150 companions fled Chittagong losing the combat.⁴⁸

The *coup* attempt was surrounded by confusion with many questions remaining unsettled because of non-availability of information. It is worth mentioning that only 20 days before Zia's death, a conspiracy of killing him through an explosion in Chittagong was unveiled.⁴⁹ Observers were caught by surprise as to how Manzoor could plan a *coup* which failed to attract support or even sympathy of the general sepoys of Chittagong and other cantonments. The factor of loose presidential security measures at the Chittagong circuit house on 29-30 May has been attributed to preplanned conspiratorial move and alleged negligence and passivity of both the army chief and the army's intelligence chief.⁵⁰

Based on the white paper concerning Zia's assassination and information from other sources some sections argue that Manzoor and his followers had no intention of killing Shaheed President Zia but had plans 'to lift the President and force him to accept their demands.'⁵¹

After Zia's death a revolutionary council was formed by Manzoor and decisions were made to demote and terminate both the army chief and intelligence chief from the armed forces⁵² and select Mir Shawkat as the acting chief of staff. In his address to a gathering of some sepoys in Chittagoiig on 30 May Manzoor expressed his dissatisfaction against the existing administration and thus called upon the people to support his revolutionary council (biplobi parishad) in its endeavours to reestablish the status of the freedom fighters and construct a corruption free society.⁵³

As noted above, the mutiny was over within 48 hou Manzoor and his companions while trying to escape

caught and brought to a police station. There he managed to tape record his lengthy statement and requested the Thana officials to imprison him in the Chittagong central jail. But repudiating his prayer Manzoor was sent to the cantonment. An initial police source disclosed that on the way he was killed by the angry sepoy while another statement later described that agitated mob killed Manzoor.⁵⁴

Some scholars have forwarded different theoretical explanations regarding the mutiny and the attempted *coup*. The first being the personal revenge and aggrandizement that applies in case of General Manzoor who 'became prominent after the Sepoy Mutiny and Abu Taher's arrest.' Mascarenhas gives a detail account of Manzoor's desires in the following manner. "Zia trusted him... But even then Manzoor was nursing his own ambition... he was cocky and garrulous. He began to fret and fume and became openly resentful of Zia. Using the opportunity of tribal insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Manzoor built up a small empire for himself in the area. New units were raised, more equipments procured, and some of the brightest and most outgoing young officers in the army were slowly gathered to his command. In time Manzoor could boast that he commanded one-third of the Bangladesh Army and had under him the most well-trained Brigade Commanders and Staff Officers."⁵⁵ It is thus often established that Manzoor's high ambition and personal grudge were instrumental in staging the mutiny of May 30, 1981.

The conspiracy theory maintains that some forces constantly but very carefully encouraged factionalism within the armed forces with an evil design to eliminate the influence the freedom fighters in the army and had been successful to use freedom fighter generals against one another as evidenced by the brutal killing of Shaheed President Zia and General Manzoor. Sen Gupta regarded the *coup* attempt and the

assassination of Zia and then of Manzoor by some army people before trial as a deep rooted conspiracy.⁵⁶ 'The conspiracy, hatched by some repatriate officers and politicians, intended to liquidate such freedom fighter generals as Zia, Manzoor and Shawkat Ali and consolidate power of the pro-Pakistan elements.'⁵⁷ Another opinion indicates that the co-conspirators betrayed General Manzoor in this violent act. Khan while summarizing this interpretation noted that 'a group of repatriate officers encouraged Manzoor to stage a *coup* only to get rid of him. They knew that a *coup* attempt outside the capital had little chance of success, especially in Chittagong where Zia enjoyed considerable popularity among the soldiers and civilians. A slightly different version hints at a larger conspiracy of the repatriate officers who wished to eliminate the military leaders of the liberation war.'⁵⁸

Yet another explanation has been that Shaheed President Zia was killed because he tried to organize his own following among the masses with a people-based power politics and shifted his power base from the cantonments.

