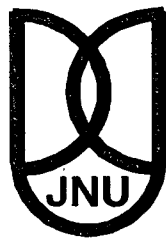


**ISLAM AS A FACTOR IN FOREIGN POLICY OF
BANGLADESH, SINCE 2001**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2010**



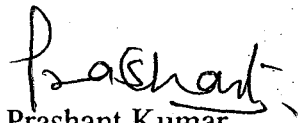
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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "ISLAM AS A FACTOR IN FOREIGN POLICY OF BANGLADESH, SINCE 2001", submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.



Prashant Kumar

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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Preface

Foreign policy of any country is primarily a projection of its socio-economic and political dynamics in international politics. Bangladesh is not an exception in its Foreign Policy Formulation. The Domestic dynamics, regional and international environment play significant role in the foreign policy making. Apart from its geographical Location, historical legacy, and economic compulsion, the nature of leadership and their ideology has become a crucial determinant in the foreign policy formulation of Bangladesh. The socio-cultural background and religious inclination of the leaders of the country had led the foreign relations of Bangladesh in accordance to their socio-political inclinations. In this process, apart from the ethos and principles, viz Socialism, democracy, Secularism and Bengali Nationalism, of freedom struggle of Bangladesh, the country had emphasized special solidarity with the Islamic world. Religion has remained a dynamic factor in Bangladeshi society; it has also been reinforced by the re-emergence of a universal Islamic identity after 9/11 as an issue in global politics. The point at which these domestic and external identities have intertwined has impacted on the emergence of Islam as a factor in Bangladeshi foreign policy. During military regime (1975-90), the Islam had become the most important determinant of foreign Policy and in 1988 Gen. H. M Ershad had declared Islam the official religion of Bangladesh.

After the 9/11 global politics has dramatically changed in western world in general and Muslim world in particular. Political Islam and the concept of the Muslim brotherhood have been shown in Muslim countries and it's also reflected in foreign policies of Muslim countries. Three broad types of Islamic orientation may be identified: radical, conservative and moderate or secular. A moderate wishes to preserve Islamic culture and norms, but without taking this to the political arena. Islamic revival or fundamentalism in its radical aspect seeks to interpret Islam as a reform movement and is opposed to modernistic interpretations of Islamic teachings which are attempted by modernist and liberal-minded Muslims. A conservative interprets Islam in legalistic-ritualistic terms that helped the ruling elites to use Islam as a political instrument.

These orientations has influenced to Bangladeshi society, politics and foreign policies. Bangladesh is certified by western countries as a moderate Muslim country and it is true that Bangladesh is second largest democratic Muslim country of world.

The terrorist attacks in New York on September 11 2001, occurred during the election campaign in Bangladesh, both major parties condemned the attacks and promised to help to America's War on Terror. And after assuming power Khaleda Zia offered to United States use of Bangladesh's air space, ports and other facilities to launch military attacks against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. But the ground reality was different. Several Islamic militant outfits were operating at that time which aimed at wiping out all enemies of Islam including the United States and India. The Khalida Zia Govt. refused to acknowledge the growing activities of the Jehadi terrorist elements from its territory while continuing to pay lip service to the so called war against international terrorism. Jamaat-i-Islami (fundamentalist party) which was participating in government stood on the 'War against terrorism, however, contrasts sharply to that of the more established parties. In the last BNP government the ties between Bangladesh and other Muslim countries remain strong due to the expression of Islamic consciousness; its expression may be determined by specific contents and situations.

The proposed study attempts to understand the Islam as a factor in the formulation of Bangladesh's foreign policy in particular and its relations with Islamic World in general, in the changing Global scenario since 2001. The relevance of Islam in inter-state relations has increased in the contemporary times particularly after 9/11 and Bangladesh is no exception. Islam had been an important determinant to shaping the nature of Bangladeshi foreign policy and to provide direction and content to the country's international relations since its independence. This study would make an effort to trace the salient features and determinants of Foreign policy of Bangladesh. The background and the emergence of Islam as a determinant factor and it's the role in Bangladesh's foreign policy will be assessed. This study would attempt to analyze the changes and continuity in its approaches and patterns of Bangladesh's foreign policy towards Islamic world.

The study shows that how Islam in Bangladesh relation while it deals with Pakistan and India. What are the reactions of Bangladesh in various issues that are related to

Muslim countries after 9/11? And study analyzes the Socio-Cultural and Economic Implications in Bangladesh's Domestic and Regional Politics as Islam's influence.

The proposed research is, descriptive, exploratory and explanatory in nature. The study will squeeze both primary and secondary sources by using both deductive and inductive methods.

In introductory chapter will introduce the evolution of Bangladeshi foreign policy, the role of religion in international relations and the theoretical and practical aspects of Islam as a factor in Bangladeshi foreign policy. And second chapter, an effort has traced the salient features, causes and background of Bangladeshi foreign policy. A study will be made how Islam has emerged as important factor after 9/11 in international politics and role of Islam has increased in formulations of foreign policy of Bangladesh.

The third chapter 'Islam as a Factor in Bangladeshi Foreign Policy, since 2001' has made attempt to critically analyze the foreign policy of Bangladesh towards Muslim countries. Here also, the focus will be to examine Bangladesh's role in Islamic organizations particularly the OIC, as well as towards crucial issues related to Islamic community. Forth chapter 'Islam's influences in Bangladesh's Domestic and Regional Politics: Analysis of Socio-Cultural and Economic Implications' finds out that How the factor of Islam in Bangladeshi foreign policy impact domestically and its effects on relationship with the South Asian region particularly India and Pakistan.

The final chapter traces the changes and dynamism of Bangladeshi foreign policy and influence of Islam as a pull and push factor in its foreign diplomacy. And it concludes the finding of all chapters.

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	i
<i>Abbreviations</i>	ii- iii
<i>List of Tables</i>	iv

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....1-19

1.1. The dynamics of Islamic Conception towards Foreign Policy and International System:

1. 1.1. The Classical Notion

1.1. 2. Islamic State System

1.1. 3. The Ottoman Empire and the Modern law of Nations

1.1. 4. Islam and Modern Community of Nations

1.1.5. The Islam in the Post Cold War

1.2. Islam and Political History of Bangladesh

1.2.1. Historical background

1.2.2. Rise and Growth of Fundamentalism in Bangladesh and its International linkage

CHAPTER 2. DETERMINANTS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF BANGLADESH'S FOREIGN POLICY.....20-53

2. 1. Introduction

2. 2. Foreign policy of Bangladesh: Creation and Development

2. 3. Major Determinants of Foreign Policy

2.3.1. The Domestic Context

2.3.2. The International Context

2. 4. Major Characteristics

2.5. Bangladesh's Foreign Policy: Main Objectives

**CHAPTER 3. ISLAM AS A FACTOR IN FOREIGN POLICY OF BANGLADESH:
SINCE; 2001.....54-91**

- 3. 1. Introduction
- 3.2. Bangladesh's Relation with the Islamic Countries during Mujib Period
 - 3. 2. 1. Military Governments and Politico-Security Relation with Muslim Countries
- 3.3. Islam as a Determination Since 2001
 - 3.3.1. Bangladesh Reaction on American Invasion of Iraq
 - 3.3.2. Bangladeshi Stand on Israel-Palestine Issue
 - 3.3.3. Politico- Security Relations with Islamic Countries After 2001
 - 3.3.4. Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Bangladesh
- 3.4. Economic Relation with the Islamic Countries
- 3.5. Bangladesh Engagements in D-8

**CHAPTER 4. ISLAM'S INFLUENCES IN BANGLADESH'S DOMESTIC AND
REGIONAL POLITICS: ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC
IMPLICATIONS....92-127**

- 4. 1. Impact of Fundamentalism on Society and Culture
 - 4. 1.1. Religious Sociology of Bangladesh
 - 4. 1.2. Recent Pro-Islamic Trends
 - 4.1.3. Marginalization of Minorities
- 4.2. Fundamentalism and the Growth of Jamaat -i-Islami, Madrassas
 - 4.2.1. Foreign Factors
 - 4.2.2. Global funding
- 4.3. Cost of Domestic Terrorism on Foreign Direct Investment
- 4.4. Islam in India Bangladesh Relation
 - 4.4.1. Insurgency in India and its Connection with Bangladesh
 - 4.4.2. Bangladesh and Pakistan's Proxy War against India
- 4.5. Islam as a Factor in Bangladesh Pakistan Relation
- 5. CONCLUSION.....128-134**
- REFERENCES.....135-146**

Acknowledgement

This work could never reach this stage without continuous help and guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Sanjay Bhardwaj. When I was a little bit puzzled in initial period of my dissertation he has provided me courage and inspiration to work in this field. His contribution in building up the whole idea and put up the dissertation in this shape is undeniable. He has not only given me invaluable suggestion and guidance, he has also listened to all my foolish questions with patience and care. The experience of one year research under him is one of the finest moments in my student carrier. I am greatly indebted to him.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the chairperson of the centre, Prof. Ganganath Jha who provided a congenial academic environment and research facilities. I take this opportunity to thanks my all teachers in South Asian Studies for their encouragement.

I also equally owe sincere gratitude to Prof. Anand Shankar Singh, Dr. A. Gangtharan, Dr. Ghanshyam, Department of History, BHU, Varanasi, Who encouraged me since my Post Graduation and have been a constant pillar of support and guidance.

The cooperative library staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University, IDSA, Teen Murti and South Asia Foundation has been instrumental in the completion of this effort by proving their help in getting required references. I am thankful to them.

My friends and seniors Aditya Mishra, Amar Singh, Anuj Radour, Karmveer Singh, Luxmi Narayan Singh, Sandeep Rajpoot, Gourav Singh, Capt. Prashant, Pawan Verma, Vikas, Ramanand Mishra, Jatin Dubey, kept encouraging me to complete the work. I express my gratitude to them.

Finally I regard it as my obligation to express my heartfelt thanks to Almighty God, and to my family for their love, constant encouragement and moral support throughout my work in all possible ways.

No effort has been spared to enhance the quality and accuracy of this work. However, I own the sole responsibility of short comings, if any in this study.


(Prashant Kumar)

ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
AL	Awami League
ALTID	Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDR	Bangladesh Rifles
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CHT	Chitgaun Hill Track
DFI	Defence Force Intelligence
DGFI	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLFRD	Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development
HRD	Human Resource Development
HT	Hijbur Tahrir
HUJI-B	Harkat ul Jihad-al Islami of Bangladesh
ICM	Islamic Constitutional Movement
ICS	Islami Chhatro Shibir (Islamic Students Camps)
IDL	Islamic Democratic League
IJOF	Islamic Jatiya Oikya Front (Islamic National Unit)
IOJ	Islami Oikya Jote (Islamic Unit Front)
ISI	Inter Service Intelligence
JI	Jaamat-i-Islami

JMB	Ja'amatul Mujaheedin Bangladesh
JMJB	Jagroto Muslim Janata Bangladesh (Emergent Muslim Masses of Bangladesh)
JP	Jatiya Party
JSD	Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (National Socialist Party)
KLO	Kamtapur Liberation Organization
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNF	Mizo National Front
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NDFB	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
NLFT	National Liberation Front of Tripura
NSI	National Security Intelligence
NTB	Non-Tariff Barriers
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
RMG	Raidy-Made Garments
SAARC	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
TK	Taka
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Asom
UN	United Nations
UNB	United News Bangladesh
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
VPA	Vested Property Act

LIST OF TABLES:

Table No. 3.1. Labour forces of Bangladesh in Gulf countries:	88
Table No. 3.2. Bangladesh Trade with D-8 Countries:	90
Table No. 4.1. Investment Scenario in Bangladesh:	108

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1

Introduction

The significance of religion in contemporary world lies in its political influence. As a potent force in the life of states and in inter-state relations, its assertion has been a striking phenomenon in modern times. The relevance of Islam to international relations goes back to the founding of the religion itself. For Muslims of the classic times Islam was not only the true and universal religion, but also the foundation of the conception of the international system.

1. The Dynamics of Islamic Conception towards Foreign Policy and International System:

The dealing with the history of the modern international system medieval period of no less than a thousand years is often ignored. But this “*Dark Age*”¹ of international relation witnessed the birth and growth of the international system of Islam. At the time of rise of Islam, there were two world powers- the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. By 642, ten years after the death of the prophet, Persian Empire was destroyed and the Byzantine Empire was stripped of the provinces in Africa and Asia. Islam achieved its full political maturity within the first century and its greater geographical extent during the first seven hundred years its existences.²

With the spread of Islam it was necessary for Islamic state to provide a system of conducting its relation with non-Muslim state as well as with the tolerated religion community within its own territory. An especial branch of the law was developed by the Muslim jurists to meet the needs may be called as Islamic law of nation. The experience of Islam provided a system designed to maintain order within the Islamic state and to guide its relation with other non Muslim states. This system, the product of centuries of political activity, reveals Islam’s effort to cope with the problem of constructing stable and orderly society.³

Islam is both a faith and socio-political system; its political organization is based on the concept of agreement (ahad) between, the Khalifa, the ruler and the Ra’iyya, the

¹ This word is firstly used by W.A. Downy

2. Nutting Antony, *The Arabs: A Narrative History from Mohammed to Present*, (New York: New American library 1964)

3. Majid Khadduri, *the Islamic Law of Nations* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), p3.

ruled. This agreement obliges the Khalifa to provide protection of life and property to his people, and oblige the people for obey their rulers who must reign according to the principles of justice, under the sovereignty of god and the authority of his law the Sariya (Islamic laws). The Khalifa is the temporal ruler of the state and defender of the faith. Thus, the Khalifa's functions are political as well as religious to maintain faith execute legal decisions, protect the frontier of Islam, raise the canonical taxes and in general himself to super wise the administration of affair without delegating too much authority.⁴ In order to reconstruct the Islamic theory of international relations it is necessary to examine the Islamic principles and values and their interpretation by the various schools in the classical period.

Quran lays down a pattern according to which a healthy social organization of all marking can be farmed. Some of the most important principles of foreign policy are found in Quran are -

- Mutual respect for pacts and treaties (8:58).
- Honesty and integrity in all dealings (16:92).
- International justice (5: 8).
- Quest for peace (8:61).
- Respect for neutrality of non combatants (4:89).
- Prohibition of imperialist for exploitations (16:92).
- Protection and support for Muslims abroad (8:72).
- Friendly relation with neutral power (60:8, 9).
- Kindness in international relations (55:60).
- Just retribution for transgressors (2:194).

Thus Islam established a principle which proved revolutionary for international relation. The Quran proclaims the equality of all men and it is against all discrimination based on color, race or language. Islam favors mutual understanding and co-operation

4. Albert Haruni (1975), *Arabic Thought in Liberal Age*, London: Oxford University Press. p103-104

between Muslims and non-Muslims. Its aim to build an amicable and unified society based on permanent values and principles.⁵

The principles and values can be pin pointed as -

- The equality of man.
- Man, the vice regent (Khalifa) of god on earth, is to rule in conformity with his will.
- Each individual is held responsible for his decision and actions.
- Fairness and justice are enjoined on Muslims in all dealings including with their enemies.

These principles supply some of the basic ingredients of relation among Muslims as individuals groups and states. They clearly emphasize the minimum requirements of brotherly and peaceful relation among muslims namely- The absence of aggression and violence and the spirit of mutual help and co-operations. The Quran made it obligatory for Muslims to adhere to these principles in their domestic and foreign relations. Prophet Mohammed Sahab followed this frame work when he migrated from Mecca to Medina and founded there the first Islamic state in history.

1.1. The Classical Notion:

In order to analyze the classical Islamic theory of international relations it would be useful to discuss the view of some scholars. According to Khadduri, Islamic theory divides the world into two parts: Dar-al-Islam (the territory of Islam) and Dar-al-Harb (territory of war). The former which might be called *Pax -Islamica*, corresponded to the territory under Muslim rule. Its inhabitants were Muslim and non-Muslims of the tolerated religious communities, who were called the people of the books *Ahl-al -Kitab*, or Dhimmis. The *Dar-al- Harb*, on the other hand, was regarded as the territory outside the pale of Muslim law. It follow, according to Khadduri, that arrangements made between Dar-al-Islam and Dar-al-Harb must be short lived by necessity because they carry with them no implied recognition of equal states under Islamic law.⁶

5. Abdul Hamid Abu Sulman, (1978), *Islamic Theory of International Relation In contemporary World*, USA: University of Pennnsylvania pp.456-470

6' Majid Khadduri, (1966), *The Islamic Law of Nations*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.p.14

The concept of Jihad is referred to by many writers as the instrument which would be used to transform the Dar-al-Harb into the Dar-al-Islam. In fact, it could be said that a popular but erroneous idea was that Islam attained its great success by violent means. But many other scholars opposed to this understanding of Islamic approach to international relation. According to them, the division of the world into two communities was not spelled out in Quran or the Hadith. Thus, it had no basis in Islamic Shariah. Muhammad Abu-Zahra, a prominent Muslim jurist, argues that the division of the world into *Dar-al-Islam* and *Dar-al-Harb* formula divided by Muslim jurists in the eighth and ninth centuries to explain the existing situation. Thus the division was intended as an explanation of the existing international system in which war has the predominant role. Therefore it was only a temporary division prompted by the state of war which existed during the formative years of the Islamic state. So the theory of Dar-al-Islam and the Dar-al-Harb is rejected by many Muslim scholars and jurists. According to them, conflict was not essential ingredient in the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim states. These writers support their view by pointing out that the Islamic Dawa, the invitation to adopt Islam was based on logical persuasion and idealism not on force and violence in support of their view they cite many verses from the Quran:

“Ye, who believe! Enter into Islam (peace) whole heartedly, and follow not the footsteps of evil one, for no is to you and a favored enemy. But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do also incline towards peace and trust in God, for this is the one that hearth and call things”. It should be pointed out that the law of war was considered by many writers to be basic and the law of peace to be the exception in international system of Islam. They concentrate on the doctrine of Jihad, without taking into consideration the important principles which Islam had introduced regarding the law of peace.⁷ The concept of Jihad was subjected to many misinterpretations. The objective of Jihad was not fighting per se; it was a concept to apply faithfully the Islamic principles for social justice and this could be achieved by other means such as Dawa. Even at the height of Islamic conquest, battles were won not only by actual fighting but also peaceful means.

7. Muhammad Hamidullah,(1986),*The Muslim conduct of state*, Lahore: Sh.Muhammad Asharaf, p162

The concept of Islamic law of nations is an extension of Islamic law. The Shariah designed to govern the relations of Muslims, with non-Muslims, whether inside or outside the territory of Islam, but we cannot say that this was separate system in international law. It is based on different sanctions, and distinct from one another. Therefore the Islamic law of nations was binding on territorial groups as well as individual. Like all ancient law, the law of Islam was inherently personal rather than territorial, for if Islam were intended for all mankind, the territorial basis of law would be irrelevant.

The Islamic state passed through various states of evolution, until it acquired universal attributes. It began as a city-state in Madina (622A.D.) and expanded later to incorporate Arabia and neighboring countries as well as a vast area in southern Asia and northern Africa. It culminated in a golden age of ascendancy with the establishment of 'Abbasid dynasty' (750 A.D.), it was as a sovereign state in the modern community of nations.

This Islamic state was compelled in practice to accommodate the realities of surrounding conditions and to accept certain limitations, notwithstanding that the theory it recognized no state besides itself. In this period leading jurists begins to devote attention to the law governing the relation of Islamic state with contemporary political communities and created works dealing with the problems arising from the encounters of Muslim with non-Muslim in war and peace. In sixteenth century, the Dar-al-Islam accepted the state of peace rather than the stage of war. The Muslim rulers agreed to deal with Christian princes on the basis of reciprocity and mutual interest.

1.2. Islamic State System:

After coming new sovereign state in Muslim world, there were new development in Islamic law of nations. One by one independent Muslim ruler came before the 16th century. The Islamic universal state became transformed into an Islamic state system, following a long process of decentralization and break-up, just as universal into a European state system.

At the opening of sixteenth century, a permanent split began which divided Islam into three political entities namely-Persia, Turkey and Arabia. This gave rise to complex

legal problems, pertaining to the recognition of Muslim states by one other, the equality and reciprocity of their inter relationships, and the treatment of the subjects of each Muslim state to other. When the split in Islam began at the opening of sixteenth century, neither Turkey nor Persia was prepared to recognize the other, nor to regulate their relationships on the basis of equality and reciprocity. When these Muslim states, from their contacts with European nations, began to learn the principle of individual allegiance based on territorial rather the religious affiliation.⁸

The most notable instrument that recognized peace as the normal relationship between Islamic and non-Islamic states was the treaty of Ottoman Porte (1535) concluded by sultan Sulayman with Francis I, the king of France⁹. This treaty provided quite a few innovations in relationship between Islam and other nation. This treaty was based on equality. By this treaty the French were to enjoy exemption from the payment of poll tax.

The other important change in international law was the adoption by the Islam of principle of territorial sovereignty and territorial law necessitated by territorial segregation. Like the medieval Christian concepts of state and law. The classical Islamic state was universal and its law essentially personal rather than territorial. To a state with a world outlook territorial limitations are irrelevant. But when the Islamic state disintegrated, the constituent entities emerged fully sovereign and each tended to divert the mode of loyalty of its subjects from universal to territorial values.

1.3. The Ottoman Empire and the Modern law of Nations:

Despite radical changes in the pattern of Islam's external relation with Christendom, the Ottoman Empire was not regarded as the part of the European system nor subject to its law of nations¹⁰. The European powers often conclude treaties or special convention with Muslim rulers to regulate their relationships on matters governed by customary rules among European nations. The laws and customs of Islam differed so much from European traditions that the modern law of nations was not deemed applicable to the Ottoman Empire.

8.T.W. Walker (1999), *A History of the law of Nations*, London: Cambridge University Press pp-37-39.

9. Baran I.De Testa(1964),*The Treaty of Ottoman Porte* (trans).Peris,Vo-1 pp-15-21.

10.Robert Plumer Ward(1795), *An Enquiry in to the foundation of history of the law of nations in Europe*, London Vo-2, pp321-22

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the European powers deemed it necessary to treat Ottoman Empire as a member of European community and it was admitted to participate in public law and concert of Europe on the invitation of the powers signatory to the treaty of Paris(march 30, 1856) over a long span before 1856 the ottoman empire had began to participate in the operation of the law of nations by establishing diplomatic intercourse with European nations and by entering into treaty relationship with them.

1.4. Islam and Modern Community of Nations:

Twentieth-century Islam has reconciled itself to the western secular system, a system which had also undergone radical changes from the medieval origin. Even Muslim thinkers who have objected to the secularization of the law governing Islam's domestic affair have accepted marked departures from the law and traditional practices, which governed external relations. In the inception of century none advocated the restoration of the traditional Islamic system of external relations. This attitude is consistent with the trend towards a worldwide community of nations developing over long period, and the active participation of Muslim states in international councils and organizations has committed Islam to the cause of peace and international security. After Second World War a few Muslim thinkers began to reflect on the enormous changes that had taken place in Islam under the impact of the west. Some have regretted that Islam became divided and weak, other have taken a critical view of the complete integration of Islam's public order within the larger world order.¹¹ But all seem to agree that Muslim states should assert a certain degree of solidarity in international councils which would enhance their prestige and serve their common interests.

The rise of statehood of Muslim territories, such as Pakistan and Indonesia has added impetus to the trends. A few Muslim leaders have called for the holding of Islamic conferences and the formation of regional pacts and alliances among Muslim states. This new trends, called neo-Pan Islamism is not aimed at the restoration of Islamic unity, as was the pan Islamic movement in 19th century, nor does it indicate a desire to reign state, the exercise of Islamic traditional system in external relations. It is rather an inspiration,

11. Nelly Lahoud, and Anthony Johns (2005), *Islam in World Politics*, London: Routledge.pp132-33

perhaps not yet shared by all, to cooperate as an Islamic bloc within the community of nations.¹²

Furthermore, a few Muslim thinkers, who advocate an active participation in international council, envisage the possibility of the contribution by Islam to the development of a peaceful and more stable world order. The reconciliation between the Christian and Islamic systems could set a precedent for reconciliation between other rival systems. Islam's centuries of experiences contributed to an expending world order, which can be discussed as under.

First: the conflict and competition between Islam and Christendom, which endured over a long period, demonstrated that diverse system could co-exist and ultimately become integrated into worldwide system when ever both parties were prepared to accommodate themselves to changing circumstances.¹³

Secondly: in the Islamic experiences of international relations the individual was viewed as a subject of the law governing external relations, and control authorities dealt with him directly, apart from the state in the past. Islam recognized the individual as a subject because its system was personal, but in a shrinking world. It would seem that the individual's claim to protection under the modern law of nations has become a pressing necessity. It can be taken for the granted that Muslims would welcome the adoption of such a principle in the modern law of nations, as reflected in their acceptance of the declaration of human rights, since traditionally Islamic law recognized the individual as subject on the international plan.

Third: Islam as a way of life stressed moral principles, apart from religious doctrine, in the relations among nations. The historical experiences of Islam demonstrate a paradox that religious doctrine as basis for the conduct of the state promoted conflict and continuous hostilities with other nations, but religion as a sanction for moral principles promoted Muslims and to observe human principles embodied in the law of war during hostilities with other nations. The historical experience of Islam demonstrate

12. Jacob M Landau (1991), *The politics of Pan –Islam: Ideology and organization*, New York: Oxford University Press.

13. Majid Khadduri (1966), *The Islamic Law of Nations*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, p.14

that any system of public order, on the national as well as the international level, would lose its meaning if it is divorced completely from moral principles stress on.¹⁴

1.5. The Islam in the Post Cold War:

The Islamic resurgence is a broad based, complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that came after the Cold War. This has been variously described as the 'fundamentalism,' 'renewal,' 'revival' or 'repoliticisation' of Islam, Islamic 'radicalism' and as 'militant Islam.' The way to understand the Islamic revival as a modern phenomenon must be through an understanding of the modern milieu in existing Muslim societies- their economies, politics and cultures in the broad senses of the term. The modern political religious movements are the outcome of the distorted process of secularization, to which Islamic societies were exposed, of the economic crisis that capped their encounters with the Western-dominated economic system, and of the crisis of identity engendered by the cultural encounter with the so-called modernism.

Three broad types of Islamic orientation may be identified; radical, conservative and moderate or secular. A moderate wishes to preserve Islamic culture and norms, but without taking this to the political arena. Islamic revival or fundamentalism in its radical aspect seeks to interpret Islam as a reform movement and is opposed to modernistic interpretations of Islamic teachings which are attempted by modernist and liberal-minded Muslims. A conservative interprets Islam in legalistic-ritualistic terms that helped the ruling elites to use Islam as a political instrument.

The terror attacks on Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on September 11th was by many seen as a confirmation of Huntington's theory. His main thesis was that the conflicts in the world no longer was between ideologies, but between civilizations, where different cultural and religious identity are the main factors in creating cooperation or conflict. *The people of the West must hang together*, was his message when it came to the question of how to meet the new 'threat'.¹⁵

14 Adeed Dawisha(1983), *Islam in Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,p.134.

15. Samuel P. Huntington (1997),*The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*,NewYork:Siimon& Schuster.

Huntington and American politicians has a verbal rhetoric marked by a religious way of speaking pointed towards groups or states suspected of protecting terrorists. Also politicians as Tony Blair has emphasized that the terror attack was a war against 'Civilisation', against 'Democracy', against 'our way of living' and so forth. This kind of rhetoric from Western leaders, and also the media has contributed to presenting Islam as the big threat against the West and our Western values. One of the consequences of using theories of Huntington's type in describing this conflict could also be that people from the Muslim world to a larger extent start seeing this conflict as '*a Western war against Islam*'. Huntington's concept of civilisation is a dangerous simplification of reality and that he is fundamentally wrong in his view of the main forces behind international cooperation, first and foremost behind states as the most important actors. Nor September 11th and the international reactions that followed can, according to critics, be characterised as *a clash of civilisations*. Both Huntington and the critics base their arguments and hypothesis on empirical facts.

Islam, the great religious and social evolution in the history of man acted as a mighty spiritual as well as democratic force in the world. With the simplicity of its faith, the principle of universal brotherhood of man in the social order and the high ideal of morality in the way of life, Islam produced revolutionary changes wherever it went. The spirit of the practical spiritual democracy of Islam wrought profound changes in the whole of the Sub-continent.¹⁶

2. Islam and Political History of Bangladesh

2.1. Historical Background:

Presently, Bangladesh is a south Asian, moderate, Muslim democratic country. It is also a post-colonial third world country that suffers from political instability, factionalism and dictatorial political practices.¹⁷ Like other parts of Asia and Europe, Islam entered south Asia including Bengal with Muslim traders and missionaries, long before it became the political force. In fact trade relation between Arabia and south Asia.

16. Nelly Lahoud, Lahoud, (2005), *Islam in World Politics*, London: Routledge. pp10-11

17. Anisuzzaman, "Religion and Politics in Bangladesh", in S.R Chakravarty(1994), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication.p44.

Date back before the advent of Islam in Bengal in 6th century. According to Hours, in this region “Islam emerged as deliverance from the tyranny of cast system in Hinduism and the example of respect maintained by the Arabs seems to have attracted many Buddhism to Islam. The new Muslim switched from one group to another group (Islam) in order to obtain benefit without an identity crisis. The initial conversion of Bengali masses took place not in a sense of ‘spiritual illumination’ but in a sense of social mobility from one community to the other.”¹⁸ Thus, the main attraction of Islam to the people of this region has been an egalitarian religion. However, the deep rooted indigenous cultural values, beliefs and attitudes of the people did not vanish with the conversion of religion. Consequently, many cultural and social rituals and practice in the society still resemble indigenous cultural heritage instead of a strict fundamental Arabian code of life.

For example Islam could not abolish the classes in the society. Socially, the Muslim immigrants from north India could not assimilate themselves with the remaining Muslims in the society. They found huge difference in language, dress, diet, and even in day-to-day practice of religion. And felt distant from Bengali society. The immigrant Muslims considered themselves as Ashraf, or higher class Muslims, and the natives as Atraf or lower class Muslims. Eaton writes, “Muslim masses are descendents of semi-Hinduized aborigines, principally Chandals and Pods, and of low caste Hindus who were converted to Islam....they are the tillers of the soil while the Ashrad do not cultivate the land with their own hands”. These Bengali Muslims had their deep-rooted indigenous cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and religious practice did not wither away. Thus, the Bengali Muslims remained considerably different from Middle Eastern and north Indian Muslims. An amalgam of the Buddhist, the Hindu and the local syncretic customs combined with Islam of Sufis and the Shiites customs altered the cultural realm and the vision of religion of the Bengali Muslims and gave birth to what can be called the ‘Bengali Muslim sub-culture’.¹⁹ This phenomenon of superimposition of religious customs quite frequent in

18. Hours, Bernard (1995), *Islam and Development in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press. p98-99

19. RM, Eaton, Who are the Bengal Muslims? Conversion and Islamization in Bengal, In: R.Ahmed(Ed)(2001) *Understanding the Bengal Muslims :Interprative Essays*, U.K., Oxford University Press.

Asia, presents a particular complex aspect in Bangladesh and it is significantly different from Arabian religious culture.

The Bengal was ruled by Muslim Nawabs with the vast autonomy from the Moghal rulers until the British entered the scene in 1757. The battle of Plessey between the British and the Bengal was the beginning of the colonial domination and disintegration of the Muslim state of Bengal. Thus the Muslims had a hatred for the British and were suppressed and isolated from politics and education for a century. In early 20th century the nationalist movements in the then Indian subcontinent became evident. Simultaneously the pluralist character of the society became prominent through various social and political forces. In 1930s the Indian Muslims under the umbrella of all India Muslim league (AIML) became dominant actor in political bargaining with the British, eventually with their claim for a separate state for the Muslims of India. Finally the partition took place in 1947 and Pakistan was established based on Islam. The Bengal province was divided into two parts and became parts of India and Pakistan respectively. The Pakistan's portion of the Bengal was named as East Pakistan.

Soon after the independence, the people of East Pakistan began to realize that the British colonialism was replaced by the internal colonialism for the Bengalis. The first blow came from 1948, when the 'founding father' of the Pakistan Md. Ali Jinnah declared 'Urdu' to be the only national language of Pakistan. The language movement began in the then East Pakistan to make 'Bangla' the national language. In the political arena the AIML became the PML (Pakistan Muslim League). But the PML leadership lacked an integrative socio-political ideology to address regional interests and ideological differences. In June 1949 a number of Muslim League Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and workers who were disillusioned by the undemocratic functioning of the party bossed met at a two-day convention in Dhaka. A People's Muslim League, namely the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (EPAML) was founded at this convention. The younger founder members of the party were the members of Muslim student League.²⁰ Besides taking part in deliberations about the language movement, the EPAML workers quietly cared out the campaign to persuade people not to admit any knowledge of Urdu to

20. Syamali Ghosh (1990), The Awami League, Dhaka: Academic Publishers. p17

the enumerators during the 1951 Census operations. Finally in 1952, the rulers had to recognize “Bangla” as one of the two national language of Pakistan after agitation and bloodshed. In the meantime, the economy of the East Pakistan deteriorated dramatically with a vast famine between 1947 and 1949. The outflow of Hindu capital from East Pakistan to India and Pakistan’s West Pakistan based economic policies caused further deterioration.

Eventually, in early 1950s the leaders of the EPAML began to realize that the word ‘Muslim’ in their party’s name was making the party restricted to communal participation, and then there was the absolute necessity of total integration of the diverse people the Hindus, Muslims and others-into a homogeneous whole.²¹ The party leadership was convinced that the bond of nationhood had to be strengthened by the loyalty and support of the entire population. Consequently, in a joint meeting of the working committee presidents and secretaries of the districts and sub-divisional Awami League held on April 5 1954 a resolution was moved proposing that “the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League be named as the East Pakistan Awami League (EPAL)”. Further it was also added that the organization should be non-communal and membership should be thrown open to all communities. Only a fraction of the party opposed this decision by saying that it was inopportune and violation of the principles of Islamic solidarity. It was also a negation of two-nation theory on which Pakistan was founded. This fraction feared that the decision would hamper the religious influence in the country and thereby facilitate the infiltration of communism. In 1954 parliamentary election, the Awami League got the majority seats in the East Pakistan and a United Front government was established. In October 7 1958, military rule was imposed on Pakistan and activities of the political parties became very restricted. The martial law was lifted on June 8 1962 and a new system of basic democracy under the military leadership was established. The EPAL revived within a short period of time.

In the general election of December 1970, Awami league, led by Mujib won 167 seats out of 169 seats allotted to East Pakistan in the national Assembly which had a total

21. RNP Singh(2002), “Root of Communalism in Bangladesh”, *Dialogue*, 10 (2):80-90

of 300 directly elected seats and 13 reserved for women.²² So the Awami League became the sole majority party of the whole Pakistan and constitutionally they should form the central government. But the political leaders of West Pakistan including the existing military Junta were not willing to handover the power to Mujib. In the next few days the military junta tried to negotiate with Mujib. Failing to do so in the night of 25th march 1971, the Pakistan Army cracked down on the innocent unarmed Bengalis. Sheikh Mujib was arrested and was taken to West Pakistan. After nine month long war of independence, Bangladesh was born as a new nation of Bengalis.

After the independence of Bangladesh, the new constitute rules out communalism instead of any religious identity for the nation. The article 12 of the constitution rules out communalism, the status of a favored religion, abuse of religion in politics and religious discriminations.²³ The first military dictator Ziaur Rahman's ascension to power in 1975 coincided with several global trends and development policy mandates. Zia was known for his anti Indian, pro-west and pro-Islamic attitude. Bangladesh improved its relations with China and Pakistan. Bangladesh endeavored to consolidate preserve and strengthen fraternal relation among Muslim countries, based on the Islamic solidarity.²⁴

On the one hand, the oil boom of the seventies had made the Arab states financially powerful. In order to legitimize his rule in the Muslim world, and to appease Western donors, the military dictator capitalized on both of these trends. He removed secularism from the Constitution and inserted in its place *absolute faith and trust in Allah*. He also included a phrase in the Constitution that Bangladesh was part of the Islamic Ummah (the brotherhood of Islamic nations) with an aim to develop fraternal ties with Muslim nations in the 1975. The military ruler initiated a gradual return to Islam under the pressure the Arab countries. Moreover, it was extremely important for the newly independent country to create its own identity as Bangladesh. Zia secured the support of Islamic revivalist section with for which the Awami League was at loggerheads. In the 1979 election many candidates from the Muslim League fought the election under the banner of BNP with the slogan 'Defeat Awami League and keep Islam

22. Hours Bernard (1995), *Islam and Development in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press.pp54

23. Hours Bernard (1995), *Islam and Development in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press.pp54

24. Sanjay Bhardwaj (2005), "Bangladesh at 35: Internal dynamics and External Linkage" *Journal of International Affair*, Dhaka 9 (June & Dec):83-91.

safe in the hands of President Zia'. There were other symbolic measures which includes display Quaranik verses and the prophet advice in public places and government office.²⁵

After his assassination in 1981, H M Erashad came into power and regime became dependent on international aid. Saudi Arabia had a paternalistic role for Bangladesh in this period the government declared Islam as the state religion in 1988. On an institutional level, Islam was made a part of everyday life from the transmission of the azan on state-run TV and radio stations to the establishment of various institutions focused on the cultivation of religion, such as the Ministry of Religion, Islamic universities, and Madrassas. The Islamic Foundation the largest umbrella organization of research on Islam in the country translated the Quran into Bengali and made popular in public. After the fall of Erashad, democracy of Bangladesh was established in Bangladesh with the leadership of widow of Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia in 1991. But she had had to make an alliance with Jamat-e-Islami for securing state power. Zia also reinstated the Jamaat-i-Islami and several other Islamic political parties that were banned after the independence of Bangladesh and allowed them to again participate in electoral politics. This helped him to appease local Islamic groups in the country, and also to gain legitimacy as a Muslim leader among Muslim countries.

The Awami League also deviated from their secularist stand in this time. Sheikh Hasina got the state power in 1996 election with the support of Jamat-e-Islami (from the outside the government) and Erashad's Jatiya Party (A friction of this party joined the government).²⁶ In 2001, four-party alliance led by BNP won the parliamentary election and formed the government. The member of this alliance is Nationalist Party of Khaleda Zia, a fraction of Jatiya party, Isalmic Okiya Jote, and the Jamat-E-islami. These governments (since 1975) supported the growth of the private madrassas system known as the Quomi (People's) Madrassas which follows a curriculum from the Deobandh School, established in 1857 in Uttar Pradesh North India. Its students are taught to recite the Quran in ancient Arabic. It is estimated that the Quomi Madrassas number around another 15,000 (there is no official number available) and unofficial sources estimate that they

25. Partha.S. Ghosh. (1993), "Bangladesh at Cross Road: Religion and Politics", *Asian Survey*, 33(3):135-188.

26. Partha.S. Ghosh, (1993), "Bangladesh at Cross Road: Religion and Politics", *Asian Survey*, 33(3):135-188.

have an enrollment of over two million plus students. The funding sources of Quomi madrassas are shrouded in secrecy but they do not accept any government funds. The Bangladeshi Quomi Madrassas received patronage from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Libya in the seventies through the nineties. They also receive private donations from overseas Bangladeshis, primarily from the United Kingdom and the Middle East. Oil companies in the Middle East recruited Bangladeshis as labor to work in the oil fields. For these men, it was their global contact and exposure to the Islam of Saudi Arabia. Upon their return home, they were keen on reforming the “impure” folk Islamic tradition of rural Bangladesh through their patronage of the Quomi Madrassas schools.

It is evident that the support of Islamic parties has been Important for all parties to accumulate power not only to get the state leadership but also to form a strong opposition. Thus, after the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan, Bangladeshi citizens adopted a Bengali secular identity. However, gradually the religious identity surfaced and dominated²⁷. At present, religion based political parties plat a significant pole in national politics. Moreover, the mainstream political parties use religious rhetoric’s to attract voters and these behavior shows in making of international relation.

2.2. Rise and Growth of Fundamentalism in Bangladesh and its International linkage:

Islamic radicalism has by now established its firm roots in Bangladesh and its most dangerous manifestation is seen in the mushrooming growth of Jehadi organizations there. The process of radicalization accelerated after the tall of the Taliban in Kandhar in 2001 as Pakistan, through ISI, managed to convert Bangladesh as safe haven for the terrorists who fought in Afghanistan. Bangladesh provides an excellent base for AL-Qaeda renewed efforts because the region is predominantly Islamic and holds pre-existing AL-Qaeda affiliated extremist networks. Bangladesh has the potential to become the ‘Home for Jehadi terror’.

Thus, Bangladesh has progressed from Islamic fundamentalism to Islamic terrorism. The country progressively emerged as an important home for Pakistan based

27. Firdous Jahan (2008), “Islamic Fundamentalism in Bangladesh: A Quest for the Root”, *Asian Profile*, 36(2):197-212.

Jehadi groups operating against India. There are over a dozen Jehadi groups often referred to as the Bangladeshi Taliban. There are indications of direct linkages of these groups with Taliban and AL-Qaeda network.²⁸

Thus, Bangladesh is already well on the way to becoming a new epicentre of pro AL-Qaeda and pro-Taliban international Jehadi terrorist organizations. The pioneer of organized terrorist activities is the Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI-Bangladesh), which was formed in 1988 on the pattern of Taliban of Afghanistan. It has an estimated strength of around 10,000 to 12,000 cadres. Like its Pakistani counterpart, the HUJI-Bangladesh propagates militant pan-Islamic agenda and favors a militarized Jihad to achieve the global hegemony of Islam. It does not recognize the division of Muslims on the basis of nation, geography, race or language. It canvasses for the unity of all the Muslims of the world, establishment of Islamic states and adoption of 'Shariat' for the governance of the people. Its main basis of recruitment and training are the string of Madarsas, schools and colleges including theological institutes. Which are used to tap new volunteers among the 'Islam Pasand' organizations. The HUJI-Bangladesh is maintaining links with number of foreign organizations including the ISI. "Servants of Suffering Humanity international" allegedly financed by Osama-bin-laden and AL-Farouq international" Trust are also providing assistance to it.

Apart from HUJI, Lasker-e-Toiba has an active presence in Bangladesh. The Jamat-ul-Mujahidin of Bangladesh, which introduced suicide terrorism into Bangladesh, openly supported and continuing of Taliban and call for the Talibanisation of Bangladesh. Wahabisation which is the precursor of Jehadi terrorism, has already made its appearance in Bangladesh and pro-Wahabi mosques and Madarasas, funded by money from Pakistan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been mushrooming all over the country²⁹. Pakistan finds the suitable place in Bangladesh to operate its Proxy War against India.