Zaman suggests that attempted seizure of power of May 30 took place due to the growing politicization of the military that resulted through their direct involvement in the country's liberation war converting them into guerilla force and then reconverting back into conventional army in the post liberation period. In the event of their feeling of deprivation they could stage guerilla style operation to kill national leader and capture power. Thus like the previous ones the *coup* attempt of May 30, 1981 had been triggered by the above officers and servicemen adopting the style of 'hit and run' as exercised in the above war.⁵⁹

Ahamed mentions that the brutal killing of President Zia can have correlations with the corporate interests of the Bangladesh army. The military since the mid-august 1975 *coup*

had been at the center of national politics exercising state power. 'Once entrenched in power, both political and economic, the military elite became intolerant of any other organized groups, especially the political forces which President Zia began nurturing since 1979.'⁶⁰ As such the attempts to seize state power stemmed from the intentions to continue the interests of the praetorian army. Ahmed made assertions that the interests of the jawans differed from those of the officers. Unlike the officers, the jawans were more concerned with their immediate economic needs like increase of salaries and other benefits and became skeptical about the political strategies of the military officials.⁶¹ When Zia balanced in favour of upholding the cause of politics and democracy 'it was not the jawans but the senior officers who were displeased and felt deprived.' As soon as President Zia launched BNP and lifted martial law these dissatisfied officers had to take a 'back seat in state affairs.'⁶² The unhappy and disgruntled top brass of the military therefore opted for severe action and staged the violent *coup*.

After the mutiny the top echelons of the army organized a meeting at Dhaka cantonment where General Ershad, Mohabbat Jan Chowdhury, Chief of General Staff Major General Nooruddin, GOC of 55 division Major General Abdur Rahman, and other repatriated officials were present. The meeting reviewed the killing of Manzoor but allegedly did not take any sort of measure against those involved in his killing. Some have raised questions regarding Manzoor's 'mysterious' killing terming the same as a preplanned affair. They argue that he was killed by only one bullet from a very short distance causing 4 and 2 inches deep hole in his head as evidenced by the post mortem report of the government doctor.⁶³ While under police custody Manzoor prayed for his life and wanted to be imprisoned. Had he not been killed, his

trial would have unveiled the conspirators with more information and details of the untold story.⁶⁴

Moreover, the tape- recorded statement of Manzoor was never made public. Besides, the secret trial of 31 accused associates of Manzoor did not follow the established rules or regulations of the army and they were denied of defending their self.⁶⁵ At the time of their trial Bangladesh *Mukti Joddha Sangsad*, *Mukti Joddha Shanghati Parishad*, and *Mukti Joddha Sangram Parishad* in a joint statement protested the allegedly force trial. These freedom fighter associations also raised questions regarding the neutrality of the controversial general acting as the president of the Field General Court Martial.⁶⁶

In the trial, 12 army officials were found guilty and on 23 September 1987 they were executed. Of them 10 were freedom fighters who had been awarded state honour for their heroic performance during the liberation war. They all were working in the Chittagong cantonment during the *coup* attempt. As noticed, a number of other freedom fighters positioned in different cantonments were also terminated from service although there was no evidence of their involvement in the Chittagong mutiny.⁶⁷ At the time of Zia's assassination, of the 50 major generals and brigadiers in the Bangladesh armed forces only 3 had been freedom fighters. Those who led the 11 sectors during the liberation war, four of them, Khaled Mosharrof, Taher, Shaheed Zia, and Manzoor, were killed ; Major Jalil was imprisoned for life; Shafiullah, after his retirement, was appointed as an ambassador ; Major General Main Chowdhury was given retirement and posted as ambassador; and Mir Shawkat Ali promoted as Lieutenant General was given forced retirement and sent abroad in ambassadorial post after President Zia's death.⁶⁸ The above scenario thus exposes how the freedom fighters within the Bangladesh armed forces were reduced to insignificance,

which can be explained as a consequence of a deep-rooted conspiracy and evil design against them. The position of the army chief General H.M. Ershad, however, remained unimpaired who later came up with the demands of army's 'constitutional' role in Bangladesh polity and shrewdly exploited the prevailing circumstances to ultimately snatch state power on 24 March 1982.



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CONCLUSION

Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman was one of those Third World statesmen who in the process of democratization of the polity had been engaged in the difficult tasks of state building and nation building. But unlike many of them he had obtained a great deal of success and accomplishments while performing those tasks. It was Zia who turned Bangladesh into a multi-party democracy from autocratic rule.