Islam emerged in the Arab Religion and it is based on Arabic language and culture. Thus, the origin of religion, process of worship, the language of the religion etc are often

28. Ibid

29. Amena Mohsin, Meghna Guhathakutra, "The Struggle for Democracy in Bangladesh", in Zoya Hasaan(2007), *Democracy in Muslim Society (Ed)*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p47-71.

30. Bernard Hours (1995), *Islam and Development in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press. p38

alien to the general people in Bangladesh. Consequently, on the one hand despite being religious, the people do not feel attached with the core ideology of Middle Eastern Islamic fundamentalism. On the other hand, the local Maulanas and Islamic parties can take the opportunity of the ignorance of general people to portray the religion the way they want. It is important to mention that population wise Bangladeshis are one of the large Islamic countries. So, the Islamic world has a profound interest in Bangladesh. Many Middle-East based groups and in some cases several states patronize Islam-based political and social pragmatizations. The government in power also often tends to be more Islamist to maintain a friendly relationship with oil-rich wealthy Muslim countries. Moreover, Bangladesh is geopolitically and strategically important to India and the Western countries for its geographical entity. The country has more than 4000 kilometers common border with seven Indian states. In cases of domestic politics, the democratic practice in the country is not still well developed. The major political parties continue to have profound distrust and hatred towards each other. Both the main parties use Islam and seek support from the Islamist parties to be in power.

Jamat-e-Islami along with its religious and social alliances is the propagator of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh. The party is deeply rooted in Islamic fundamentals but structured according to the Western political model. The Jamaat wants to purify the society “from the inside out”. As a “*reformist party*”, it seeks to resacralize political life and to build a stage governed by the Quran and the Sunnah. From the very outset, its position has been that Islam was not limited to five pillars of Islam. A sixth pillar, Jihad (struggle for Islam) specifies the social and political action to establish a Muslim rule.³⁰ During the war of independence in 1971, the Jamaat was against the formation of Bangladesh and was an ally for the Pakistan Army. In the late 1970s Jamaat began to strengthen its power and the expatriate leader of the party came back from Pakistan and also won the lawsuit against his citizenship of Bangladesh.

In 1991 national assembly election, Jamaat got 18 crucial seats. With the support of Jamaat, Khaleda Zia consolidated her legitimacy with the Islamic side. In 1996, the party supported the Awami League government. In 2001, Jamaat became one of the four-

parties that won the election and formed the government. Thus, Jamaat is now a very much legitimized Islamic fundamentalist party in the country, though there is no imminent possibility for the party to win any national assembly election with single majority and form the government.

Another important factor in Bangladesh is the developmental NGOs. It is estimated that there are 900 declared associative organizations in Bangladesh among which more than 400 are engaged in developmental projects financed by foreign organizations.³¹ These NGOs play a vital role in spread Islamic fundamentalism in the rural areas. The madrassa-educated Alims have major support base within the mass of rural areas. On the other hand, NGOs are politically active, compete with each other and sometimes work for a specific political party and patronize the people during elections to cost their votes for a particular party. So there has been a tension and sometimes conflicts in the rural areas among different NGOs and the religious Associations.

In recent Islamic fundamentalism emerged in Bangladesh due to material reason including Poverty, Ignorance and unemployment of poor young citizens. The general people of Bangladesh are not fundamentalist in but Islamic parties patronized by the Middle-Eastern and other international and national groups are becoming stronger day by day.

So Islam has long been an ideology for political dissent as well as the legitimization of authority in Bangladesh and it occupies a prominent place in the people of Bangladesh. Islam is the official religion of Bangladesh, although it is not an Islamic state. Ties between Bangladesh and other Muslim countries remain strong due to the expression of Islamic consciousness; however, its expression may be determined by specific contents and situations. It has also been reinforced by the re-emergence of a universal Islamic identity as an issue in global politics after 9/11.

31. Selig Harrison, "Terrorist in Bangladesh," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 July 2008.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2

Determinants, Objectives and Principles of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy

1. Introduction

International politics is a struggle to achieve and protect desired outcomes on a wide variety of issues. States vie to have their preferences realized on many dimensions and at any moment, will be pleased with the status quo on some issues and displeased with the status quo on others. States have limited resources available with which to pursue their foreign policy goals. The challenges that states face are allocation of these resources between efforts to change unfavourable aspects of the status quo and efforts to maintain those favourable elements of the status quo.¹ The simplest definition of foreign policy is that it is an attempt by a state to maximize its national interest in the external or international environment. Even this simple definition suggests some of the complexity of this attempt. The definition assumes a commonly agreed definition of the national interest in the country, which is not always true. Secondly, foreign policy is an ends and means problem, a problem of achieving certain national goals with the limited means available. Unlike domestic policy, the attempt to attain one's goals has to be made in an environment which is largely outside of one's own control. Thirdly, again unlike domestic policy, this attempt is made in competition with other states who are seeking the same goals for themselves.

For instance, if any one state in the international system attains absolute security for itself, there would be absolute insecurity for every other state in the world. So merely maximizing one's own interest competitively will not suffice. One needs to include some measure of cooperation or alliance building to work together. Two basic goals of the state, security and prosperity, security, is often presented as a zero sum game. The other, prosperity, requires states to cooperate with each other. Both goals can therefore pull one's foreign policy in opposite directions. And this competition

¹ This is substantially different from many traditional approaches to international relations, which are based on the fundamental assumption that all foreign-policy actions are guided solely by a desire to enhance national security. Under these approaches, any action can (and must) be seen as security enhancing and so the role of analysis becomes to devise some account for any observed action that shows how that action increased national security. A major flaw with this approach is that it renders the concept of security nearly meaningless. This perspective also differs from those that assume that some states seek to prevent changes in the status quo while others seek to bring such changes about.

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and cooperation with other states to maximize one's own interest takes place in a perpetually changing external environment and while the states themselves gain and lose relative and absolute power. As they change, states change or modify their definitions of national interest. Even the domestic mainsprings of external policy shift. Some factors that one expects to remain constant undergo change. History is redefined continuously by all political systems. And immutable facts of geography are made less or more relevant by advances in technology and ideology.

Foreign policy appears to be a series of responses made by the official decision makers to the international conditions. But contrary to the appearance, it is a much complex process. Peter Calvert point to this fact by saying that policies are not simply any decisions talking place within the organised structure of the state.²

In this world of interdependence, no country, large or small, powerful or weak, can afford to live in isolation. In the course of interaction nation are constantly changed and influenced by each other. Through such interaction, each state pursues a broad range of policies in order to create an environment in which its interest can be preserved. A policy with which one country attempts to influence the behaviour of other countries in its favour is termed foreign policy. A country's foreign policy, therefore, may be defined as the basis and framework of its relations with other countries.³

As Prof. Richard C. Snyder has said, the number and complexity of factors that influence national action in the international arena are not only enormous; but the task of identifying the crucial variables is also unfinished.⁴ State alone as actors do not provide enough material to explain why foreign policy changes so frequently, one requires for example, certainly looking at major political and social movement and their determinants. "The political system therefore becomes the basic unit of foreign policy". According to Brecher, a foreign policy system is made of components which are classified as inputs, process and outputs. The inputs are made of operational and psychological environments. The decision makers arrive at a decision or output that is the identifiable choice, among foreign policy options. Besides; Brecher Stressed upon

² Peter Calvert (1986), *The Foreign Policy of New States*, Brighton: Wheatshet Books, p.1.

³ Andrew H. Bending, (1966), *The Making of Foreign Policy*, Washington, p.1.

⁴ Josheph Frankel (1963), *The Making of Foreign Policy*, London: Oxford University Press, p.3.



the concept of 'dynamic interaction', which reveals that foreign policy, is ceaseless process.⁵

Foreign policy is an exercise in the choice of ends and means on the part of a nation state in an international setting. This exercise involves two plains. On the first, the community presents the resources, opportunity and limitations for the exercise of foreign policy. Secondly, on the international plain, a state seeks the adjustment of the actions of other state in its own favour. This adjustment may be sought through change or even no change in the actions of other state. It depends on what position change or status quo suits a particular state. The link between these two plains is provided by the official decision makers. They translate the interactions of the community to the policy maker who have their significance only in relation to the community. They do not have any independent significance. That is the reason why foreign policies are considered more in term of nations than in terms of individuals. Thus, the foreign policy is decided and pursued by the official decision makers, but they work within the parameters provided by the community. Further, they seek to influence the foreign policy of other state in their own favour and also adjust their own foreign policy to the international environment.

George Modelski describes foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and adjusting their own activities to the international environment.⁶ An operational definition of foreign policy states that it consists of the course of actions which a state usually undertakes in its effort to carry out national objectives beyond the limits of its jurisdiction.⁷ This complex and dynamic political course taken by each state is directed to "the hierarchy of interests, to advance or defend, or which it will refuse to retreat from" to achieve the maximum benefits to itself. Every state may need to make compromises on secondary interests for long-term benefits, but no state would make any compromises on its primary interests or core values: these must be protected at any cost. A nation needs to identify these core values and try to pursue policies that will preserve them.

2. Foreign policy of Bangladesh: Creation and Development

⁵ Michael Bracher(1974), *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*; London: Oxford University Press pp-3-4.

⁶Modelski, George, (1962), *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, New York: Centre of International Studies, Princeton University, p.6.

⁷Ibid, p3.

The Basic tenets of the foreign policy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had been active in Bangladesh politics since early 1940's and had successfully led the freedom struggle, were non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and opposition to colonialism, racialism and imperialism in all its manifestations. The Sheikh was consistent with his declaration that the foreign policy of Bangladesh would be guided by the principle of "friends with all and malice towards none". The Sheikh's main concerns were:

- *The diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh by the independent states of the world and the acceptance of Bangladesh as full member by the UNO and other such international organization;*
- *Withdrawal of Indian troops and settlement of many vexed bilateral issues;*
- *Speedy recovery of the war torn economy of the country.*

He achieved great success in most of the fields. Bangladesh was recognised by most of the sovereign states of the world including Pakistan by the end of 1974. China and Saudi Arabia were only among the important countries, which formally recognized Bangladesh after the assassination of the Sheikh, had been on the process of recognizing the country during the ending months of his rule. Bangladesh was enrolled as a member of the UN in 1974, and much before that UN had started extending economic assistance for the reconstruction of the war ravaged economy. Along with the UN at least ninety countries were doing relief work with their personnel; and relief material in Bangladesh.⁸ The NAM and the Commonwealth accepted it as their full member. Even the organisation of the Islamic states accorded full membership to Bangladesh in 1974. Indo-Bangladesh relations registered marked progress. Indian troops were withdrawn on 13 March 1972, 12 days ahead of the scheduled date. The border dispute, which had defied solution since the partition in 1947, was amicably settled once for all. Principles for setting the maritime boundary were agreed upon. The Sheikh had also convinced India of Bangladesh's were problem. An agreement, though interim, about the sharing of the Ganga water was signed. Traditional border trade was restored and Bangladesh also signed trade agreement. The Government requested the World Bank in July 1974 to constitute a consortium of aid donors on the conventional line for Bangladesh.⁹

⁸ Anthony Mascarenhas(1986), *Bangladesh: Legacy of Blood*, London: Hodder and Stoughton p.20.

⁹Just Faaland, (1981), (ed.), *Aid and Influence: The Case of Bangladesh*, London: Macmillan, p.118.

The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman marked a qualitative change in the foreign policy of Bangladesh. The successive regimes established good relations with Pakistan and Islamic countries at the cost of its good relation with India countries like Pakistan, Saudi-Arabia and China. Who were reluctant to open thread with Bangladesh. Establishes both diplomatic and trade relation. Bangladesh foreign policy become 'outward looking' and was based on a new pragmatism.¹⁰ Even in the foreign policy of Bangladesh the Islamic ideals were called upon to endeavor to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relation among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity¹¹. Through this policy of upholding Islamic principles, Zia-Ur-Rahman secured the support of the Islamic revivalist section with who the Awami league was at loggerheads. Restoration of Islam had even been popular with the army. Thus, with religious sentiments forces of 47' being predominant in the country Islam became a useful instrument for rallying majority support for the new regime. After Zia Ur Rahman's assassination, the second military regime under General A. H. M. Ershad came into power. In his regime, Ershad declared Islam as a state religion.

After the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, the begum Khaleda Zia government also strengthened its power-base in collusion and cooperation with the religious political elements who had a clear anti-people role in 1971 and who up to 1977 had been banned from politics¹². The BNP always used the anti-India stand as a major election plank and Bagum Khaleda Zia has proved to be a failure in her foreign policy towards India.¹³ On the other side, in the wave of liberalization globalization and privatization, the foreign economic policy of Bangladesh moved towards enhancing trade and investment for the economic development of the country. More importance was given to trade, and a roving trade representative of the country was appointed.¹⁴

In the general elections held in 1996, the Awami league led by Sheikh Hasina came to power. She had maintained the balanced posture in the foreign policy of the country and the relationship between India and Bangladesh seemed to be improved. Prime minister Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to India and a landmark treaty on

¹⁰ Muhammad Shamsul Haq (1993), *Bangladesh in internal politics, the Dilemma of weak State*, Dhaka :University Press p.107

¹¹ Shaheen Dil (1980), "The Myth of Islamic Resurgence in South Asia". *Current History* p227

¹² The banned parties were: Council Muslim League, Convention Muslim League and Jamaat –e –Islami.

¹³ S.R. Chakawarty (1994), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication, p-56

¹⁴ Ibid

sharing of Ganges water was signed with the prime minister of India. In the 2002 Bangladesh foreign policy establishment has given special considerations to its look East Policy. It has given more emphasis on diplomatic and economic ties with the countries of East and Southeast Asia compared to the traditional linkages with the India and the other SAARC nations in the changed world scenario¹⁵. It has also viewed that the country and the people would derive more benefits by the prime minister's diplomatic visits to the southeast and East Asian countries. Bangladesh's location as a bridge between south and Southeast Asia is regarded as the basis of its new policy thrust. The visits at highest political level undertaken since December 2002 between Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar, china, Vietnam and Singapore were economic oriented. Bangladesh has also considered that its location creates its legitimate claim to become part of ASEAN regional forum (ARF). The country seeks Myanmar's supports for it.

This is needful to understand that the challenges of globalization and new threats to the world security made it imperative for states in general and developing countries like ours in particular to live in peace with neighbours. Therefore, the regional or sub-regional cooperation is significant to meet the emerging socio-economic challenges. In spite of the mutual distrust and adverse foreign policy perceptions between India and Bangladesh (and other states in south Asia, too) a trend of largely due to the changed global scenario, which has made it necessary for these states to integrate their economies to compete the overwhelming forces of global economy collectively. As the balance of payment is heavily against Bangladesh, the country had to give special emphasis to enhance the global foreign trade in pursuits of its new economic diplomacy_Bangladesh has participated in BIMSTEC for strengthening of bilateral relation and economic cooperation as well.

For political and security reasons, Bangladesh prime minister visit to china in December 2002 was characterized more economic oriented. Both the countries have made bilateral agreements in investment and trade construction of roads and bridges, cultural exchange and defence sectors. In the context of proposed Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project, Bangladesh has assumed the importance of being middle point of all the road and railway communications between

¹⁵Sanjay Bhardwaj, "Bangladesh at 35: Internal dynamics and External Linkages" *Journal of International Affair*" Dhaka 9 (June & Dec):83-91.

south and Southeast Asia. The BIMSTEC initiative has also brightened the prospect of implementation of the southern corridor of ALTID, which connects turkey, Iran, Pakistan, china, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

The present state of democracy and the rise of Islamist extremism have become a demoralizing and inhibiting aspect for the growth of a progressive society in Bangladesh. The Civil society is being vertically divided between the two main political parties the Awami League and the Bangladesh nationalist party and it is increasingly losing its capacity to work as a means to strengthen democracy in the country. In fact, it is also losing its self-proclaimed general status and become a pawn in the hands of political struggles between the two political parties.

In the last BNP government, Islamist extremist groups and individuals increased. Proliferation of Madarssas and free movement of AL Qaeda and Taliban escapees, who have arrived in Bangladesh since the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, make the promotion of democracy and peace and strengthening of civil society a matter of concern for all. This shift from ethnic-linguistic to religious identity was made by state not in response to any popular movement launched by the citizens, but by the military rulers on their own initiatives in order to recruit political support from communal and anti-Awami League forces, many of whom also opposed the creation of Bangladesh.

3. Major Determinants of Foreign Policy

Like an individual's social behaviour, the international behaviour of a nation state is the interaction between its organism and the society around. It is a two way flow of the initiatives and responses, the theoretical layout for the functioning of which constitutes the basic frame of the foreign policy of a country. This layout is motivated by the needs and aspirations of the state conditioned, in expression, by the domestic milieu and external setting. The motivations and the conditioning factors determine the policy objectives and the policy process is further guided and controlled by the interaction between them. In other word the Foreign policy making is a dynamic process. Normally, change of government does not change the fundamentals of foreign policy of a state, though a revolutionary change in political set-up may result in drastic changes. Why does it normally remain unchanged? It is because foreign policy of a state is determined by a number of factors, many of them are static.

There are some factors that do change, but their impact in shaping a country's foreign policy is usually secondary. The foreign policy of a country is "compounded out of many factors and forces". All of them interact and determine the foreign policy. The determinants of foreign policy are broadly of two types —domestic and external.¹⁶ These variables play a pivotal role in the conduct of the foreign policy of any country. They act as capability (as a source of strength) and constraint in the foreign policy formulations. Broadly, the nature of these variables as capability or constraints is determined by domestic, regional and international environment in which the country has to operate.

In the international world all nations, big and small, are important and none can afford to live in isolation as interdependence has become a characteristic feature of the contemporary international politics. All states, therefore, participate in the interplay of the international political activities with the aim of achieving their objectives. The foreign policy of Bangladesh, like that of any other state is also primarily a projection of the country's socio-economic and political compulsions in international politics. Thus, the domestic and international environment determines the foreign policies of the nations. Bangladesh's foreign policy is also determined by certain basic factors such as the geographical realities of the region, its search for security, historical backgrounds, and cultural affinities, etc.¹⁷ In this paradigm, India, a regional power, occupies centre stage in the foreign policy of Bangladesh, which it pursues by virtue of its geographical surroundings, historical and cultural legacies, and more importantly, persistence of a number of outstanding bilateral issues, which are vital to its existence.¹⁸

3.1. The Domestic Context

(a) Geography

Geography is a constant determinant of a country's foreign policy.¹⁹ Napoleon said, goes to corroborate that the foreign policy of a country is determined by its

¹⁶ James N. Rossenau, (1979), *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, London: Nichols Pub, pp. 115-64.

¹⁷ Virendra Narian (1984), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: 1971-81*, Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers; p. 72.

¹⁸ Sanjay Bhardwaj, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy vis-a-vis India", *Strategic Analysis*, 27(2):263

¹⁹ Writing on the importance or otherwise of geography in the study of international relations (including foreign policy Quincy Wright observes; "Geography is primarily a descriptive discipline... it may itself make a few empirical generalization. Geography, however, does not determine international relations. Geography cannot develop concepts and conceptual system applicable beyond a limited time... Political geography may be combined with demography and technology to develop a discipline concerning the material conditions of international relation. It must be combined with these and with social psychology,

geography.²⁰ It is not intended here to dilate on various theories in the field of geopolitics as they are well-known.²¹ There are various aspects of geography which have a direct bearing on foreign policy. Undoubtedly, geographical factors are also important to varying degrees for Bangladesh's domestic and foreign policy. These have been discussed further under separate heads:

(1)Size

The land area of any country is in itself an element of power. Its significance varies considerably with changes in other elements of national power. A country which is large in size and is endowed with better natural resources accommodates a larger population. Simultaneously, for a developing country which is small in size and has limited resources becomes its weakness and increases its dependency. At the same time developing of means of transportation and communication is cumbersome, and maintenance of the political unity among the people in a widely dispersed area is also difficult. Therefore, size has both positive as well as negative implications. As far as Bangladesh is concerned, it is a country of moderate size, neither small nor big. The total area of Bangladesh is 55,598 square miles or 143,999 square km which includes both inland and estuarine water surface.²²

(2)Topography

Topography has an important strategic value vis-a-vis other nations and sometimes set limits on expansion. Bangladesh is the world's largest delta area criss-crossed by a network of rivers, rivulets and streams.²³ The deltaic plain is formed by three major rivers — the Ganges, the Brahmaputra which is locally known as the Jamuna and the Meghna. The other important rivers are Tista, Karotoya, Atri, Mahananda, Gunti, Kamabulli, Kaboolak Auspha, Amal Khan and Madumati.

Bangladesh is basically a flatland regularly washed by water whether it is rain or flood. This aspect is very important since the country's culture and economic base is agriculture. Mymensingh and Sylhet are the small hilly regions which are an extension of the Meghalya Plateau of India. The coastline of Bangladesh along the

sociology and ethics." vide: Quincy Wright, *Study of International Relation*, Times of India Press, Bombay, 1970, p.348.

²⁰ K.P. Mukerji (1965), *Public International Relations*, Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, p. 17.

²¹ Robert Strausz Hup (1942) *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power*, Putnam, New York.

²² A. Jeyaratham Wilson & Dennis Dalton (ed.) (1982), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* New Delhi: Vikas Publication. p 265. Also see, Philip Gain, *Bangladesh Environment: Facing the 21st Century*, (Dhaka: 1998), pp.1-5.

²³ Rashid Haroun (1990), *An Economic Geography of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press p34

Bay of Bengal extends 370 miles from a western projection on Myanmar to the beaches of West Bengal. There is a dense forest in the South-west of the country known as the Sunderban. In the South-west lies the Chittagong Hills rising somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 feet.²⁴ This has a dense forest cover.

(3) Climate

Climate is one of the determinants of the culture and the economy along with the natural resources. It has a direct effect on the health, energy and vigour of the people and productivity of the soil. There is a need for sufficient heat, a long growing season, sufficient rainfall (or irrigation possibilities) and soil of optimum quality in order to produce crops. It has been very aptly suggested that a great power cannot exist outside of the temperate zones. Bangladesh has a sub-tropical monsoon climate and suffers from periodic cyclones. The climate is characterized by high temperature, high humidity, heavy rainfall and marked seasonal variations. Like India, Bangladesh also experiences three seasons--the rainy season, the winter and the summer.

The location of the Himalayan Mountains in the north, the Bay of Bengal in East and the Indian Ocean in the South, controls the weather phenomena of Bangladesh. It is estimated that out of the total river flow in Bangladesh as much as 85 percent comes from India, and the rest is from rainfall within the country. No less than about 94 rivers flow into Bangladesh from India.²⁵ Natural calamities pose a major challenge to the economic development of Bangladesh. These calamities are so frequent that they render a pathetic image of Bangladesh to the International public.

(4) Location

In the geographical context, the location of a country plays an important role in the determining the nature and course of that country's foreign policy.

Bangladesh is situated in the south of the Asian continent. It stretches latitudinal between 20°34' and 26°38' north and longitudinally between 88°1' and 92°4' East. It is on the cross-roads of two sub-continent - South East Asia and India.²⁶ The geographical proximity of Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal and to the Indian Ocean triggered off the competition between the then Super Powers during

²⁴ Rashid Haroun (1990), *An Economic Geography of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press p. 8; 4.

²⁵ Philip Gain (1998), *Bangladesh Environment: Facing the 21st Century*, Dhaka: Society for Environment and human Development. p.31

²⁶ Philip Gain (1998), *Bangladesh Environment: Facing the 21st Century*, Dhaka: Society for Environment and human Development, pp31-35.

the Cold War period. Its locational relationship to South Asia and South East Asia increases its geo-strategic importance in world politics. It has a common border with India and Myanmar. Bangladesh is surrounded by India. It has a 1740 miles long land border with India on all sides except the south-India has a long sea coast from west to east deep into Bay of Bengal and in the south. Other countries near to Bangladesh without common borders, in the north are Nepal, Bhutan and China. Its location weakness in comparison to India dictates that it should maintain good relations with India.

Geography is more a restraint than a capability to Bangladesh. Its size, topography, climate and location have more negative features than positive. Bangladesh is sensitive to its geo-politics. Hence, geographically and strategically Bangladesh becomes more vulnerable as it is land locked within India, also affecting its contacts with other regions.²⁷

(b) Population

The second tangible factor that influences the foreign policy of any country is that of its population and manpower. Generally the population is considered in terms of the birth-rate and the death rate, sex-relation, education and health, skilled and unskilled manpower, which are earning or are dependent. It is examined in terms of its size, productive, density and educational level. It is a determining factor in defining the foreign policy, the relationship of population size to capability of a nation is such that it is practically impossible to be a medium or great power without a relatively large population. Hans J. Morgenthau states, 'No country can remain or become a first-rate power which does not belong to the more populous nations of the earth.'

The logic behind this argument is that a large population is necessary to have an effective military force. It is true that there has been no modern military. It is also true that despite the advanced technology, large masses of human beings still fight many wars. Moreover, large modern armed forces require as large number of people to manufacture, supply, operate and repair their highly sophisticated weapons and support systems. However, these statements are accurate only to some context since there are other types of conflict where this concept is

²⁷ M.G. Kabir and Hassan (1989), *Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Society of International studies p. 257.

inappropriate. Strictly speaking, this argument deals primarily with one kind of military conflict, a conventional war. The development of nuclear capability does not necessarily require a large population, nor does it enhance the ability to launch a decisive first strike attack with highly sophisticated forces against technologically inferior and less trained opponents. None of this is to the benefit of the potential military advantage that a large population can yield, it mainly depends on the nature of the conflict and the parties involved.²⁸

The second reason for having a large population is usually important in context to a region's economic strength. It can also provide a potential market for others. Population becomes a liability when any increase in the overall population is higher than the quantity of goods and services available for it. Population explosion is one of the major challenges to any country's foreign policy as it slows down the rate of economic growth and creates dependency on other affluent countries for capital and technical know-how. Thus, overpopulation detracts the capability of a nation.

The economic problem which Bangladesh is facing frequently is population explosion. It has been declared as a primary problem. Officially, Bangladesh has a population of 112 million as per the census of 1991 and estimated at some 124 million in mid 1997.²⁹ The gravity of the situation is candidly depicted in these words: "the ultimate demographic tragedy... so overpopulated that none can survive, perhaps it would lead to a term of collective suicide".³⁰ Population density in Bangladesh is highest in the world (about 900 persons per square kilometre) after Hong Kong and Singapore. It is three times more crowded than India. The population of Bangladesh continues to grow at a rate of about two per cent a year.³¹ At this rate, it will double in twenty three years, its density rising to some 3,000 people per square mile.³²

The annual growth rate of the population has declined from three percent in the 1960s to about two percent in the 1990s, however even with this decline in

²⁸ Robert L. Wendzel (1977), *International Relations: A Policy-Maker's Focus*, New York: John Wiley, pp. 92-93.

²⁹ Gain Philip (1998), *Bangladesh Environment: Facing the 21st Century*, Dhaka: Society for Environment and human Development, p3.

³⁰ Marcus Franda (1982), *Bangladesh: The First Decade*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers. 152.

³¹ Gain Philip (1998), *Bangladesh Environment: Facing the 21st Century*, Dhaka: Society for Environment and human Development, p3.

³² A. Jeyaratham Wilson and Dennis Dalton, n.6, p. 265

the growth rate, the population is projected to increase by another 50 percent over the next century, from 120 million in 1995 to 173 million by 2020.³³

Providing basic necessities to the fast growing population is a great challenge faced by Bangladesh. Due to the acute poverty, revenue generation is low, savings are small and capital formation is slow. A huge investment is required for the optimum utilization of the exploited resources and extensive exploitation of the untapped resources, which is very difficult without the mobilisations of the domestic resource. Over population will continue to be draining the country's resources, preventing it from achieving even moderate objectives in its foreign policy without incurring excessive costs.

(c) Ideology

An ideology adopted by the ruling elite of a country determines its foreign policy. Ideology provides the intellectual framework through which policy makers observe reality.³⁴ The ideology adopted by the constitution of independent Bangladesh includes the doctrine of nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism.³⁵ The nationalism of Mujib was ethno lingual nationalism. The basis was language and culture. The people were called Bengali's. Zia redefined nationalism from "Bengali" to "Bangladeshi".³⁶

The pledge to develop socialistic economic system was removed.³⁷ Zia adopted the capitalist path of development. Ershad continued the same and further intensified it. The doctrine of democracy adopted by Mujib was that of parliamentary democracy which failed to work. On January 25, 1975, Mujib amended the constitution to establish a Presidential system and ruled through single party. Zia

³³ Philip Gain, n.25, p.43.

³⁴ K.J. Holsti (1967), *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, New Jersey: Engelwood Cliffs, p.169.

³⁵ *Bangladesh Documents: Ministry of External Affairs*, vol. 2 (n.d.).

³⁶ Bengali nationalism emerged with the rise of a Bengali ethnic consciousness in the 1950s and 1960s. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was one of the greatest advocates of Bengali nationalism. It stood for a composite identity which took into account the experiences, language and literature of all Bengalis irrespective of religious orientation. The notion of 'Bangladeshi nationalism' was put forward by Zia-ur-Rahman in 1978. It asserted the precedence of the political identity over the cultural identity.

³⁷ Abul Fazl Haq, "Constitutional Development (1972-1982)" cited in S.R. Chakravarty and V. Narain (1986), (ed.), *Domestic Politics*, vol. II, New Delhi: p. 64. Also see Mahendra Ved (1995), "Bangladesh: 20 Years after Mujib", *Strategic Analysis*, 15(5): 667.

retained the Presidential system of government but ended single party system and limited the executive and legislative powers of the President.³⁸

The fourth doctrine of Mujib's ideology³⁹secularism was a 'negative non-discriminatory Indian type of secularism'.⁴⁰ The adoption of secularism was a historical necessity.⁴¹ Zia completely removed secularism from the constitution and substituted it by a new clause (1A) to Article 8 to emphasize that 'absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah' as the basis of all actions. Article 12 which defined secularism was totally omitted. 'Bismillah Rahmanirur Rahim' (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful) was added to the preamble.⁴²

When Ershad came to power, he used Islam more explicitly and extensively in his politics. Through the 8th amendment of the constitution in June 1988 he made Islam the state religion of Bangladesh. Another major change in the constitution was the deletion of Article 12 which prohibited patronage of any religion by the state.⁴³

The present state of national ideology in Bangladesh is very confusing and conflicting. Bangladesh being the most homogeneous of the South Asian states is facing problems of identity. There are three distinct phases in the quest of identity in the history of Bangladesh. In the first phase when in 1947 East Bengal became East Pakistan, it was a victory of Islam over Bengali culture. Thus, the religion was the chief basis of identity. In the second phase tables turned when in 1971 Bengali language and culture overtook Islam. Thus the language became the basis of identity. The third phase came after the assassination of Mujib in which both religion and language became focus of identity, i.e. Bangladeshi nationalism.

(d) Nature of Leadership

Leadership, evidently, plays an important role in the formulation of foreign policy. Image of a particular situation in the mind of leadership is very important variable for the foreign policy of a country. It has been rightly observed by a great thinker Rosenau who said, "a leader's belief about the nature of international arena and the goals that ought to be pursued therein, his or her peculiar intellectual strengths

³⁸ Maniruzzaman Talukdar (1976), "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and its Aftermath", *Asian Survey*, 16(2):124.

³⁹ Maniruzzaman Talukdar, "Bangladesh Politics: Secular and Islamic Trends", in S.R. Chakravarty and V. Narain (1988), *Bangladesh- Domestic Politics*, vol.11 New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, p49.

⁴⁰ Zill R. Khan (1985), "Islamic and Bengali Nationalism" *Asian Survey*, 25(8):846.

⁴¹ Partha S Ghosh (1993), "Bangladesh at Cross Road: Religion and Politics", *Asian Survey*, 33(3):135-188

⁴² Mahendra Ved (1995), "Bangladesh: 20 Years After Mujib", *Strategic Analysis*, 15(5):667-681.

⁴³ Emajuddin Ahmad, *Military Rule and Myth of Democracy*, Dhaka: University Press.

and weaknesses for analysis, the information and decision making, his or her past background and the extent of its relevance to the requirements of the role, his or her emotional needs and most or other personality traits. These are a few idiosyncratic factors that can influence the planning and execution of foreign policy".⁴⁴

There is no doubt that dynamic leadership quality can easily surmount various nagging problems through judicious and balanced approach on different issues. Image of a leader on Global, Bilateral and Regional issues in view of external factors and internal environment like that of military-capability, Economic-capability, Political-structure, Interest-groups and Competing-elites constitutes an important part of any foreign policy. Strategising is an important variable for leadership. For the foreign policy of a country, decision-makers act according to their perception of reality, not in response to reality itself.⁴⁵ For instance, under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia, the Bangladeshi armed forces that had previously looked for any pretext to intervene, exhibited signs of restraint and political maturity.

Military and democratic regimes played a decisive role in determining its foreign policy. If one would have a close look at the personality and contribution of these four rulers (Mujib, Zia-ur-Rahman, H.M. Ershad and Begum Khaleda Zia, during 1971-96) since Independence in 1971, Bangladesh has certainly been led by both democratic and authoritarian leaders. Mujib had a political legacy and emerged as a supreme leader of Bangladesh. Zia-ur-Rahman, who captured state power through a coup, and his regime, was characterized by attempts to open up the economy organising a political party called Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The reign of Zia had features of intermediate regime and the politics of this period was of praetorian nature.⁴⁶ H. M. Ershad accelerated the process personalizing the polity. He opted for marginalizing the public sector and encouraged private sector and accorded Islamic character to the country. The pattern of foreign policy in the post-Mujib Bangladesh was similar to Pakistan in many respects that is friendly attitudes towards

⁴⁴ James N. Rossenau (1980), *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, London: Nichols Pub. Co, pp. 115-64.

⁴⁵ K.J. Holsti (1967), *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, New Jersey: Engelwood Cliffs p.158.

⁴⁶ Peter J. Bertocci (1982), "Bangladesh in the early 1980s: Praetorian Politics in an Intermediate Regime", *Asian Survey*, 22, (10):73.

the Islamic Countries, the US and China.⁴⁷ Even the democratic leader Begum Khaleda Zia did not follow any different path in domestic as well as foreign policy than her predecessors. The attributes of these leaders have left a deep impact on Bangladesh's foreign policy.

(e) Economic Condition

As a determinant of foreign policy, the economic aspect is very important. One of the important tasks of foreign policy is to secure economic resources for socio-economic reconstruction.⁴⁸ The factor is economic condition in the form of human and natural resources. The national economy of a country determines its strength. The status of a country as developed or developing depends mainly on the performance of its national economy. If a country is producing surplus food and surplus finished industrial products, it is independent of other states for its needs. It will sell the surplus products to another country which is deficient in that product. An economically deficient country is a weak power, because it is dependent upon others for its needs. Persistent underdevelopment and deprivation of economic well-being adversely affects the balance of payments. Being in such a predicament, its economic dependence on external assistance makes Bangladesh's vulnerable and consequently its bargaining power in international relations is minimised.

Bangladesh is among the least developed countries in the world. After the liberation war many outsiders doubted that Bangladesh could become an economically viable nation. Robert Dorfman of Harvard said that from an economic point of view East Pakistan is simply a mistake.⁴⁹ The economy of Bangladesh has been pessimistically levelled as an 'international basket case'. The more optimistic economists termed it as a 'test case of development'.

Bangladesh is an overwhelmingly agricultural economy. Out of the total land, the net cultivated area is about 60 per cent which is the highest in Asia. The share of agriculture to GDP has fallen to 32 in 1996-97 (which further declined 28.9% in 1997-98) from 55 per cent in 1970. But it still employs the largest part of the

⁴⁷ Farah Kabir (1991), 'Bureaucracy in Bangladesh: The Political Involvement and Influence', *BISS Journal*, 12(2):257-60.

⁴⁸ Virendra Narain (1994), 'Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Evolution and Prospects' in S.R. Chakravarty eds. *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*: Delhi, p. 36.

⁴⁹ A.M.A. Muhiith (1978), *Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation*, Dhaka: Bangladesh book international, p 1.

population.⁵⁰ With the present size of population, Bangladesh's agriculture supports 14 persons per hectare of arable land, comparable only with levels in South-Eastern China and Java (Indonesia) the most intensively cultivated regions of the world. In general we can say that in Bangladesh one third of gross domestic products is being produced in the agricultural sector, two thirds of which is crop output and the remaining one third is equally shared by fisheries, forestry and livestock output. Agricultural products, for instance, raw jute, jute products, tea, hides and skins and fish account for about 90 per cent of export earnings.⁵¹

Physical infrastructure in energy distribution, transport, communications, irrigation, drainage is not very satisfactory. There has not been much progress in the social sector after independence. The literacy rate has not improved significantly. The allocation for the education sector has been at a consistent low level (around 2 per cent of GDP and 3 per cent of development expenditure of the government).⁵² Opportunity to seek higher education and access to health services has become more unequal. The lack of educational resources in the education sector has prevented the achievement of an efficient education system. Income distribution is unequal and poverty is more widespread.

In developed countries large population is a source of power, but in developing countries population is a burden and hindrance in its fast development. In the case of Bangladesh, there is extensive malnutrition, hunger and disease prevalent in the country. Large number of people is scantily clothed, illiterate, unskilled and unemployed. To provide the basic necessities to the fast growing population is a great challenge to the government. Due to all pervasive poverty revenue generation is low, saving is small and capital formation is slow. Huge investment is required for the optimum utilization of the exploited resources. Natural resources are gifts of nature of proven utility. It includes minerals, flora and fauna, waterfall and soil fertility. The presence of exploitable non-human natural resources are neither essential nor a guarantee for economic development, is proved by the development experiences of different countries. The only important mineral which is present in abundance and being exploited is natural gas. Total estimated recoverable natural gas is 13.9 million

⁵⁰ Abul Kalam Ed. (1996), *Bangladesh: Internal Dynamics and External Linkages*, Dhaka: University Press, p47.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 280.

⁵² Ibid, p.175

cubic feet and the net available reserves after production of 2.86 trillion cubic feet till 1996, is about 10.73 trillion cubic feet.⁵³

Therefore, the structural problems, food deficit and urgency of the development of the Bangladesh economy demands very active economic foreign policy to get foreign assistance, promote trade and attract foreign investments. Through active aid diplomacy, Bangladesh can procure different kinds of foreign assistance from different sources. Because of its weak economy a negative image of Bangladesh is projected in the international fora, for instance, Bangladesh suffers from the shortage of food which really constraints its freedom of action in international affairs to a great extent.⁵⁴

(e) Military Capability

One of the important determinants governing the foreign policy is the capacity and capability of military of a country. Taken in border sense military capacity not only governed by sheer size of its forces, it is judged by its structure, quality, its capacity to equip itself with modern technology, and its sophistication. Apart from man power factors and its various aspects such as training discipline, moral, and character. Military capacity is also dependent upon the capability of a country in terms of military capability is also dependent upon the level of self-sufficiency in arms production as well as the arms imports from other countries.

Military capability is a prerequisite for the achievement of politico-strategic objective of the foreign policy and provides firmness to it. An important feature of Bangladesh military forces is that, it was organised under united Pakistan forces which establish its separate entity after the war of independence. However, it took formal and independent shape only after its break from Pakistan and repatriate Bengali soldiers from West Pakistan. There was a deep chasm between fighters' and 'repatriates' because the freedom fighters were highly politicized on the ideological line during the process of liberation war. The appellation 'Freedom Fighters' was considered as a badge of valour, whereas the word 'Repatriate' became a term of derision for the returnees. In the proves of its national movement and establishing a separate identities to forces, the Mujib government raised a parallel armed force

⁵³ Bangladesh Economic Review 1997, Ministry of Finance Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Dhaka, 1998), p.38

⁵⁴ Rehman Sobhan (Dec.1, 1979), "Politics of Food and Famine in Bangladesh", *Economic and Political Weekly*, p19.

called the Jatiya Rakhi Bahini (National Security Force or JRB), a para-militia group of 25,000 men drawn mainly from the group of freedom fighters loyal to the Mujib government.⁵⁵ The nature of its organization and its objective was not only limited to serve as the presidential guard rather it played its important role as its secret service and alternative army. JRB was abolished and absorbed by Zia-ur-Rehman. After the liberation war, the East Pakistan Rifles (EFR) was reorganised as Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).⁵⁶

Ideologically, the armed forces were divided into different groups during Mujib and Zia's periods. Apart from the ideological divisions⁵⁷, there was antagonism, grouping, factionalism, rivalry, jealousy vis-a-vis different and wings within. The feeling of being discriminated against on the part of repatriates vis-a-vis the freedom fighters adversely affected the military's morale, accelerated the process of polarization of the two and strained the command structure of the defence service.⁵⁸

On the whole the emergence and organisation of the armed forces in the Bangladesh was of Pakistani origin which took an active self-righteous nationalist form in the war of independence. The amalgamation of these two trends is the key to the Bangladesh military ethos. However, in the post independence phase the Bangladesh army developed certain antagonism towards the policy persuaded by the Bangladesh government. They were not only dissatisfied with the poor handling of the defence service, but also resented the policy persuaded by the Mujib government, particularly Mujib's repeated emphasis on Bangladesh's cordial ties with India. Leaving aside its inefficient organisational structure and poor service condition there have been various political and ideological reasons behind the anti-India feeling among the arm forces.

Since independence, the Bangladeshi army has increased manifold, from 17,000 in 1973 to 101,000 in 1975. There has been a notable increase in allotment of funds for arms and ammunition for the army, particularly under the Ershad government. The import of arms by Bangladesh averaged \$ 18 million per year during the period from 1972 to 1974, and \$ 30 million per year during the period from 1976 to 1986. Defence

⁵⁵ Maniruzzaman Talukdar (1976), "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and its Aftermath", *Asian Survey*, 16(2):124.

⁵⁶ Habibul Haque Khondaker (1980), "Bangladesh: Anatomy of an Unsuccessful Military Coup", *Armed Forces and Society*, 13(1): 136.

⁵⁷ Baladas Ghosal (1980), "Bangladesh: Passage to Military Rule", *Foreign Affairs Reports*, xxxi (8):144

⁵⁸ Enajuddin Ahmad (1988), *Military Rule and Myth of Democracy*, Dhaka: University Press, p. 52.

spending of Bangladesh went up to 1.58 per cent of GDP in 1990s. In 1998, budget expenditure on defence was estimated at 27,900 Million Taka.