Shaheed President Zia was the most renowned hero of the country's liberation war in 1971. It is true that he remained not very known to the nation until the Pakistani military's crackdown on the innocent Bengali masses on the fateful night of 25th March 1971. He rose to the occasion in the midst of great uncertainty and non-action on the part of the then leadership and immediately declared Bangladesh's independence from the Chittagong radio station which greatly contributed to inspire millions of people to join the national liberation war. That he played such a historic role was a factor strong enough to provoke within him an urge to play a national role¹; and he found an opportunity for the same when he was brought by the sepoys and masses to the limelight and assumed state authority in the post-7 November 1975 Sepoy revolution. The nation found in Shaheed Zia all the qualities of charismatic leadership and extended their all cooperation in his socio-economic and political moves to achieve national development.

After assuming state power Shaheed President Zia's prime

efforts had been to initiate necessary constitutional and political reforms consistent with the desires and sentiments of the majority population and need of the time. As such it was imperative to highlight faith in Almighty Allah in the highest law of the land and make important alterations in the state principles to articulate Bangladeshi nationalism and economic and social justice in place of Bengali nationalism and socialism respectively. Such steps truly corroborated with the fundamental ideals of the independence movement and electrified the people with appropriate identity and just way of doing things to accomplish cherished goals. Zia's 19-Point programme served as a philosophy for introducing broad based reforms in the sectors of society, politics and economy. The people were thus enthusiastic to participate in the enormous task of building the nation supported by proper ideology, pragmatic approach and dynamic leadership. There was thus awakening of the nation with a new vision and missionary zeal of Shaheed President Zia who in the process obtained legitimacy of his rule and initiated well thought out socio-economic and political programmes for overall development of the country.

Shaheed Zia reorganized the political process where all political segments and actors belonging to extreme left, rightist and middle of the road associations could perform. President Zia was in favour of allowing all groups and parties to flourish irrespective of their extreme beliefs or opinions and thus he withdrew all sorts of ban in order to establish the democratic rights of organization and assemble. He did not believe in any policy of discrimination against certain sections and tried to wipe out the artificial division created by the previous regime in the name of pro and anti-liberation forces. He therefore emphasized on the concept of unity of all groups of people of this soil to remain ever vigilant against hegemonic and

imperialist foreign forces for protecting the country's sovereignty and preserving national security. The system he introduced was characterized by a unique combination of divergent elements. Thus not only the rightists and extreme leftists but also freedom fighters and collaborators were his political companions working in the same organization and participated in the social, economic and political programmes of the government.² He therefore showed 'adroit political skills in bringing together diverse political groups and accumulating political power through coalition building.'³

Zia uttered that he would make politics difficult and therefore tried to alter the traditional way of doing politics characterized by palace politics and involvement of only the urbanites to the exclusion of the majority rural people. He thus set new principles and standards for the national leaders and politicians and unlike his predecessors established himself as the people's president and often mixing with the common masses very openly breaking all protocols. President Zia popularized people-oriented politics by introducing his concept of 'politics of development' and such populist style assisted him in acquiring enormous public support that strengthened his rule. In the process he employed the mechanism of equality of opportunity and tried to materialize the state principle of economic and social justice in the lives of the ordinary citizens. Shaheed President Zia through his frequent visits to every nook and corner of the country propagated his all encompassing rural development programmes making the Swanirvar Gram Sarkar as the nucleus. There was huge gathering in his public meetings and the rural people were greatly amazed to find the head of the state at their door- steps or at the rural road- sides. President Zia's swanirvar programme, national revolution, education revolution, land reform, canal digging revolution, cooperative

movement and the like all attracted huge public support as evidenced by their spontaneous participation in most of these programmes. It was the people that remained very central and principal protagonist in both planning and implementation of these ventures. 'The disorganized nature of local administration was replaced by a more orderly system that spelt out the role of local bodies and comprehensive rules and regulations pertaining local governance were framed.'⁴ Local democracy was thus established through constituting representative bodies elected by the local residents on the basis of universal adult franchise. In order to materialize local development efforts and rural upliftment schemes, state's administrative apparatus had also been fashioned in that direction. Bureaucratic elitism was discarded and replaced by a people oriented development administration. President Zia's devolution of power and local governance by means of Gram Sarkar was chalked out to solve local problems through a grooming local leadership and bring about a drastic rural socio-economic change.⁵ Gram Sarkars in most instances had been able to materialize increased food production, mass literacy, population control, improved law and order situation and local adjudication. There were examples of successful interactions between the representatives of the Gram Sarkars, local self-government structures and the state bureaucracy along with better coordination to properly organize, plan and implement the development projects.