The armed forces of Bangladesh have been an important determinant in influencing the foreign policy of the country. The military has played an active diplomatic role during the regimes of Zia and Ershad. The influence of armed forces' on foreign relations has been immense. Ershad had inducted military officers in various important positions in Bangladesh's Foreign Service as ambassadors, ministers and counsellors. He had plans to and had recommended the induction of army officers in the Foreign Service cadre to make it more what he called 'dynamic'.⁵⁹

3.2. The International Context

(a) The Systemic Variables and Role of Major Powers

In the contemporary interdependent world nation states is a crucial variable in the formulation of foreign policy. Such interdependent factor becomes more tangible and unavoidable in the case of third world countries. Since a foreign policy of any entity does not materialize in a vacuum, therefore, it becomes imperative on the part of any nation to take a firm and concrete step in a particular international political climate. However, the increasing role of international institutions and various multiple international forums led to generation of exposure and influence of a nation to world views and simultaneously compelled any country to readjust its foreign relationship according to the logic of the circumstances. It is naturally exposed to its influence and adjusts its steps and moves accordingly.

While chalking out the course of her foreign policy Bangladesh had to face antagonistic and confrontationist tendencies across the entire spectrum of relationship with all super powers. Her sole aim was to preserve the effectiveness of her newly won independence; therefore, anti-imperialist ingredients became the budge word of Bangladesh's foreign policy. As U.S.A. has strongly opposed her arrival as an independent sovereign political power on the world map which remained a crucial determinant while giving orientation to Bangladesh's foreign relationship with super power. Logical fall out of such situation led to signing of Friendship and Cooperation treaties with India and Russia as they were active supporters and sympathizer of Bangladesh's freedom struggle. Since Bangladesh came into being after splitting

⁵⁹ Fakhruddin Ahmed (1993), "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Review of Past Two Decades", *BLISS*, 14 (2): 180-181.

herself from Pakistan, the reaction of Islamic world had to become a crucial determinant in her foreign policy. Thus, Bangladesh had to accommodate the pulls and pressures often unleashed by super-powers and interests of Islamic nations were to be carefully readjusted on the basis of pragmatic calculations.

(b) Regional Environment

Since Bangladesh is seating on the edge of South Asia as well as South East Asia, Therefore, it has to follow double-edged foreign policy so that it could relish the advantages being offered by both political regions. Apart from that, India as a big and powerful neighbour has always remained the main concern of Bangladesh's regional foreign policy. In the perception of Bangladeshi security analysts, few countries have to face the 'tyranny of geography', as it is faced by Bangladesh. 'Dictates of geopolitics have rendered Bangladesh literally India-locked.'⁶⁰ Though, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka through bilateral agreement treaty have accorded formal acceptance of India's role in their foreign policy. Interestingly, Indo-Bangladesh treaty had intention to keep each other's security and foreign policy in harmony which unfortunately received serious setback in post Mujib era without any call for review.

In broader perspective one can see that there are three policy options to Bangladesh about India: a policy of intransigence, a policy of indifference or a policy of accommodation.⁶¹ A close look at the comparative capabilities of both countries does not allow Bangladesh to remain indifferent towards India as it will bring more vulnerability to Bangladesh. As policy of indifference is not feasible due to strong linkages interims of topography, hydrography, culture and economy this kept on evolving during colonial rule. Therefore, policy of accommodation can be a crucial political juncture in the relationship between India and Bangladesh. Thus, reciprocal apatite on the part of both will bring development in the Bangladesh and India can swiftly move ahead on North-East development plan with the cooperation of Dhaka. Therefore, it is practical on the part of Bangladesh to keep friendly relationship with India because 'it influences its politico-security diplomacy both at bilateral and multilateral level'.⁶² Viewing such domination of India in South Asia it is crucial for

⁶⁰ Itekhazzaman, 'The India Doctrine: Relevance for Bangladesh' in Kabir and Hassan eds (1989), *Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy*, Dhaka: University Press. p18.

⁶¹ Shaukat Hassan, "The India Factor in the Foreign Policy of Bangladesh' in Kabir and Hassan eds (1989), *Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy*, Dhaka: University Press, p 53.

⁶² M. Rashiduzzaman, (1977), *Changing Political pattern in Bangladesh: Internal Constrains and External Fear*, *Asian Survey*, 17(9):793-808.

Bangladesh to play a proactive role in South Asian region so that it could take political leverage at various multilateral regional forums.

An overwhelming importance accorded to South Asia by Bangladesh can be gazed through the contribution made by it in the formation of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. However, it was always in the interest of Bangladesh to consolidate the identity of South Asian region so that it could ward off the influence of India on it. Such step ensures not only political leverage against India but also assists in the development of intra-regional economic cooperation. Bangladesh's foreign policy has to take note of the developments in the neighbouring Myanmar which has substantial Muslim population known as Rohingyas.⁶³ Rohingyas cross border migration in Bangladesh has produced tension in the recent past. However, worsening internal political upheaval led to formation of differences between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

(c) Islamic Factor

One of the important aspect influence the foreign policy of the Islamic countries is their nearness or adherence to Islam. The degree of influence, however, varied from country to country depends upon the state ideology. This can be gazed from the fact that Islamic solidarity is expressed in the form of Islamic conference. The Islamic states collectively deliberate on the problem of Muslim Ummah Islamic states in the forum (OIC). This is also true in case of foreign policy of Bangladesh where Islam has acted independently as a debt on the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has gradually developed a close relationship with the Islamic countries in the post-Mujib period. There are push and pull factors influencing Bangladesh's relations with Islamic countries. In the push factors, the first is the religiosity of the masses, who want closer relations with the Islamic countries and identification with Islamic issues. The second is the influence of religious saints on the government particularly on Ershad who sought the Islamisation of the country's domestic and foreign policy. Even the centralist and Islamic parties have time to time attempted to establish closer relations with the Islamic countries. An important factor which acted as push factor is the absence of any Islamic country being a close neighbour as is the case with the

⁶³ Virendra Narain, 'Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Evolution and Prospects' in S.R. Chakravarty (1994), eds., Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, Delhi: Haranand Publication, p.41.

other Islamic countries. Bangladesh's desire for Islamic solidarity has been strengthened by the consciousness of this isolation.⁶⁴

As far as the pull factors are concerned there has been various political and social factors working towards bringing Bangladesh closer to Islamic countries. Politically the Islamic countries are important for Bangladesh individually and collectively. The Islamic countries supported Bangladesh on the water dispute with India in the UN and its candidature to UN Security Council. Economically, the oil rich Arab Islamic countries are very helpful for Bangladesh in many ways. They provide economic aid most of which is in the form of grants to Bangladesh. Moreover, the West Asian countries have provided the largest market for Bangladeshi labour force, both skilled and unskilled nature. The remittance money has become a vital source of foreign exchange. Trade between Bangladesh and these countries has great prospect which is increasing. The terms of trade are favourable to Bangladesh because a major share of the import bill is paid through loans and grants.⁶⁵

Responding to above mentioned factor Bangladesh adopts Islamic posture on every opportune occasion. The Islamic countries indirectly have influenced the Islamisation process in Bangladesh. Bangladesh actively participates in the diplomacy. In International forums and the UN, Bangladesh highlighted and takes a definite stand on the problems of Islamic countries. It co-sponsored the resolutions on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan along with Pakistan. At the same time, it has maintained a neutral stand over dispute concerning between Islamic countries and has tried to solve the issue with impartiality to reach an ambical solution. Bangladesh has hosted many official and semi-official conferences and congregations of the world Muslim dignitaries since 1982. As the second largest Muslim state in the world and as the leader of the LDCs among the OIC countries Bangladesh has position in the Islamic world. Change in the nature of regime in 1996 has not explicitly affected the role of Islam, as a variable in Bangladeshi foreign policy decision-making

4. Major characteristics

These characteristics can be identified as follows

⁶⁴ Tabarak Husain, "Domestic Inputs in Foreign Policy" in S.R.Chakravarty and Virendra Narain ed., *Bangladesh: Global Politics*, vol. 3 (New Delhi: 1988), p. 26.

⁶⁵ Md. Golam Mustafa (1986), "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: The Middle East factor", *Bliss Journal*, 7(1): 67-78.

(a) Non-Alignment

Having emerged as independent nation through a gruelling process of national liberation movement, it was possible for Bangladesh to understand the nature of international political system divided as it was into antagonistic blocks and afflicted with the evils of consequences of the cold war. Race for armament and stockpiling of nuclear weapons had kept the world at the brink of catastrophe. There was also the great divide between the rich north and the poor south in the context of which the north always tried to extricate the maximum political advantage from the south. Bangladesh belonging to the south and being the least developed nation of the world had no option but to be non-aligned as it gave her the freedom to act in accordance with her own national interest. Non-alignment was also supportive of Bangladesh's national liberation movement and had played a role in her west for self-respecting national identity. Non-alignment this became a characteristic feature of the foreign policy of Bangladesh, though adherence to this characteristic was dependent on the nature of political leadership at the helm of state power in the course of her existence as an independent nation. In the constitution of Bangladesh embodies the basic principles of nonalignment Policy; that says, the state shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for international laws and principles as enunciated in the United Nations Charter. Since inception Bangladesh participated and supported to NAM summit. Bangladesh joined the NAM in 1973 and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman participated in the NAM summit at Algiers in the same year. The decision was motivated by his desire to widen and broaden Bangladesh's relationship with other developing countries. His attendance was a big exposure soon after independence for Bangladesh and many Non-Aligned leaders were impressed by his personality. Bangladesh wanted to hold the NAM summit in Dhaka in 2001 but with the coming into power of BNP-led government in 2001, it did not proceed reportedly for "security reasons." An alternative venue was chosen and the NAM summit was held in 2003 in Malaysia.

(b) India Centric in Nature

India and Bangladesh has cultural, linguistic, racial affinities and historical legacy which is strengthened by geographical proximity. The religious difference

however has been a source of irritant in the recent past accentuated by the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Godhra communal violence of 2002. Religious difference, political dominance and the physical size of India has continued to evoke a sense of apprehensive notion about India. The question of security and exchange of economic goods and services further contribute to this notion of dichotomy. The people of Bangladesh generally view India as another colonial master waiting to capture on the basis of its achieved economic and military strength. India's dealing with Bangladesh was often read with a sense of mistrust and suspicion and its contribution to the formation of Bangladesh was viewed with pre meditated ideas. The very leit motif of India to help Bangladesh was primarily designed with the intention to establish India's supremacy over Bangladesh in all walks of its life. Various interest groups in Bangladesh try to whip up primordial sentiments against the perceived notion of India's belligerent designs.

India played a vital role in liberation war of Bangladesh spent not only 7000 crore of Rupees but also scarified the lives of 3630 shouldered of her army and about Ten Thousands Jawan had been wounded⁶⁶ but it is noticeable that role of India was already politicized during the liberation war. The factionalism among various groups that were fighting the liberation war, the resentment that India was selectively arming parties close to Awami League and the Mukti Bahini and later creation of Mujib Bahini created a scenario where from the beginning India's action became the synonymous with Awami League interests.⁶⁷

Mujib adopted the policies of democracy, nationalism and secularism whereas but old leader like Maulana Bhasani followed a very narrow strain of policies which had an anti-Indian base. When Mujib signed the friendship treaty with India, Bhasani criticised Mujib for having traded the political and economic sovereignty of Bangladesh to India. While Mujib wanted to follow a policy of friendship with everyone, Bhasani wanted to identify more with the Islamic world. Bangladesh was never recognised by many of the Islamic states during the Mujib regime. Maulana Bhasani's policies were based on 'Islamic Socialism.' In one of his meetings, he declared that he would "trample the Constitution underfoot, if it is not based on the

⁶⁶ Salam Ajad (2008) "Role of Indian People in liberation war of Bangladesh", *Dialogue*, 10(2):137-144

⁶⁷ Smurty S Pattanaik (2005), "Internal Political Dynamics and Bangladesh's Foreign Policy towards India", *Strategic Analysis*, 29(3):395-426.

Quran and the practices of the Prophet⁶⁸. According to Bhasani, 14 per cent of the Hindus were exploiting 86 per cent of the Muslims of Bangladesh. He criticised Mujib for making Bangladesh a satellite of India and tried to forge a united front of the Right and Left extremists, against the secular parties like Awami League. In addition, Bhasani's policies were aimed at the creation of a new sovereign state *Bangassam*, comprising the Bengali speaking areas of Eastern India and Bangladesh. His idea was that, if such a state was formed, it would be a Muslim dominated state and such a state would make India weak. This concept of *Bangassam* must be understood not as mere hysterical claims of a crazy political leader, but for its deeper implications. This concept is alive even now in Bangladesh.

The creation of Bangladesh earned for India paradoxical image on the one hand it was seen as active supporter of liberation war and on the other as an unprincipled self keeper. Behavior of Indian soldiers and behavior of Indian bureaucrats are discussed and exaggerated in many time and many ways. Inevitably the Islamic fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh which had for tactical region endorsed the Indian intervention also received in the spring of 1972, during the Hindu religious festival there were report of communal violence in several part of Bangladesh. In summer of 1973 the so called Muslim Bangla Movement was launched by right wing of Islamic forces to revive Muslim sentiment and to resist the policy of secularism propounded by ruling Awami League.

The activists of Muslim Bangla were confined to treating Bangladeshi Hindu and Indian diplomats with anonymous letter and advising them to escape to India later they became vocal and slogan appearing in the wall of Dhaka .the slogan "we shall not allow Sikkim to be repeated in Bangladesh". Muslim Bangla movement had open its centers in London an Mecca and tried to collect fund to raise a guerrilla army to promote the objectives of movement the SANGRAM magazine had been published. Leftist Parties utilized the growing anti India and communal sentiment to their interest. According to Rasidduzzaamam Islamic identity became the center of resistances against India pre dominances in Bangladesh politics. it also became the source of strength for opposition against Sheikh Mujib's government .the other reason for the growth of Anti-Indianism was Mujib failure in the economic field compelled with identification with India it was fashion of that time to speak against India.

⁶⁸ S.R Chakravarty (1994), *Bangladesh under Mujib, Zia and Ershad*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication

The most controversial issues in the aftermath of the liberation war as 1972 treaty. The rumors regarding the so called clause created a lot of furore and gave Mujib's detractors a reason to create anti-Indianism for their political benefits. The issue of secret clause was raised again and again.⁶⁹ The treaty is considered as a price that Bangladesh paying to India's contribution, some Bangladeshi analysts argue that this treaty compromised Bangladesh's sovereignty. India had earlier given two Fokker air craft and the couple of Cargo ships the anti Indian interpreted these to be of sub standard quality and attributed that India's motive was only to prevent Bangladesh to acquiring superior air craft and ships. Later Mujib -Ur-Rahman, not only engaged in anti India rhetoric but used Islamic idiom to enhance his domestic credential which were frequently put to question.

After the assassination of Mujib the Bengali nationalism turned into Bangladeshi nationalism. The elements of 1947 were working very sharply. Zia was known for his anti Indian, pro-west and pro-Islamic attitude. Bangladesh improved its relations with China and Pakistan. Bangladesh endeavored to consolidate preserve and strengthen fraternal relation among Muslim countries, based on the Islamic solidarity. Zia secured the support of Islamic revivalist section with for which the Awami League was at loggerheads. In the 1979 election many candidates from the Muslim League fought the election under the banner of BNP with the slogan 'Defeat Awami League and keep Islam safe in the hands of President Zia'. There were other symbolic measures which includes display Quaranik verses and the prophet advice in public places and government office. Flying of Eid -Mubarak festoon with national flag on Eid festival, propagating the principles of Sariyat through radio and so on Zia-Ur- Rahman began to preface his public speeches with Bismillah -ar Rahman ar Rahim in the social level. There were a tendency to assert the Muslim characteristic of Bengali language as against Hindu the traditional mode of education though the Madarras also get a new impetus and resurgences of Islamic parties. The tension over Border dispute and sharing Ganga water made worst image of India at that time. Zia ur Rahman tried to internationalize these issues. He took the Farrakka issues to OIC

⁶⁹ Smurty S Pattanaik (2005), "Internal Political Dynamics and Bangladesh's Foreign Policy towards India", *Strategic Analysis*, 29(3):395-426.

Foreign Ministers Conference in Istanbul in 1976.⁷⁰ This issue was raised again and again in different stages. In his regime the free trade zone which had provided for ten mile strip on either side of the border in the trade agreement, was widely looked upon as India's manoeuvre to smuggle valuable goods to Bangladesh to India. Resentment was also voiced against the 25 year Indo-Bangladesh friendship treaty, which was viewed as being 'imposed' on Muzib. In the tenure of Genral H. M. Ershad anti-India sentiments remained in politics. Ershad declare th Islam as state religion. During his regime the water sharing issues continued to make India image bad in the eyes of Bangladesh.

The restoration of democracy in 1991 brought in its own dynamic to India image in Bangladeshi view. Relation and Image became of Flavor in domestic politics and national discourse. Democracy and political mobilization made India an essential factor in domestic politics in the election campaign, India factor dominated for example, Awami League manifesto that talked of secularism and return to 1972 constitution was attacked by BNP as selling the county to India. Since Awami League is perceived as pro-Indiaism and Anti-Indianism a major tool for BNP. The ideological front the Awami league and BNP differ fundamentally in their interpretation of historical emergence of Bangladesh, unlike Awami League BNP acknowledges his history begins it not from 1971 or 1947 but from establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal. Defeating of Sirajuddaola is considered a low point in history of Muslim of Bengal. The next two centuries witnessed the humiliation of India Muslim (particularly Bengal) at the both the British and majority Hindus. In BNP eyes the creation of Bangladesh did not invalidate the basis of Pakistan 'two-nation theory'. Awami League is seen by many a stooge of India and obstacle to the development of an independent identity for the people of Bangladesh. Under the BNP government the history of Liberation war was being rewritten that it was Zia-Ur-Rahman Who was the real hero of liberation war and not Mujib-Ur-Raman, because it was the former who first gave the call for independence of Bangladesh on 26 March 1971.

AI led by Sheikh Hasina represents Bengali nationalism and while the BNP led by Khalida- Zia represents the Bangladeshi nationalism. The Jamat-e-Islami, Islami

⁷⁰ Kamal Hossain (1985) "Bangladesh's Sovereignty and an Independent Non-aligned Foreign Policy" *Man and Development*, 4 (December):46-48.

Oikyo Jote are resolutely Islamic, they always make propagation against India. Bengali nationalism and its supporters stands for good image of India .The Bangladeshi nationalism that represent the ethos of 1947 have clear tilt with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The society is also divided in BNP men and Awami League man so there attitude toward India is similar to their Parties. But due to growing Islamisation in the countries within society the Awami league is unable to remain there secular image to take the benefit in election, party started to speech against India. In 2004 the pro- Islami section was demanding to change the Nation Anthem that was written by R.N. Tagore and National Flag.⁷¹ The growing number of Madarassa in the Bangladesh is ever controversial the Funds come from the Jeddah based Islamic Development Bank. There are several Islamic militant outfits operating in Bangladesh most important are Harakat -Ul- Jihad, Islami-Chhatro-Shibir, Samjukta- Islamic-Organization and the Islamic- Markaz- Party which aims at the wiping out all enemies of Islam including The United State and India.⁷²

The other threat is cultural. The cultural mosaic of India encompasses all the cultures of South Asia: its languages and literatures and music, its religions, its ethnic identities, its customs and traditions. There are more Muslims in India than in a Pakistan created as the homeland for the Muslims of South Asia, half as many Bengali speakers as in a Bangladesh created so that the people could speak their own language the home of which is in India, many more Hindus than in Nepal, more Buddhists than in Bhutan. If globalization can be defined in one version as the spread throughout the globe of a pervasive and homogenizing culture and value system, then regionalization is what seems to threaten India's neighbors.

As a counter among India's to the influence of socio-politics and culture there has develop neighbors a strong proclivity to assert the separateness of their identity. This may find recourse in the adoption of an ideology that contrasts with that of India as when Bangladesh adopted Islam as the state religion and criticized India for what it called an attempt to foist an alien culture that obliterates the distinct culture of the Bengali Muslims. Or it may lead to demonstrative distancing, a refusal to settle issues on terms which seem reasonable. Indians often bewail this. Commentators from India continue today to bewail the passing of secularism but to do so is an anachronism.

⁷¹ Partha S Ghosh (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh", *South Asian Survey*, 12(2):248-256.

⁷² Ibid

They are of a mind with those who call Bangladesh 'an anachronism within an anachronism'. Such comments lead to further feelings of insecurity in Bangladesh.⁷³

The response in Bangladesh to India's all-encompassing cultural mosaic has been more vehemently self-assertive than that of the other neighbors. This is because it has been pushed first one way, then the other. Pakistan thought the promotion of the Bengali language was a plot devised by India to lure the Eastern wing away, so it tried to impose Urdu on the former East Pakistan, which led to the language movement and ultimately the movement for separation.. Bangladesh swung between the two poles of secularism and Islam, Bengali and Bangladeshi; the so-called forces of 1971 and those of 1947, pro-India and anti-India.

Though an aspect of operational phase, attitude towards India is also a major characteristic of the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Anti-Indians characterized foreign policy formulations and at the official level India was projected as a hostile neighbor, though at the popular level friendly image of India continued to persist. As to how this characteristic feature was made use of by different political discussion at a later stage.

(c)Religion Centric in Nature

Though Islamic ideology played only a negative role in the national liberation movement of Bangladesh, Islam did become a characteristic feature of foreign policy, which had to be taken into account by the decision-makers. The pole of a majority of Islamic countries led by Saudi Arabia was extremely hostile to Bangladesh since its emergence was perceived as a blow to Islamic nations though he expressed his willingness to forge friendly relations with them, as part of the policy with friendship with all and enmity with none, as proclaimed by Bangladesh after independence. Islam therefore was not taken as a factor in determining the nature of relationship with the Islamic world during the Mujib period.

But after the coup of 1975, which was hailed by some of the Islamic countries as reassertion of Islam in Bangladesh, the situation took a pro-Islamic world turn and development of friendly relations with the Islamic world became a cardinal principle of the foreign policy of Bangladesh. It is, however, interesting to note that attempts at Islamisation of Bangladesh's polity and society have met with popular resistance thus signifying deep commitment of the people of Bangladesh to the concept of

⁷³ Firdous Jahan (2008), "Islamic Fundamentalism in Bangladesh: A Quest for the Root", *Asian Profile*, 36(2):197-212.

secularism. Islam as a characteristic feature of foreign policy, however, significantly affects the other characteristics namely the attitude towards India. This character would be discussed in next chapter.

(d)Orientation towards Major Powers

Bangladesh as a member of the non-aligned movement in the beginning had sought to develop friendly relations with all major powers of the world, though, owing to hostile attitude of USA and china towards her national liberation struggle, her relations with them were not as friendly as they were with the socialist bloc and India. China did not recognize Bangladesh and opposed her entry into the United Nations, while the USA tried to use her economic power of influencing the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujib tried hard to get economic aid from the USA on his own terms without compromising with the basic objectives of the national liberation movement, but gradually and particularly after the military coup of 1975, Bangladesh's tilt towards the USA and china became evidently clear. Dependence on foreign aid pushed Bangladesh into a situation where in non-alignment notwithstanding, pro-west orientation became a characteristic feature of the foreign policy of Bangladesh after the military.

The US president Bill Clinton visited Bangladesh as the first US president since the nations independent. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Bangladesh extended its full support to the US in its war against international terrorism. Accordingly, when the US govt. requested us for over flight permission and also, if required, some logistical facilities, the Caretaker govt. after duly consulting the major political parties, promptly agreed to the US request.

5. Bangladesh's Foreign Policy: Main Objectives

An analysis of foreign policy of Bangladesh will indicate certain objectives which have governed it from its inception. There have been changes of government in Bangladesh through military coups, sometimes accompanied by violence, which have caused political instability at the home and bewilderment abroad. Nevertheless Bangladesh's foreign policy has shown certain consistent features. The technique and modus operandi for attaining those objectives were, however, varied from time to time in accordance with changing circumstances both at home and abroad. The attitudes of the superpowers, patterns of alignment in the subcontinent, inter-state relations in South Asia, historical experience and the trauma of Bangladesh's

emergence, international as well as regional political and economic structure have all profoundly affected the policymakers of Dhaka. Through three successive regimes the consistent features which have emerged in Bangladesh's foreign policy are:

(a)Protection of National Identity

The most important objective of any foreign policy is to promote national interest, and in this context the inescapable interest lies in protecting the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Seen in this perspective and keeping in view the historical legacies of the freedom struggle, safeguarding of sovereignty and independence of the nation is the main objective of Bangladesh's foreign policy. Thus promotion of Bengali (now Bangladeshi) nationalism in order to establish in form and essence an identity of its own is the fundamental responsibility which foreign policy seeks to fulfil through various diplomatic mechanism. Maintenance of territorial integrity in the context of her geographical location enjoins upon Bangladesh to manage her relations with India prudently and realistically. Concern for security puts pressure on Bangladesh to seek avenues of support from outside the region. Continuing border and river water sharing problems with India give gritty the mill of anti-Indian tirades in the country with which the foreign policy has to deal effectively. The indo-Bangladesh relations have become all the more complicated because of the influx of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants into India and the occurrence of communal clashes in both the countries. The need to demonstrate her own national identity from India's west Bengal also poses a challenge before Bangladesh's foreign policy. Hence the main objective in terms of promoting and protecting national identity is to deftly handle relations with India. And that is the most important task before the foreign policy of Bangladesh.

(b)Economic Development

Another major objective of Bangladesh's foreign policy has been the concern for economic development.⁷⁴ Bangladesh had inherited a shattered economy, having been exploited by West Pakistan rulers for more than twenty four years. It had no significant industrial base, and was also poor in national resources. There had been large scale devastations owing to the repressive dictatorial rule of West Pakistan. The country had to be built literally from a scratch. Economic development as part of an

⁷⁴ S. R. Chakravarty (Ed) (1995), *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Haranand Publication.

overall nation-building activity was, therefore, on top of the agenda. Hence from the very beginning Bangladesh's search for economic assistance has been one of the main objectives of her foreign policy.

The foreign policy of Bangladesh is tied closely to the realities of its economic condition. Since independence the country has required a great deal of foreign assistance in the effort to keep its people fed and to build, for the first time, a modern society. Under these circumstances, it has been important for successive regimes to seek good relations with all nations and to attract economic aid from every possible source. Bangladesh has therefore cultivated good relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union, and their respective allies, but it has remained unaligned with either superpower. In an attempt to stimulate regional development plans, Bangladesh has been instrumental in organizing regional economic cooperation in South Asia. It has also been active in international organizations, especially in those dedicated to solving the economic problems of the poorer countries of the world. Despite its poverty and small military capability, Bangladesh has not hesitated to defend its sovereignty and to take strong stands on many international issues. Any hint that India might try to intimidate Bangladesh or encroach on its territorial rights has quickly elicited a powerful, nationalistic response from all levels of society⁷⁵. Furthermore, Bangladesh has annoyed both superpowers by standing against them on various major issues, and relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union have gone through difficult periods. A major component of Bangladesh's self-assertiveness has been evident in its efforts to focus on its Islamic heritage and its quest for fraternity with the worldwide Muslim congregation. The friendly relations it has enjoyed with Islamic nations have led to the receipt of economic aid from wealthy Arab countries.

Thus we see that Bangladesh has two main objectives namely, promotion of national identity and economic development. But other objectives emanating from the experiences of the national liberation movement and socio-economic realities in the country have led to certain characteristic features of the foreign policy of the Bangladesh.

- National security and territorial integrity.
- Good neighborly relations: seeking closer ties with India, Pakistan, China and South East Asia.

⁷⁵ S.R. Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication

- Promoting and maintaining, because of the religious affinities of the Bengali Muslim, fraternal ties with Muslim countries, including Pakistan.
- Seeking stability and peace to promote international cooperation in order to maintain the flow of financial assistance which is needed for Bangladesh's economic development.
- Support for a new international economic order which would be beneficial for a developing country like Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3

Islam as a Factor in Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Since 2001

1. Introduction:

Islam acts as an influencing factor on the foreign policy and diplomacy of most of the Muslim countries. The degree of its role on the foreign policy may vary from country to country depending on the state ideology. Islamic factor acts independently as a determinant on the foreign policy and diplomacy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has developed close relationship with the Islamic countries, the process of which has been started during the Mujib period. There are push and pull factors influencing Bangladesh's relations with these countries. The first push factor is the religiosity of the masses who want closer relations with the Islamic countries and identification with the Islamic issues.¹ The second push factor is a clause which was added in the article 25 of the constitution by Zia, which read, 'the state shall Endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity.'²

The rightist and the centrist parties want to have and act as a pressure group to have close relations with the Islamic countries. Another push factor is the absence of any Islamic country as a close neighbor unlike other Islamic countries. The consciousness of this isolation has made its unique contribution to Bangladesh's desire for Islamic solidarity.³ The pull factor includes political and economic reasons. Politically the Islamic countries are important for Bangladesh individually and collectively. Islamic countries collectively supported Bangladesh on the water dispute with India when it was raised in the UN General Assembly in 1976 and its candidature to the Security Council in 1978. Economically the oil rich Arab Islamic countries are very helpful in different ways. They provide economic aid most of which is in the form of grant to Bangladesh. The West Asian countries have become the largest market for Bangladeshi labor force both skilled and unskilled. The remittance money has become a vital source of foreign exchange. Trade between Bangladesh and these countries have great prospect, which is

¹ S. R Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign policy of Bangladesh*, (ed.), New Delhi: Haranand Publication. p.59

² ibid

³ Tabarak Husain "Domestic Input in Foreign Policy" in S.R Chakravarty and Virendra Narayan(ed) (1988), Bangladesh: Global Politics, New Delhi, Vo.3, p. 26.

increasing in volume and value. The terms of trade is favorable to Bangladesh because a major share of the import bill is paid through loans and grants.⁴

The push and pull factors guide Bangladeshi foreign policy towards Islamic countries. Dhaka adopts Islamic posture on every opportune occasion. The Islamic countries particularly Saudi Arabia influence the decision making process of the government. The Islamic countries indirectly influence the Islamisation process in Bangladesh as an external factor.⁵ In international forums and the UN, Bangladesh highlights and takes definite stand on problems of Islamic countries.

2. Bangladesh's Relation with the Islamic Countries During Mujib Period

During the Bangladesh liberation war diplomatic support was given to Pakistan by Iran and Arab states of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, morocco, and the Sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, white other Arab states- Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria- remained comparatively silent.⁶ Indonesia was concerned for the secession of Pakistan, so it was interested in the peaceful settlement of the crisis. It offered its good offices to try, to keep west and East Pakistan together. The Indonesia Foreign Minister made effort, to help in the political settlement of the crisis. After the emergence of Bangladesh and establishment of government in Dhaka, Indonesia and Malaysia were the first Muslim states to recognize Bangladesh on 25 February 1972.

Among the Arab states Iraq, Egypt, Algeria and Syria displaced an early willingness to recognize Bangladesh. Bangladesh foreign minister visited Iraq, Syria and Egyptian august-September 1972. Even after Arab states negative attitude towards Bangladesh, it consistently avoided any link with Israel. Mujib spurned Israeli overtures for its friendship. A senior career diplomat was appointed as special envoy of Bangladesh to the region shortly after the independence was established.⁷

Bangladesh did not lose any opportunity to express its solidarity with the Arab countries vis-à-vis Israel and upheld the Palestinian cause. In the October 1973 Arab-

⁴ S. R.Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign policy of Bangladesh*, (ed.), New Delhi: Har Anand Publication p.59

⁵ Rounaq Jahan (1980), *Bangladesh Politics: Problem and issue*, Dhaka: University Press,p.5

⁶ Asghar Ali (1971), "Bangladesh and the Muslim World", *United Asia*, (Bombay), 23(3):193.

⁷Mizanur Rahman, Shelly (1983), "Bangladesh: Quest for International Recognition", *Asian Affairs* (Dhaka), 5(4):414.

Israel war Bangladesh strongly supported Arabs. In a symbolic gesture Bangladesh sent tea and a military medical team to Cairo. Mujib personally visited the war Zone within weeks of the ceasefire. These efforts paid fruitfully. Most Arab and Islamic countries excluding Saudi Arabia and Sudan recognized Bangladesh during Mujib time.

The main problems between Bangladesh and Pakistan essential to be settled for normalization of relations were (1) repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war (POWs) held in India, (2) repatriation of Bengali military and civilian personnel held in Pakistan, (3) repatriation of Pakistani personnel and Urdu speaking pro-Pakistani people residing in Bangladesh, (4) division of assets and liabilities between them. After Indo-Pak normalization of relations in July 1972, New Delhi persuaded Bangladesh to deal with the repatriation problem softly. After a series of negotiations and agreements between Bangladesh and India in April 1973, India and Pakistan in July 1973, a final agreement about repatriation was signed between India and Pakistan on 28 August 1973.⁸

The Arab Islamic countries played hectic diplomacy for participation of Bangladesh in the second Islamic Conference held on 22-23 February 1974. With the good offices of the member countries Mujib attended the Lahore OIC summit and acquiesced the trial of the accused Pakistani military personnel for war crimes. Bhutto recognized Bangladesh respecting the 'unanimous opinion' of the Muslim leaders.⁹ Iran, turkey and Libya recognized Bangladesh after Pakistan. Recognition by Pakistan did not result in establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. After a tripartite negotiation between Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, Bangladesh announced its clemency to the 195 alleged war criminals.¹⁰ President Bhutto visited Dhaka on 27-29 June 1974. The visit could not produce any further agreements or even improvement in relations. Since Bangladesh demanded just division of assets of undivided Pakistan before establishing diplomatic and commercial relations whom Pakistan refused to accept.

⁸ Mouded Ahmed (1983), *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*, Dhaka: University Press. pp. 195-202.

⁹ Danis Wright (1988), *Bangladesh: Origin and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975)*, New Delhi: Sterling Pub. pp 64.

¹⁰ According to the then foreign Minister kamal Hossain, clemency was granted on the appeals on behalf of war criminals. Bhutto had appealed to Mujib to grant clemency since any attempt to holding a trial would lead to a military backlash which could overthrow the civilian government.

Mujib met King Faisal of Saudi Arabia at the NAM Summit of 1973 and the Islamic Summit of 1974. There had been several Foreign Minister Levels meeting between the two countries at which detailed discussions were held regarding formalization of relations.¹¹ Saudi regime was slowly coming towards formal recognition during Mujib time. The Saudi recognition after Mujib's removal was not sudden, but hasty culmination of a process started by Mujib regime.

2.1. Military Governments and Politico-Security Relation with Muslim Countries:

(a) Neighboring Islamic Countries

In post-Mujib Bangladesh, Pakistan has gradually emerged as the important neighboring Islamic country. Pakistan was the first country to recognize and support the new government after the violent change of regime in August 1975. Prime Minister Bhutto announced that Pakistan would immediately dispatch 50,000 tons of rice and five million yards of cloth. He expressed his desire to make greater contribution for the well-being of Bangladesh, with whom they have shared common nationhood and destiny.¹² Mustaque sent Pir Muehuddin as a special emissary to Islamabad and established diplomatic relations with Pakistan in October 1975.¹³

Zia-ur-Rahman, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, sent the first Ambassador to Pakistan on 3 January 1976. Pakistan's Ambassador to Bangladesh reached Dhaka on 12 January 1976.¹⁴ Zia took further diplomatic initiatives to develop good relations with Pakistan. During his regime the two countries signed Trade Agreement, joint Economic Commission Agreement and Cultural Cooperation Agreement. Telecommunication, air,

¹¹ Kamal Hossain (1985), "Bangladesh's Sovereignty and an Independent Non-Aligned Foreign Policy". *Man and Development*, Chandigarh, 7(4): 72.

¹² Harvey Stockwin (1975), "Bangladesh: The Past lives on", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 September, p5

¹³ Mujib had refused diplomatic relations until Pakistan share the assets with Bangladesh and repatriate the remaining Biharis. Pakistan wanted to share assets and liabilities both. Mustaque withdrew the conditions and diplomatic relations was established.

¹⁴ Syed Serajul Islam, "Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations: Conflict to cooperation" in Emajuddin Ahmad, ed, (1984), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A small state's Imperative*, Dhaka: University Press, p. 55.

shipping links was started in 1976.¹⁵ Pakistan offered a Boeing 707 and 28 railway coaches to Bangladesh. The plants which were not working due to lack of technical and managerial skills were rehabilitated with the help of Pakistan. After the reciprocal Foreign Secretaries visits and Zia's visit after it to Islamabad in December 1977, the process of normalization was completed. After the beginning of the normalization process it appears that the bilateral relations has swiftly reached a stage after which it has been routines.

During Ershad regime Pakistani foreign Minister visited Bangladesh in August 1983. Zia ul Haq visited Bangladesh after the coastal areas were swept by one of the worst cyclones as a goodwill gesture after Rajiv-Jayawardene's visits in 1985. Ershad visited Pakistan in July 1986 as the first Chairman of SAARC. Prime Minister Benzir visited Dhaka in October 1989 and in 1990 the Pak Foreign Minister and Chief of Staff separately visited Dhaka. In the late eighties, during Ershad regime a new aspect of co-operation in defense and security field has been added. There has been exchange of visits by high-level military delegations since 1989. Pakistan has given 40 discarded F-6 Chinese fighter to Bangladesh.¹⁶ Bangladesh, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed was awarded with the highest military honor of Pakistan by president Ghulam Isaq Khan in August 1990 for his effort, to improve relations between the two countries.

Nothing remarkable has occurred in the Bangladesh-Pak relations during the Khaleda Zia regime. She visited Pakistan in August 1992 and Nawaz Sharif came to Dhaka in December 1992 on the occasion of the 7th SAARC summit even after its postponement and also in April 1993 to attend the summit.¹⁷ Pakistan has agreed at the time of Begum Zia's visit to repatriate the stranded Pakistanis, in phases which did not materialize few to violent reaction by the Sindhis in Karachi. The new Foreign Minister of Pakistan Sardar Asif during his Dhaka visit assured the Bangladesh leadership to

¹⁵ Charles, Peter, O'Donnell (1984), 'Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation', Colorado: Westview Press, p 217.

¹⁶ Srikant Mohptra (1991), "National security and Armed Forces in Bangladesh" *Strategic Analysis*, 14(5):594.

¹⁷ 'A year of Involvement with Regional Problems', *Bichitra Varsh Patra*, 1993 (Dhaka), p 57.

respect the commitments given by the previous government. During 1993 some industries in Bangladesh were returned to its Pakistani owners.¹⁸

The objective of Bangladesh politico-security diplomacy towards Pakistan is to amplify its sense of security and increase its maneuverability against India. Pakistan responded positively towards Dhaka's overtures of normalization because it wanted to minimize Indian influence over Bangladesh. It seems that the post-Mujib Bangladesh have more or less similar outlook and common sentiments about the sub-continent. After normalization they have developed a striking similarity in their foreign policy directions and linkage pattern.¹⁹ Both have close and friendly relations with the West, the Muslim World and China.

But, there is a limit of Bangladesh and Pakistan politico-security relations few to some domestic and external constraints. The first domestic constraint on Bangladesh is the unsettled problems of the stranded Pakistanis and the division of assets and liabilities.²⁰ The second factor is the legacy of the liberation war. In Bangladesh still alive is a hard sizable section of the population who had participated in the liberation war or had seen the atrocities of the Pakistani army. The third constraint on Bangladesh's Pakistani diplomacy is the India factor. Dhaka is conscious that India minutely observes the nature and momentum of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. Too close relationship with Pakistan is perceived by New Delhi as a threat of its security. To counter that threat India is capable of endangering Bangladesh, and Pakistan is not capable to check that danger.

The other important neighboring Islamic countries are Malaysia and Indonesia. Bangladesh has excellent relations with Malaysia. A joint Economic Commission is working between them. Bangladeshi workers are working in the rubber plantations and some other professionals are also working there. Malaysia, as the emerging radical and vocal leader of the developing world, cooperates with Bangladesh in different fields. Malaysian navy chief visited Dhaka in October 1992 and the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad paid three day visit to Bangladesh in January 1993, on the occasion

¹⁸ Syed Anwar Husain (1994), "Year of Active Economic Diplomacy" *Bichitra Varsh Patra*, p. 41.

¹⁹ M. Abdul Hafiz (1985), "Bangladesh -Pakistan Relations: Still Developing", *BIISS Journal*, 6(3):386.

²⁰ Bangladesh never endeavored hard to settle the issues due to different reasons but ritualistically mention the issues at each formal bilateral meeting. For practical purposes the issues are dead.

the on-going cooperation in different fields were reviewed and new pledges were taken to further the cooperation.²¹ Bangladesh's initiatives develop close relations with Indonesia is not reciprocated equally. The relationship though not up to the expectations of Bangladesh is good. There was an exchange of naval mission and an informal joint exercise of Indonesian and Bangladeshi navies in 1978. Bangladesh has purchased and AS-332 helicopter for VIP use in 1989.²² The primary motive of Indonesia in its relationship with Bangladesh is cultural and religious rather than economic or strategic.

(b)Relation with Persian Gulf Islamic Countries

The Persian Gulf is a very important region for all the nations of the world because of its oil wealth. Its significance is higher to the poor developing countries. Bangladesh being one of them pursues active diplomacy in this region. It has resident mission in all the gulf cooperation Council (GCC) states Iraq-Iran. In every mission in this region it has posted diplomatic staff to look after the interests of Bangladesh.²³

Saudi Arabia was the last Muslim country to recognize Bangladesh after the Mujib era was over. This shows its perception about the ideology of the regime in Bangladesh with which it wants to do business. Both the people and government to Dhaka have friendly feelings for the kingdom due to its religious, economic importance and political clout. The relation has progressively improved since Zia.

The first ambassador to Riyadh was posted in October 1976. While accepting the credentials of the first Bangladesh ambassador King Khalid appreciated the efforts of the Bangladesh Government in preserve its independence and sovereignty from external

²¹ *Bangladesh News*, vol.2, no. 4, February 15, 1993.

²² Bangladesh –Indonesia Relations see '*Bangladesh in International Affairs*', 1(7), July 1978, p. 8; Bangladesh-Indonesia Bilateral Relations, *News from Indonesia*, issued by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bangladesh, no. 270/86 pen, 17 August 1988, pp. 1-5

²³ The number and the status of the diplomatic staff looking after labor, commercial and economic interests of Bangladesh in these missions depend upon the level of relations. In Saudi Arabia the labor wing is led by a minister and assisted by an attaché. There is a separate labour wing in Jeddah consulate headed by a Vice-counselor. In Iran, Kuwait and UAE there are labor counselors. In Bahrain, there is one labour attaché in Qatar second Secretary incharge of labour. In Iraq there is no labor or commercial personal due to the war. In Saudi Arabia there is an economic and commercial wing headed by counselor. In Baharin and Qatar there is commercial wing.

threats and improve conditions of life of its people.²⁴ Bangladesh has a defense attaché posted in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia maintains a separate office for its military attaché in Dhaka consisting of five diplomatic staff. This shows the security aspect of their relationship. Negotiations were held between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia to replace nearly 10000 strong Pakistani soldiers in Saudi Arabia by Bangladesh forces. In this connection the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Prince Bin Abdul Aziz visited Dhaka in December 1985. The idea did not materialize finally.²⁵

Ershad made his first foreign trip to Saudi Arabia after coming to power in May 1982. Riyadh has become the largest donor and the largest human resource importer from Bangladesh amongst the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister went to Riyadh in August 1990 with the intention to visit different West Asian countries after the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The Saudi King at the first leg of his visit assigned him the task of persuading the six-Islamic South and South-East Asian countries to take a joint initiative against Iraq. Postponing his further planned tour, he went to Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Maldives and Pakistan directly from Riyadh on a Saudi government plane. As a result of the shuttle diplomacy, the six countries including Bangladesh issued a joint statement asking Saddam to immediately withdraw his forces.²⁶ Bangladesh's reaction and involvement in the Kuwaiti crisis was in accord with the majority viewpoint and particularly as desired by America and Saudi Arabia, the important donor countries. Begum Khaleda Zia went to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on her first official foreign tour as Prime Minister in June 1991. She sent one and a half thousand troops to Kuwait to take part in mine clearing programme in 1991.