Shaheed President Zia not only restored multi-party people's democracy and a credible electoral process but also introduced a proper governance system where each organ of the government remained within its own jurisdiction and performed designated roles free from outside interference. Through a number of Presidential orders he brought positive changes in the political order including inter-institutional

relations. Executive-legislature relations were thus modified and sovereignty of the Jatiya Sangsad was ensured. Law-making and legislative scrutiny over executive actions had been maintained through various parliamentary devices and more importantly legislative committee structures. Zia regime also reestablished the independence of the judiciary by removing concerned autocratic measures of the Fourth Amendment and restored the powers of the High Court division to enforce the fundamental rights and the security and permanent tenure of the judges. Shaheed Zia therefore kept the judicial matters free from the interference of the executive organ. Ahmed mentioned that 'the army, bureaucracy, trade and business, judiciary and all professions were allowed to function and flourish according to the existing rules and practices. This policy worked because these institutions had been demolished during the AL regime and Zia gained the support of these powerful self-interest groups by restoring them and simply allowing them to function.'⁶

There are success stories of Shaheed President Zia regarding better management of the country's economic condition. This is because compared to the previous Awami League regime the amount of Gross National Product, Gross domestic Product, and the foreign exchange reserve went up considerably during his rule. In order to boost the economy through increased private and foreign investments, he introduced privatization and denationalization policies. Transferring nationalized industries to private hands proved pragmatic and the process contributed to increased production along with diversification of economic activities. His approach towards economic problems was based on realistic policies acting as catalyst to place the economy on a firm footing. His new industrial arrangements began to show positive results with favourable response from the business community and

foreign investors. In the rural development sector, bottom up approach was initiated and the development schemes like self-reliance effected increased food production and mitigated the on going exploitation of the poor. His strategies to involve the women folk in public and community services and steps for development of the youth and children marked his special concern for these sections of population. He has widely been regarded 'as a benevolent modernizaing leader laying emphasis on social and economic development of the country.'⁷ Shaheed President Zia's untiring mission to transform Bangladesh from 'international basket case' to a self-reliant prosperous nation obtained enormous admiration both from the people at home and outside the country. He brought great prestige for the country by pursuing an independent foreign policy and cultivating effective relations with the western powers and fruitfully with the brotherly Muslim countries of the Middle East. Obtaining required foreign assistance for development purposes, and export of skilled and unskilled man-power to Arab countries signified the economic diplomacy of the government. It was a matter of honour for a small state like Bangladesh that she was elected to the Security Council of the United Nations and under the dynamic leadership of President Zia played crucial roles in international bodies like the OIC, NAM and started the process of building South Asian regional cooperation.

It goes without saying that the effective political structures created by Shaheed President Zia contributed to filling the political vacuum of the country and setting proper rules of the game of politics. It is often said that there had been political stability in Bangladesh during his time. His political plans were intelligently employed to control and manage the country's overall affairs.

Although President Zia's accomplishments in the political

sector were quite impressive, his regime could not prevent rebellions from occurring within the armed force where he commanded significant support. The traumatic affairs, *coups*, and the sepoy revolution that brought Shaheed President Zia to assume authority, continued to instigate his opponents for state power. A trend of defying the authority of the central command emanating from rising expectations began to develop within certain quarters of the army. The more these quarters pressurized Zia, the more he moved towards the people as he believed that meeting their unending demands would be incompatible with the building of a democratic order. 'His belief in sharing power with the people rather than the army demonstrated a unique sense of responsibility.'⁸ President Zia through significant steps restored the status of the armed forces and started the process of raising their professionalism, but it did not stop the aspirants and conspirators who staged repeated *coup* attempts ultimately killed the country's one great son, Shaheed President Zia. History showed that the military leaders had been thrown out of power or killed when they alienated themselves from the masses with no means to peaceful transfer of power. But in case of President Zia, 'the tragedy was that he was killed at the height of his popularity and at a time when he was emerging as a successful leader both at home and abroad.'⁹ Unlike Sheikh Mujib, Shaheed Zia's killing led to mourning of the millions and the depth of shocks had been unprecedented in the history of this country manifesting the unreserved support of the whole Bangladeshi people for his ideals and policies.¹⁰