After the second gulf war Bangladesh-Iran relations have achieved new momentum. Iran is taking active interests in Bangladesh as a competitor of Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Islamic world. The Deputy speaker of the Iranian parliament visited

²⁴ *Bangladesh Observer* (Dhaka), 22, October 1976.

²⁵ According to *Tribune* (Chandigarh), 6 October 1977, Saudi Arabia has provided \$619 million to Bangladesh since normalization of their relations to purchase arms. According to *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 19 September 1980 which has quoted a Dhaka based Bangla Weekly, *Bangladesh Khabar*, Riyadh is believed to have agreed to extend Rs 2000 million aid to purchase Chinese arms.

²⁶ Syed Anwer Husain (1991), "The year of Compulsion of the Donor Countries": *Bichitra Varsha Patra* p.65.

Bangladesh in February 1992 and in connection with the Rohingya refugee problems.²⁷ A meeting of the Bangladesh-Iran joint Economic Commission was held in November 1993. Iran agreed to construct cement factory and food grains storage. It also assured Dhaka to give priority in employment to Bangladeshi laborers, skilled workers and professionals. Begum Khaleda Zia has visited Bahrain in August 1992. Two agreements to promote economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries have been signed. A ministerial level joint Committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the agreements.²⁸

The Awami League also deviated from their secularist stand in this time. Sheikh Hasina got the state power in 1996 election with the support of Jamat-e-Islami (from the outside the government) and Erashad's Jatiya Party (A fraction of this party joined the government).²⁹ She has strengthened good relation with Islamic Countries for economic profit and getting leadership of Muslim countries. She paid her presence in all important Islamic platforms as OIC and D-8.

3. Islam as a Determination Since; 2001

Political Islam has emerged in Bangladesh by 2001 due to rise of Islamist political parties, state patronage of Islamic Forces since 1975, Islamizing the constitution, rise of Islamist political parties, and Islamic Militancy on the rise since Mid-1990. Jamaat-i-Islami is the most powerful Islamist political parties used the tension between the Bengali and Islamic dimensions of Bangladeshi identity to fulfill their political interest.

In 2001 election the votes between Awami league and BNP were more or less than balanced, although because of the electoral mathematics BNP secured a large number of seats. The four party alliance led by BNP got 46.9 % votes and 201 seats Awami league got 40.29 % votes and 63 seats.³⁰ While the pro Islamic forces interrupted the electoral result as their victory Jamat-i-Islami got 17 seats and became third largest party. The

²⁷ *Keesings Contemporary Archives* 1992, vol. 38, no. 5 May 1992, p.38913.

²⁸ Bangladesh News, vol. 1, no. 16, 15 August 1992.

²⁹ Partha S Ghosh (1993). "Bangladesh at Cross Road: Religion and Politics", *Asian Survey*, 33(3):135.

³⁰ POT 2001 a :1201-102

member of this alliance is Nationalist Party of Khaleda Zia, a fraction of Jatiya party, Islamic Okiya Jote, and the Jamaat-i-Islami.

In her manifesto BNP proclaimed that she would enhance cooperation with Islamic forces in internal and external policies. It was mentioned *No Islamic Law and close ties with Muslim Countries. And We will build good relation withand Further strengthen the relation with Muslim countries.*³¹ And Awami League also shows their inclination towards the Muslim countries in her manifesto- fraternal relationship with the countries of the Middle East including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait as well as Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia will be maintained. Solidarity with the Muslim Ummah and economic cooperation within the framework of OIC will be enhanced. Steps will be taken for establishing fruitful³². The Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Islami upholds Islam in its entirety. It aims at bringing about changes in all phases and spheres of human activities on the basis of the guidance revealed by Allah and exemplified by his Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh wants to try establishing Islamic ideal in the country in a democratic way. The Jamaat-i-Islami's current leader in Bangladesh is Motiur Rahman Nizami, a man who fought against both Bengali nationalism and the secular constitutionalism assumed the portfolio of ministry of Industries, in March 2001 in BNP government.

The year 2001 witnessed a shift in Bangladeshi foreign policy due to the shift in global politics and domestic requirements. It was a time when Bangladesh was forced to re-look at its foreign policy and to effect appropriate changes to meet the requirements of the 21st century. This can be observed at different levels. After the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September, 2001 (9/11), the US declared a "War on Terror" wherever it existed. The dramatic change in the US foreign policy and increasing global terrorist network impacted directly or indirectly the foreign policy of all countries. Bangladesh has also been categorized as a high risk terrorist state. Bangladesh on its part has been trying hard to project itself as a moderate Muslim majority state. She never

³¹ Election manifesto of BNP accessed from URL/ <http://www.webbangladesh.com/election/htm>

³² Election manifesto of Awami League accessed from URL/<http://www.albd.org/autoalbd/htm>

recognized to Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, occurred during the election campaign in Bangladesh, when the country was ruled by a caretaker government. But the outgoing prime minister, Sheikh Hasina and then opposition leader Khaleda Zia, condemned the attacks and both, if they were elected, offered the United States use of Bangladesh's air space, ports and other facilities to launch military attacks against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In 9/11 attack twelve Bangladeshi had been killed in pentagon.

Bangladesh stood with OIC, showing unity and solidarity with Islamic world in relation to various issues which affect Muslim communities. It strongly opposed the so called link between Islam and terrorism. It strongly condemned the new conservative ideology of 'regime changed' as seen in the Iraq invasion as an encroachment on Muslims sovereignty and identity. A Bangladeshi embassy official in Washington branded the attacks 'an affront to Islam...an attack on humanity.' Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh stand on the "war against terrorism," however, contrasts sharply to that of the more established parties. Shortly after the US attacks on Afghanistan began in October 2001, the Jamaat created a fund purportedly for "helping the innocent victims of America's war." According to the Jamaat's own announcements, 12 million taka (\$210,000) was raised before the effort was discontinued in March 2002. Any remaining funds, the Jamaat then said, would go to Afghan refugees in camps in Pakistan.

During this period the conservatism in Bangladesh has increased and this Islamic fanaticisms is closely connected to the phenomenon of the Islamic terrorism and its affects India-Bangladesh relation. Several Islamic militant outfits operating in Bangladesh, the most important amongst them are: HUJI Bangladesh, which has connection with Harkat-Ul-Jehad-e- Islami and Harkat-Ul-Mujahiddin of Pakistan, Islami Chhatro Shibir, Samjukta Islamic Jihad Committee and Islami Marakaz Party which aims at wiping out all enemies of Islam including the United States and India. The Khalida Zia Govt. refuses to acknowledge the growing activities of the Jehadi terrorist elements from its territory while continuing to pay lip service to the so called war against international terrorism.

3.1. Reaction of Bangladesh on American invasion of Iraq

Iraq was the first Arab nation, who recognizes Bangladesh in August 1972. Although in initial phase, Iraq was inclined in supporting to Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. They did so orally and had not participated in transferring weapons to West Pakistan. Bangladesh dispatched diplomats across the Middle East to explain their view of the conflict. Bangladesh Foreign Minister visited Iraq in August-September 1972.³³

Bangladesh and Iraq's relation are primarily based on common conviction but there hasn't been much progression into areas such as trade and investment. Between 1980 and 1986, Iraq sent five officers to study in Bangladesh's military academy in Dhaka. The only notable visit between the two nations was Saddam Hussein's visit to Bangladesh in 1988. The height of Bangladesh-Iraq relations was during the 1980s due to Bangladesh's role in trying to call for a ceasefire between Iraq and Iran during their eight years war as a member of the United Nation Security Council and participating in the UNIIMOG mission which they became Acting Head of in the last few years before withdrawal. It later helped them to be elected into the OIC Peace Committee.

In dispute between Islamic countries, it generally maintains neutrality and impartiality and strives to solve the problem. It has hosted many officials and semi official conferences and congregations of the world Muslim dignitaries.³⁴ Relations quickly deteriorated after Iraq invaded Kuwait sparking the Gulf War and a huge rise in oil prices. Bangladesh responded to the UN resolution demanding Iraq withdraw by the deadline or face military action. Bangladesh's other reasons for participation was because of the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait who some work on oil rigs and Kuwait is Bangladesh's oil supplier. Compared to Iraq's relation to its neighbors and the West, their relations with Bangladesh were considered satisfactory and this was displayed by deploying two engineer battalions rather than infantries to directly engage Iraqi troops.

Relations between Baghdad and Dhaka would later improve after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 when Bangladesh declined to send troops to Iraq despite America's

³³ S. R.Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign policy of Bangladesh*, (ed.), New Delhi: Haranand Publication. p59.

³⁴ Ibid

diligence and stating that the UN should have had a primary role in solving the matter before the war.³⁵ Bangladesh supported America's war on terror policy but he condemned the US policy of Iraq in which many innocent people were to be killed. The Prime minister and Foreign ministers in their speeches, interviews raised the problem of Iraq and express the solidarity and affinities with Iraq's citizens. In a speech Prime minister said that Majority of world people do not want war and we also want peace, not war," Bangladesh believes in amicable solution to all problems through peaceful means,"

Bangladesh condemned the US invasion of Iraq specially killings of Iraqi citizens. Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury condemned the attack and said that they were very upset at the continued killing of civilians in Iraq ... that was unfortunate, that was unacceptable.³⁶"

In a press conference Agriculture Minister of Bangladesh Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami said that we condemn and strongly protest the baleful and brutal US-British attack on Iraq, which is an independent Muslim country in the Middle East... [Iraq is] a member state of OIC and sovereign... This aggression is violation and ultra vires of the UN Charter and International Human Rights."³⁷ America has pressed Bangladesh to send combat troops to Iraq but Bangladesh have decided against contributing to the U.S.-led force. Bangladesh has symbolic importance: as it would have become the first large nations with substantial Muslim populations to send troops to Iraq. Therefore the bonhomie and cordiality in US-Bangladesh relation remains intact, it is evident that the relationship in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq war has become a complex one. High on the U.S. agenda has been the issue of Bangladesh sending troops to Iraq. Now that a UN resolution has been adopted, not a very satisfactory one from the point of view of several key member states, it is more than likely that this issue will climb to the top of the bilateral agenda.

³⁵ John L. Esposito, John Obert Voll, Osman Bakar (2008), *Asian Islam in the 21st century*, Oxford University Press. P-103

³⁶ Pinaki Bhattacharya, (2007), "US: Looking for a New Regime" *World Focus*, August: 308-310.

³⁷ Response of Bangladesh Government-War on Iraq : South Asia Impact/URL/http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/exclusive/iraq/bangladesh_gov.htm.

In side of Bangladesh Protests, Flag burning have been staged across country against the US-led attack on Iraq.³⁸ Thousands more demonstrated in Bangladesh, where there were calls for a boycott of American goods. And in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, riot police watched as nearly 1,000 Muslims staged an anti-war rally outside the central mosque.³⁹ The mosque's head preacher, Obaidul Haq called on Gulf nations like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to oust US military bases. According to him " All Muslims must unite to resist the evil forces, " and this war is an attack on the whole Muslim world,"⁴⁰

In 21 may 2004 a grenade attack at the srine of Hazrat Sahzalal in Slyhat which lead to death of three people and injured over 70. Among the latter was the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar Choudhary, himself of Bangladesh origin. One region of course, has been Britain's participation in the united state-led invasion on Iraq, which had angered a large section of people in the world, including many people. In Bangladesh and elsewhere, angry demonstration against Britain and USA. USA report in the *Prothom Alo* of 23 May quoted a reliable source as stating there were possibility of an international terrorist group being involved in this accident .According to a senior police officer an international group may have been acting behind the scene in the incident in the context of development in Iraq.

3.2. Bangladeshi Stand on Israel-Palestine Issue

Israel is the only country in the world which is not recognized by Bangladesh and on other hand Israel was the one of the first country to recognize Bangladesh after it declared independence. Since Mujib Period Bangladesh has clear stand on Israel-Palestine issue. Dhaka considers Israel as an 'enemy state' since 1971 and the tradition is continued by all subsequent governments in the country. In 1973 when Arab-Israel War happened, Bangladesh expresses its solidarity with Arab countries and strongly supported to Arabs. In symbolic gesture Bangladesh sent tea ship and military medical team to Cairo. Mujib personally visited the War Zone within week of the ceasefire and

³⁸ <http://www.theindependent-bd.com/details.php?nid=112033>

³⁹ Bangladesh wants'closest ties withIraq'URL/http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/search_index.php?

⁴⁰ Response of Bangladesh Government-War on Iraq :South AsiaImpact/http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/exclusive/iraq/bangladesh_gov.htm

condemned the Israel stand⁴¹. The later similar attitude is adopted by other Muslim countries. Muslim nations want for the end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and an independent Palestinian state. Bangladesh is also the only Muslim majority nation to have a complete ban on Israel even though this is a direct violation under the WTO protocols.

According to rules of World Trade Organization (WTO), none of its member countries are allowed to maintain total ban on another member country but Bangladesh presently continues the following bans and embargoes on Israel. Bangladesh is a member of WTO and continues violating to this international law. Because of this specific rule of WTO, country like Saudi Arabia even lifted trade embargo on Israel.⁴² Despite the fact that, a large segment of readymade garment and shrimp buyers in the world are Jewish entrepreneurs.

Despite series of requests from the international community, Bangladesh did not change its anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic sentiment. Rather, the foreign advisor in the military backed interim government in Dhaka, Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, continues to give anti-US, anti-West, anti-Israel and anti-Semitic statements. He has openly expressed solidarity to Hamas and Hezbollah. Bangladeshi authorities even passed remarks in press stating that the country is no more a partner in war on terror. Bangladeshi soldiers are continuing to work in joint forces under United Nations. Bangladesh continues the following bans and restrictions on Israel. Bangladesh Postal Service does not accept any letter or postal materials bound Israel nor does it deliver anything from Israel. Such restrictions had never been applied on South Africa when Bangladesh did not have diplomatic relations, nor it is applicable with Taiwan, with which Dhaka does not have diplomatic relations as yet.

Bangladesh blocks telephone and fax communications with Israel. Bangladesh continues travel ban on Israel. Meanwhile, travel ban on South Africa was lifted when Bangladesh established diplomatic relations with that country. Dhaka is yet to recognize Taiwan although the travel ban was silently lifted several years back. In all Bangladeshi

⁴¹ S. R. Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign policy of Bangladesh* (ed.), New Delhi, Har Anand Publication pp. 58.

⁴² Bangladesh undermines WTO Rules Sunita Paul - 6/8/2008/<http://www.globalpolitician.com/24891/-wto/-bangladesh/>

passports, issued to civilians it is clearly written, "Valid for all countries in the world, except Israel." While Bangladeshi citizens are not allowed to travel to Israel, Bangladesh very tactfully omitted the same restrictions in the diplomatic passports, in other words to befool the international community showing that the country does not have any travel ban on Israel. By stopping the civilians from traveling to Israel, Dhaka is continuing to commit gross violation of people's right. According to Bangladeshi law, travel attempt to Israel is considered being an offence under various sections of the Penal Code, including sedition, treason and blasphemy.

Any country cannot have two systems at a time. Israeli Flag Vessel is not allowed in Bangladesh. Whenever any Letter of Credit (L/C) is established from a Bangladeshi bank, there is a specific clause in the L/C document stating, the goods to be imported by Bangladesh cannot be carried in 'Israeli flag' vessels. Bangladesh previously did not have diplomatic relations with South Africa and now even does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. But, such notorious clause has never been used in case of any other country, except Israel, as if Bangladesh is at war with Israel. Bangladesh supports Hamas, Hezbollah and other Islamists terror groups. Although openly pretends to be anti-Taliban and anti Al Qaeda. Bangladeshi Foreign Minister in last BNP government Morshed Khan described Israel's retaliation as 'State Terrorism'. According to him Hamas is fighting for Palestine's homeless people not for invalid state.⁴³

In the immediate aftermath of 2006 Lebanon War Bangladesh offered to send battalions of its infantrymen to help with the UN peacekeeping force; however Israel rejected it stating Bangladesh does not recognize Israel. Although Israel rejected the country's participation, Bangladesh and Nepal were the first countries whose troops reached the shores of South Lebanon whereas Western nations such as the original leader and top contributor, France, delayed their deployment. Immediately after other UN peacekeepers arrived, Bangladeshi forces had to leave immediately, as they were considered not to be neutral in the conflict based on the fact of Bangladesh refusing to recognize Israel.

⁴³ Salahuddin Ahmed (2002), *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, p.34.

On 27 December 2008, Israel launched a barbaric attack with highly sophisticated weapons, largely supplied by USA, on the civilian population of Gaza under the pretext of fighting Hamas, an organization democratically elected to the parliament by the majority of the Palestinian people. In densely populated Gaza, an all out war against Hamas is, in reality, an attack on the civilian population.⁴⁴ Bangladesh's interim administration urged the Israeli authorities to stop military actions in the Gaza. Saying that ultimate solution to the Palestinian issue depends upon adherence to relevant United Nations resolutions and upon the creation of Palestine as a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In January 21, 2009, Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni and State Minister Dr Hassan Mahmud met with Palestinian Ambassador Shaher Mohammad and decided to send medicines as humanitarian aid for the war-wounded Palestinians in Gaza.⁴⁵ Bangladeshi people have emotional stand beside their Palestinian brothers and Government tried to made diplomatic approaches to the USA, the UK and China for immediate halt to the “barbaric” attacks on the people in Gaza. Prime minister asked about the role of OIC in resolving the humanitarian crisis in the valley and emphasized to Muslim unity as she said “We need more unity between the Arabs and Muslim countries.” The Bangladeshi government condemned recent, attacks by the Israeli troops on the international aid flotilla transporting humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people under the Israeli blockade. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said “Bangladesh is shocked and saddened at the unwarranted attack on unarmed civilians on board the Mavi Marmara on 31 May, 2010, and the resultant loss of lives”

Even Both major parties have different perception on the domestic matter as well as foreign policy but similar stand on issue of diplomatic relation with Israel. Weekly Blitz editor, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury is facing sedition, treason and blasphemy charges since 2003 for advocating relations with Israel. On the other hand Israel want to improve relation with Bangladesh and media of Israel is always tried to prove that

⁴⁴ Rafiq Ahmed, ICDDR.B'S Military connection with Israel
<http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.pakistan/2009-01/msg00244.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.theindependent-bd.com/details.php?nid=112033>

improved relation would be better for Bangladesh itself and Israel media put the example of Pakistan, Indonesia and other Muslim countries. Media of Israel lauded that by establishing good relation with Israel Bangladesh can play a good role in the peace process between Israel and Middle East.

Israel looks at the impoverished South Asian Muslim country, with its population of 127 million, as one big potential market for Israeli products. Israel also hopes to be part of the efforts of the Western countries, which seek investment and development in countries like Bangladesh for the sake of world stability. Israel hopes that Bangladesh would follow Indonesia's model as soon as possible. It is important and economically sound for Israel to reduce threats to its immediate environment. It can only do that by mollifying the feelings of Muslims towards the Israeli injustices to Palestinians. Muslims, as an Ummah, cannot accept Israel's abuses of Palestinians, so Israel's current strategy is to penetrate Muslim societies through the backdoor and craft economic ties with poor and muted Muslim societies via weak and illegitimate governments. Palestine leader Yasser Arafat was a close friend of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who visited Bangladesh several times. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government, which was the first government after the independence of Bangladesh, applied all forms of bans on Israel. Bangabandhu was a great friend of the people of Palestine, who extended all out support to their war against Israel. Since independence of Bangladesh, a large number of local Jihadists were sent to fight against Israel. Most of these Jihadists were from notorious militancy group named Harkatul Jihad Islami [Huji].

3.3. Politico- Security Relations with Islamic Countries After 2001

After the death of Yasser Arafat first Palestine leader Mahmood Abbas visited to Bangladesh on February 11, 2010 and met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He urged to continue Bangladesh's support to the Palestinian struggle for ending 'Israeli occupation' of Arab lands and establishing an independent state. Sheikh Hasina told Abbas that Bangladesh had always stood beside the Palestinian people and supported their legitimate cause. She announced that Bangladesh would continue to support the establishment of peace in Palestine as it believes in peace and harmony throughout the world. They

recalled the contribution of the late Palestine leader, Yasser Arafat, to the establishment of Palestine as a state in the Middle East and to peace.