With the unfortunate demise of Shaheed Zia another significant chapter of Bangladesh's history was closed. Since his assumption of power until his death President Zia led the nation with his charismatic appeal and the record of his accomplishments in the tasks of national development was

great and unparalleled in contemporary Third world history. Unlike other developing societies where the system of rule and political organizations of military leaders collapsed immediately after their down fall, the institutional system erected by Shaheed President Zia in Bangladesh and the democratic processes and procedures he nurtured continued to remain popular until today. This is evidenced by the popularity of his own political organization, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party that had been voted to power through 1981 presidential election and subsequently became victorious in the Fifth, and Sixth parliamentary polls in 1991 and February 1996 respectively. In Seventh general election of June 1996, BNP emerged as the ever- largest official opposition by bagging 116 parliamentary seats out of 300 in the Jatiya Sangsad. After his demise Shaheed President Zia's noble mission passed on to his political associates and followers, more importantly, his better half Begum Khaleda Zia who steered the BNP at a critical stage during the nine-year long autocratic military rule of General Ershad. While successfully organizing the anti-autocracy movement, Begum Khaleda Zia led the 7-Party political alliance and played an instrumental role in ousting military dictator Ershad and restoring parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh after winning the 1991 general election. Under her dynamic leadership the BNP got institutionalized with a firm footing and mass following down to the remotest corners of the country. Begum Khaleda Zia since her assuming the post of the party president has been engaged in realizing Shaheed Zia's dream and as a champion of democracy and *deshnetri* she has proved her capabilities and become the most popular national leader of the Bangladeshi people.

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4. H. Zafarullah, 'The Legacy of Zia' in ed. *The Zia Episode in Bangladesh Politics*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996, p.176.
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8. Moudud Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
9. *Ibid*, p.146.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Zia's First Council of Advisers

[operational from 21 April 1977]

Ziaur Rahman

President And CMLA

President's Secretariat; Cabinet Secretariat; Defence; Foreign Affairs;
Finance; Home Affairs.

Abdus Sattar

Vice-President

Law and Parliamentary Affairs.

Musharaf Hussain Khan

DCMLA and Chief of Naval Staff; Ports, Shipping and Internal Water
Transport; Flood Control, Water Resources and Power; Forests, Fisheries
and Livestock; and Communications.

Abdul Gaffar Mahmud

DCMLA and Chief of Air Staff; Aviation and Tourism; Posts, Telegraphs
and Telephones; Petroleum (until 12 July 1977); and Food (until 12 Oct 1977).

Abul Fazal

Education, Scientific and Technological Research and Atomic Energy; and
Cultural Affairs and Sport (until 22 Jun 1977).

Kazi Anwarul Haq

Jute (until 12 Oct 1977); Roads, Road Transport and Railways; and Land
Administration and Land Reforms.

Mohammad Abdur Rashid

Public Works and Urban development

Mirza Nurul Huda

Planning.

Mirza Nurul Huda

Planning

Mohammad Ibrahim
Health and Population Control.

Banita Roy
Relief and Rehabilitation.

A.K.M. Hafizuddin
Industries (until 10 July).

M.M. Haque
Manpower Development, Labour and Social Welfare.

Azizul Haq
Agriculture.

Akbar Kabir
Information and Broadcasting (until 12 Oct 1977).

Mohammad Saifur Rahman
Commerce

Muzaffar Ahmed
Textiles (from 28 Jun 1977)

Syed Ali Ahsan
Education, Scientific and Technological Research and Atomic Energy; and
Cultural Affairs and Sport (from 22 Jun 1977)

Jamaluddin Ahmed
Portfolio: Industries (from 10 Jul 1977)

Ashfaq Hossain Khan
Petroleum and Minerals (from 12 Jul 1977)

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury
Information and Broadcasting (from 12 Oct 1977)

Abdul Momen Khan
Food (from 12 Oct 1977)

S.M. Shafiul Azam
Jute (from 12 Oct 1977)

Source : Habib Zafarullah ed. *The Zia Episode in Bangladesh Politics*, New Delhi :
South Asia Pub. 1996 pp. 180-81

Appendix 2

Zia's First Cabinet

(Formed 29 June 1978)

Ziaur Rahman

President

Defence; Finance; Cabinet Affairs; Science & Technology

Abdus Sattar

Vice-President

Law & Parliamentary Affairs; Parliament Secretariat; EC

Mashiur Rahman

Senior Minister

Railways and Road Transport

Mirza Nurul Huda

Planning

Shah Azizur Rahman

Labour and Industrial Welfare

Kazi Anwarul Haq

Civil Aviation and Tourism

M. Shamsul Huq

Foreign Affairs

Azizul Haq

Agriculture and Forests

S.M. Shafiul Azam

Jute

Abdul Momen Khan

Food

Majedul Haq

Establishment

Abdul Halim Chowdhury

Local Government, Rural development and Cooperatives

B.M. Abbas

Power, Flood Control and Water Resources

Mustafizur Rahman

Home Affairs

Roshraj Mondal

Relief and Rehabilitation

Mohammad Saifur Rahman

Commerce

Jamaluddin Ahmed

Industries

Badrudozza Chowdhury

Health and Population Control

Kazi Zafar Ahmed

Education (until 11 Oct 1978)

Shamsul Huda Chowdhury

Cultural Affairs and Sports

Nurul Huq

Ports, Shipping and Inland Water Transport

Enayetullah Khan

Petroleum and Mineral Resources (until 19 Oct 1978)

Moudud Ahmed

Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones

S.A. Bari

Manpower Development and Social Welfare

Amina Rahman

Women's Affairs

Mirza Golam Hafiz

Land Administration and Land Reforms

K.M. Obaidur Rahman

Fisheries and Livestock

Abdul Alim

Textiles

Habibullah Khan

Information and Broadcasting

Abdur Rahman

Public Works and Urban development

Abdul Baten

Education

Akbar Hossain

Petroleum and Mineral Resources

Ministers of State

Fashiuddin Mahtab

M.A. Matin

Source : *Ibid*, pp. 184-186.

Appendix 3

Macroeconomic Policy Indicators, 1973-81

	The Mujib Period 1972/73-1974/75	The Zia Period 1975/76- 1980/81
Industrial Policy	Socialist, limited role for the private sector	Emphasis on the private sector
Agricultural Policy controls	Private agriculture; large government subsidies on inputs and some control over agricultural prices	Private agriculture; low subsidies on agricultural input; removal of over agricultural prices
Incomes Policy	Partial adjustment of wages to inflation	Complete
Subsidies on Public utilities and Industrial Inputs	Massive	Moderate
Foreign Aid	Limited	Moderately large
Foreign Trade	State controlled and nationalized	Moderately liberalized; emphasis on private trade

Source : Compiled from Aktar Hossain, 'The Economy Towards Stabilization' in Habib Zafarullah ed, *op. cit.*, p. 73

Appendix 4

Main Macroeconomic Policy and Performance Indicators during 1973-81

	The Mujib period (Annual average) (1972/73-1974/75)	The Zia Period (Annual average) (1975/76-1980/81)
Per-capita real income (Taka, 1973 prices)	635	728
Population growth (% per annum)	2.9	2.3
Real GDP growth (%)	5.1	5.5
Agricultural real wages (Taka/day)	6.5	6.6
Manufacturing real wages (1969/70 = 100)	56	74
Gross domestic saving (% of GDP)	0	2.2
Gross domestic investment (% of GDP)	6.7	10.5
Government revenues (% of GDP)	5.1	8.3
Government spending (% of GDP)	13.5	15.8
Composition of spending		
Defence	5.4	7.8
Economic Services	49.2	55.6
Health	4.2	5.1
Housing	2.9	3.8

Source : *Ibid.*

Appendix 5

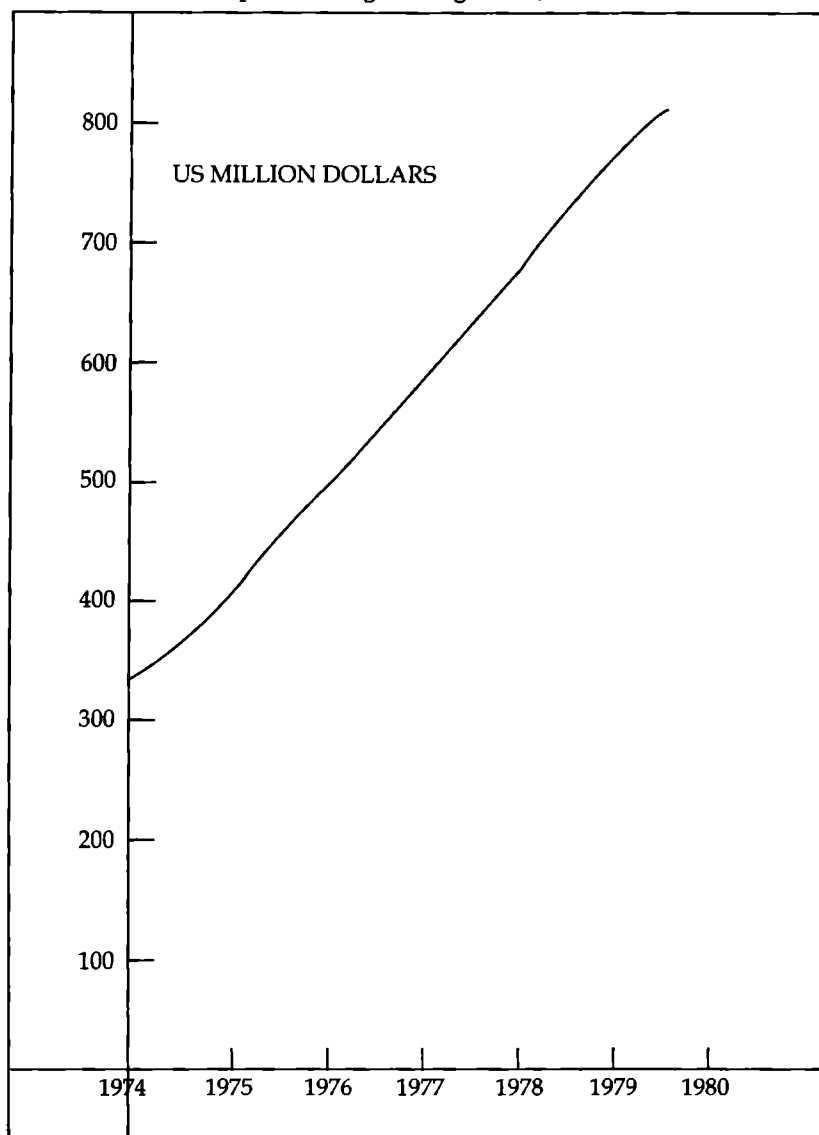
Gross Domestic Product (1974-75 to 1979-80) (Constant 1972-73 prices, in mn Taka)

Item	1974-75	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80
Agriculture	29,701	32,161	34,542	35,198	35,803
Industry	3,735	4,650	5,130	5,356	5,365
Construction	1,756	2,306	2,684	3,150	3,727
Power & Gas	265	260	413	475	517
Transport	2,615	3,023	3,235	3,403	3,536
Commerce	3,924	4,203	4,797	4,731	4,869
Housing	2,494	2,698	2,806	2,918	3,035
Public Administration	2,462	3,033	3,361	3,663	3,943
Bank and Insurance	349	431	470	508	522
Other Services	3,297	3,573	3,752	3,940	4,208
Total	50,598	56,438	60,890	63,340	65,525

Source : Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Finance, *Bangladesh Economy Survey 1980-81* (Dhaka : 1981), Islam, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

Appendix 6

Export Earning of Bangladesh, 1975-80



Source : S. S. Islam, *op. cit.*, 1988 p. 156.

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