Bangladesh continues to accord unconditional support to Palestine in all international forums. Dhaka considers Israel as an 'Enemy State' since 1971 and the tradition is continued by all subsequent governments in the country.⁴⁶ Despite the vast differences in language, culture and political systems, the historic region of Bengal which is today constituted mostly by present day Bangladesh, has strong political, cultural economic relation with Iran. Though Iran is neither contiguous to Bengal, nor did Iranians get a chance to establish their rule in this region, Iranian influence was consistently dominant in Bengal throughout Muslim rule in the region that began in the 12th Century. Bengal saw a great influx of Persian scholars, merchants, administrators and warriors during the Mugal Empire.

Persian was the official language of Bengal throughout the Muslim period for over 600 years, and Persian literature enormously influenced Bengali literature. Due to the large immigration of Iranians, many Persian words entered the Bengali language and literature as well as into official documents and the idiom of court circles. In the 1930s Many Bengali Muslim poets were heavily inspired by rich Persian poetry and culture. Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh, had greatly used Persian literature to develop Bengali Gajal and poetry. During the Bangladesh Liberal War, the Shah helped to transport US military equipment to West Pakistan during their fight with the Mukti Bahini.

With the fall of the Shah in 1979, new dimensions were added to the relationship between the newly proclaimed Islamic Republic of Iran and Bangladesh. Relations gradually grew further with President Hashemi Rafsanjani becoming the first Iranian leader to visit independent Bangladesh in 1995. Subsequently Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also visited Iran and held talks with President Mohammed Khatami. The government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is seeking to deepen ties between the two states, with Iranian investment in Bangladeshi industry. Bangladesh has also supported Iran's controversial nuclear program, claiming it is for peaceful purposes.

⁴⁶Salahuddin Ahmed (2002), *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation. p.56

The Bangladeshi interim government also called for Iran's full membership of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; it is currently an observer member of the organization. Bangladesh and Iran signed a preferential trade accord in July 2006 which removed non-tariff barriers, with a view to eventually establishing a free trade agreement. Before the signing of the accord, bilateral trade between the countries amounted to US\$100 million annually. In mid-2007, the Bangladeshi government requested Iran's help in the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bangladesh, in order to offset the decline in the availability of gas for power generation. Bangladeshi Minister of Power, Energy and Natural Resources also requested Iranian assistance for the construction of new oil refineries in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and Bahrain enjoy excellent relations based on identical values, shared perceptions and Islamic traditions. Both have record of mutual support and cooperation at all international forums including the United Nations. The political commitment to the close relationship has been translated into action through bilateral agreements covering economic, technical, and cultural cooperation. Conclusion of further agreements in the areas of trade & investment, customs & taxation, and air services etc. strengthening and expanding the relations between our two countries further. Relations between the two friendly countries have continued to grow since establishment of diplomatic relations following Bahrain's recognition of Bangladesh in 1974. Bangladesh and Bahrain have maintained an excellent record of mutual support and cooperation at the United Nations and other multilateral forums both on substantive and electoral matters. Bangladesh established a resident Mission at the Ambassador level in Bahrain on 28 February 1983, and opened resident Embassy in Bahrain on 28 February 1983.

The then Prime Minister Khaleda Zia paid an official visit to Bahrain from 8-9 August 1992. The then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the funeral of Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Emir of Bahrain, on 6 March 1999. While two successive Prime Ministers, a DPM and a number of Cabinet Ministers from Bangladesh visited Bahrain in the past two decades, there has been no high level bilateral visit from Bahrain to Bangladesh.

A two member delegation headed by Mr. Yousif Abdullah Humood, Head of International Affairs, Ministry of National Finance and Economy visited Bangladesh on 28 October 2000, to finalize bilateral agreements in preparation for the visit of His Highness the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain (which was subsequently postponed due to the situation obtaining in the subcontinent).

Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus visited to Bahrain at the invitation of His Highness the Crown Prince in early February 2007. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank and Dr. Fatima Al Balooshi, Minister for Social Development. Under the MOU, the Grameen Trust would extend technical cooperation and other necessary support for setting up of the proposed the Family Bank, in replication of the Grameen Bank. A Code Sharing Agreement was signed between Bangladesh Biman and Gulf Air in Dhaka on 15 March 2006. Under the arrangement, Biman suspended its own operations in Dhaka-Bahrain sector in April 2006. The Gulf Air has since been operating six direct flights in Bahrain-Dhaka sector, and five flights via other Gulf destinations per week. A Bilateral Agreement on Air Services was finalized and initialed during the visit of a delegation led by Secretary, Civil Aviation and Tourism from 22-24 April 2006. The Agreement is expected to be formally signed soon.

Saudi Arabia has great influences in Bangladeshi society, culture, politics and economy as well. Saudi Arabia provides money assistants and charity, to Islamic groups of Bangladesh. These charity groups accelerates fundamentalism for the example of Haramain, a Riyadh based Muslim Charity, which was opened in Cox Bazar in 1992 to help Rohingya refugees but continued to operate in Bangladesh uninterrupted despite it being banned by the United States and Saudi Arabia. The connection between Al Haramain and terrorism was revealed in 2002, when linkages were made between Al Haramain and its suspected links to terror funding and trafficking of women and children under the garb of providing Islamic education. As far as individual support is concerned, links to Bin Laden were cited. Wahhabi Islami which was established in mid eighteenth century in Arabia By Muhhammad ibn Abdul Bahav, remain the dominant religious

creed in Saudi Arabia. Many regard wahhabism as a radical and violent departure from main stream Islamic tradition.

Both countries try to strengthen relation on the base of religious affinities and in Bangladesh both major political parties have similar attitude in dealing with Saudi Arabia. In 2006, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia paid weeklong visit to Saudi Arabia and met with Saudi Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, both countries agreed to enhance cooperation in investment, commerce and manpower for the mutual economic benefit of the two Muslim countries. They also discussed supply of fuel oil on deferred payment against '365-day credit' to Bangladesh and defense cooperation. She performed Umrah and met heads of some international religious organizations which provides funds for Bangladesh. The visit is significant as Bangladesh has been receiving aid and grants from the Saudi government and religious organizations.

Zia has paid many visits earlier both for conducting diplomacy and for performing Haj. The coming visit is considered important politically as well; since it came amid reports that her son Tareq Rahman, and former president H.M. Ershad visited the country prior to her coming. In 2003 when Cylon hit In Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia delivered 25 ambulances and funded SR 400 million for new project and construction. Bangladeshi exports crossed \$74 million, while its imports from the Kingdom touched \$344 million so balance of trade is in the Kingdom's favor. The majority of the 1.8 million semi skilled and skilled workers are living in Saudi Arabia Bangladeshi workers in the Kingdom send more than \$ 1 billion annually to their country.

Relation between Kuwait and Bangladesh are considered strong based on common religion. Bangladesh sends guest's workers to Kuwait to facilitate its citizens to work in higher paying jobs leading to remittances as well as a Bangladeshi community in the country. Relations between the two countries have even indulged into military ties since the 1980s. In February 1, 2004 Bangladesh and Kuwait signed a defense agreement under which the Bangladeshi armed forces would provided technical and vocational training to the Kuwaiti army. About 3,741 members of the armed forces have been sent for three years on deputation to train the Kuwaiti army. The agreement provided a headquarters of

the Bangladesh army in Kuwait, which supervise, maintain and look after the appointment, extension, deputation and all other aspects of the defense agreement.

In the Kuwait strong lobby of Bangladeshi about two lakh are working. In 2008, around 6,000 Bangladeshi workers went on strike on August 17, 2008 over non-payment and unlawful deductions of their salaries. On February 09 2010, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed and her accompanying delegation paid visit to Kuwait. During the meeting, Al-Khorafi stressed the importance of reinforcing bilateral relations in trade, cultural and parliamentary relations. She raised the problems of Bangladeshi workers and discussed a number of topics that were are humanitarian nature, such as procedures to repatriate bodies of Bangladeshi citizens who pass away in Kuwait, as well as the mechanisms that facilitate the process of residence permit transfer and renewal for Bangladeshi citizens.

During the meeting, the chamber chairman, Ali al-Ghanim, stressed the significance of commonalities between Kuwait and Bangladesh, including belonging to Asia and Islam. For her part, the Bangladeshi prime minister commended Kuwait's pioneering role in the economic development process in the Gulf and Arab region. She invited Kuwaiti companies to visit Bangladesh to explore available investment opportunities there. Both stressed the significance of commonalities between Kuwait and Bangladesh, including belonging to Islam. Bangladesh and Brunei share common views on regional and international issues both are members of OIC, Commonwealth and NAM. Brunei actively supports Bangladesh's candidacy for different regional and international organizations. They supported Bangladesh's United Nation Economic and Social Council 2004-06 tenure, UNESCO Executive Board from 2003–07, Governing Board of the ASEAN Organization of the Supreme Audit Institution (ASOSAI) for the 2004-06 term and membership into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Prime minister Khaleda Zia visited Brunei and expressed satisfaction with the excellent bilateral relations and close cooperation enjoyed in various fields Both countries are looking to increase trade & investment such as Bangladesh's pharmaceutical products and Brunei's oil in particular. Brunei also imports manpower from Bangladesh although recently Bangladesh have been asking to take in more manpower especially

professionals and to reduce the price of applying to work in Brunei by half (currently it is \$1800 per worker from South Asian countries). In similar year Bangladesh Foreign Affair minister and subsequently minister of Expatriates paid official visit to enhance Economic Cooperation. Actually, Bangladesh is trying to increase exports to ASEAN countries so Bangladesh has requested that Brunei considers importing its pharmaceutical products as part of plans to expand trade and economic relations between the countries.

Brunei Government provides Scholarship for Bangladeshi students to get study at University of Brunei Darussalam and Institute Technology, Brunei. Defence relations are improving although Bangladesh is expecting more trainee officers in the future. Every year Brunei sends it's personal for training in Defence Services Command and Staff College and other Military institutions. Defence officers from Bangladesh can also visit Military institutions in Brunei. Both countries have agreed to increase air links between the two countries which have already signed two agreements in 2004 and 2006 resulting in Bangladesh granting fifth freedom traffic rights with "intermediate" and "beyond" like Singapore and Dubai.

In 2003 Indonesia Prime Minister Megawati and her delegation paid three-day official visit to Dhaka, both countries agreed to boost trade. Bangladeshi Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman and Indonesian Minister for Industries and Trade Rini Suwandi signed an agreement on avoidance of double taxation, while Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Suwandi signed a memorandum that allowed some Bangladeshi products free access to Indonesian market.

Throughout the course of history, relations between Bangladesh and Sudan have been warm and smooth. Seeing as both nations share a common religion, relations are generally good, but only recently has cooperation began to increase between the two countries. In March 2008, both governments came to an agreement which would primarily allow Bangladesh to export semi-skilled and skilled workers and also the opportunity to allow Bangladeshi firms and companies to expand their operations to Africa's largest country by size which is now enjoying an oil boom regardless of the events occurring in Darfur since 2007.

The relationship between Bangladesh and Sudan thickened as UN Peacekeeping Mission manned by Bangladeshi military started to work in Sudan in 2007. Bangladesh agreed to sending 1,600 of its personal and urgently needed helicopters to join the UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. As part of the growing relationship, Bangladesh opened a full-fledged Diplomatic mission in Khartoum. Relations have diverged into different areas such as education where Sudan has offered more scholarships to Bangladeshi students and recently Sudan has shown interest in importing pharmaceuticals from Bangladesh.

3.4. Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Bangladesh

Bangladesh is an active member of the OIC. Viewing the importance of OIC for its national interest, Bangladesh participates in the activities of OIC very sincerely. The objectives which Bangladesh wants to achieve through its diplomacy in OIC are:

- To get economic and financial assistance and other benefit for its development from concerned institutions of the OIC.
- To use its OIC diplomacy as a leverage, for its relations with affluent Arab-Islamic countries, upon which it depend for aid, oil and foreign exchange remitted by its nationals working in these countries.
- To get political and diplomatic support of the Islamic solidarity for the achievement of its foreign policy objectives in the international organizations.
- To enhance its sense of security in countering any threat to its national security and also as a deterrent to the possible threat.⁴⁷

OIC is only institutional platform of Muslims have for discussions, both among themselves and with the outside world, From a geographic and demographic point of view, perhaps it is the second largest international organization, next to the UN, currently with 57 member states spread over Africa, Asia and Europe. This forum represents the entire spectrum of the people of Islamic faith around the world. Because its membership is confined only to countries with “overwhelming Muslim population” and thus representing the voice of just about 70 per cent of the world's Muslims. The

⁴⁷ S. R. Chakravarty (1994), *Foreign policy of Bangladesh* (ed.), New Delhi: Haranand Publication pp. 59

overwhelming majority of the people of Bangladesh are Muslims. After independence, Bangladesh was enthusiastic on establishing close relations with all other Muslim countries particularly the countries in the Middle East.

A dramatic breakthrough took place at the Second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore, which began its deliberations on 21 February 1974. It had been earlier agreed, in principle, that Bangladesh would be formally admitted to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) at the Summit. Bangabandhu, however, took the principled position that unless Pakistan formally extends its recognition, Bangladesh would not be able to attend the Lahore Summit. The Muslim leaders pressurized Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto to recognize Bangladesh. A high OIC Ministerial level delegation, headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, who was also a brother of the Emir, came to Dhaka to escort Bangabandhu to the Summit. This was a major diplomatic gain for Bangladesh, and fully consolidated her position in the Muslim world.

War-ravaged Bangladesh surely needed substantial economic aid and other forms of assistance from oil-rich Arab countries. Bangladesh skillfully played her active role in the multilateral arena to promote bilateral cooperation with these countries. Within a few months of joining the OIC, Bangladesh was admitted as a member of the United Nations (UN) and started playing a highly active role in all its deliberations. During Bangladesh's two-year tenure (1979-80) at the Security Council, she extended her steadfast support for the Arab and the Palestinian cause on the question of Middle East. In appreciation, she was included as a member of the OIC Al Quds Committee.

Bangladesh also firmly opposed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and called for an emergency meeting of the OIC for taking a collective action on the issue. In Iran-Iraq war, Bangladesh as a Council member exercised its moderating influence on both sides, and urged them to peacefully resolve all bilateral disputes. This helped her in becoming a member of the OIC Peace Committee. Likewise, Bangladesh played a pro-active role in protecting rights of Muslim minorities in Cyprus and the Philippines.⁴⁸ On economic and social issues Bangladesh, as the coordinator of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) at

⁴⁸ Mohammad Tajuddin (2001), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Liberation War to Shiekh Hasina*, Dhaka: National Book Organization.p.132.

the UN and at the Group of 77, played a pioneering role in those forums as well as at the OIC, for special assistance to the LDCs. At the OIC, she also proposed formation of an Islamic Common Market to facilitate greater trade and economic ties among Muslim countries. Bangladesh also coordinated emergency assistance to OIC countries affected by natural disasters.

After the 9/11 biggest challenges came before the Muslim World is to restore the image of Islam and to control the Islamic militants. It is true that the West, for its own reasons, had promoted contemporary Islamic militancy during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Osama Bin Laden and other Mujahideen fighters from different Muslim countries ⁴⁹ had received equipment and training from them. At that time, they had fought valiantly for nine years and had liberated Afghanistan from foreign intervention. But once the Soviets withdrew, the West lost interest in them. In 2004 Bangladesh and Turkey have expressed deep interest in having the OIC secretary-general's post. (In initial phase Malaysia had their candidate for this post). Although the OIC rules do not bar a vote on the secretary-general's post, the group has traditionally taken a unanimous decision on the issue. Due to controversial candidate Bangladesh loosed this post.⁵⁰ Bangladesh's candidate has contest for the position of Secretary General at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), nominating a political outsider name as S Q Chowdhury was but a diplomatic miscalculation for the Khaleda Zia government. There were prevailed widespread accusation about his controversial role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh; and judging by his political background and leadership quality. Chowdhury did not have essential attributes to provide dynamic leadership to the Muslim world, in spite of mass criticism of the choice at home and abroad, the Khaleda Zia government nominated to him. And Bangladesh prime minister herself visited to Kuala Lumpur for OIC meeting. And met with several leader of the Islamic World as the part of campaign for the candidature of Bangladesh for the post of OIC Secretary –General but he was defied.

⁴⁹ Salahuddin Ahmed (2002), *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.p.53.

⁵⁰ M Rashiduzzaman (2005), "Bangladesh In 2005", *Asian Survey*, Jan-Feb, pp 183-184

Against this backdrop, the third extra-ordinary Summit of the OIC was held in the Holy city of Makkah in December 2005. Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, in his inaugural address, urged all Muslim countries to exercise moderation and to restore the image of Islam by collectively combating all forms of terrorism and extremism.

The two-day Summit has categorically rejected “extremism” and urged member states “to fight terrorism in every possible manner”. The Summit also pledged to develop an educational curriculum to promote tolerance, understanding, dialogue and diversity and reform the Islamic jurisprudence to counter extremist ideologies and thoughts. The Summit also adopted “The Makkah declaration which underscored “the true principles and common vision of a moderate Islam” and a ten-year program of action to enhance the effectiveness of the OIC. Bangladesh stood with OIC, showing unity and solidarity with Islamic world in relation to various issues which affect Muslim communities. It strongly opposed the so called link between Islam and terrorism. It strongly condemned the new conservative ideology of “regime changed” as seen in the Iraq invasion as an encroachment on Muslims sovereignty and identity. A Bangladeshi embassy official in Washington branded the attacks “an affront to Islam...an attack on humanity.” Again within the region, Bangladesh is well placed to play an important role, both within the OIC and the other Muslim countries. Perhaps Bangladesh has also at stake for doing so, if it has to preserve its moderate and liberal culture and heritage.

On 15th November 2007 Cylon hit Bangladesh as loss of lives and widespread destruction in coastal districts. In this context The Organization of the Islamic Conference appealed to all OIC Member States, civil society organizations, philanthropists and all people of good-will to generously contribute to its Relief and Rehabilitation Appeal for the amount of US\$ 10 million following the devastating and allocated an amount of US\$ 200,000 from the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) towards emergency relief as an emergency response. In 2007 OIC meeting attended by Professor Dr. Muhammed Yunus.⁵¹ He urged OIC for economic cooperation and raising intra-OIC trade and declared that Bangladesh is in the light track to half poverty by 2015, as

⁵¹ “OIC Launches an Urgent Appeal to Raise US\$ 10 million to save Cyclone-affected People in Bangladesh” <http://www.oic-oci.org/ accessed on 12/05/10>.

targeted in the Millennium Development Goals number one. The Secretary General of the OIC, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu expressed his deep sorrow and distress at the loss of over one hundred lives in Chittagong, due to landslides caused by torrential rains. He expressed his deep sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed to Almighty Allah to give them the strength to overcome their loss.

On the appointment of Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed as the new Chief Adviser to the Non Party Caretaker Government to Bangladesh the Secretary General of the OIC, welcomed and expressed his confidence that the new caretaker government in Bangladesh and hope to the lifting of the emergency and for the holding of the next general elections in a free, fair, impartial and peaceful manner with the participation of all the political parties. OIC was prepared to offer its fullest cooperation to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh and sent a team of observers at the time of election. The Secretary General of the OIC has congratulated the people of Bangladesh for the successful general elections held on 29th December 2008.⁵² He noted that the massive turn-out of voters recorded during the elections was a remarkable achievement and represented the people's abiding faith in the democratic process.

After sworn the power Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina maintain cordially relation with OIC and foreign minister Dipu Moni visited to attend the ICFM meeting in Syria. In the 36th ICFM in Syria, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni called on OIC Secretary General Prof Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu in Damascus and sought cooperation from the OIC to help Bangladesh attain Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Dipu Moni also called on her Syrian counterpart Walid al-Moallem and praised the development of Syria under the leadership of President Bashar al-Asad. During the meeting, she emphasized the territorial integrity of Syria and unequivocally extended the support of Bangladesh to recover the occupied Golan Heights and Sheba Farms, according to a message received here. The foreign minister hoped that bilateral relations between Dhaka and Damascus would continue to grow in the future through more trade and commerce.

⁵² "OIC Secretary General welcomes the New Caretaker Government in Bangladesh"/[http:// www.oic-oci.org/](http://www.oic-oci.org/)accessed on 10/05/10

The Secretary General of the OIC, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, paid an official visit to the Bangladesh from 3rd to 5th November 2009, had a formal bilateral consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Dr. Dipu Moni, and Prime minister. They discussed issues of mutual cooperation and concern to the OIC and Bangladesh as well as regional and international issues.⁵³

The Secretary General briefed the Foreign Minister on the latest developments taking place at the level of the OIC and sought Bangladesh's support for the Organization in particular with regard to the establishment of an independent human rights commission in the OIC, implementation of the Ten-Year Programme of Action, adoption of the Goldstone report, combating extremism and terrorism, science and technology projects, poverty alleviation fund, resolution on defamation of religions, peace and security, Muslim Rohingya refugees of Myanmar and climate change. On climate change, which is an issue of top priority and concern to a number of OIC Member States including Bangladesh, the Secretary General emphasized the need for organizing a meeting of environmental experts from the OIC Member States in the near future to discuss its adverse consequences and draft an action plan for submission to the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers for further consideration. The Secretary General hold bilateral meetings with the leadership of Bangladesh including the President and the Prime Minister and other high ranking government officials to discuss issues of cooperation and mutual concern between the OIC and Bangladesh as well as regional and international issues.

He also briefed her on the progress in the implementation of the OIC Ten Year Program of Action. Ihsanoglu thanked the Bangladesh Prime Minister and her government for her commitment to the OIC since the time of Bangladesh's membership in the OIC in 1974.⁵⁴ Shiekh Hasina said that the OIC has been transformed into a dynamic organization under the leadership of Professor Ihsanoglu and urged him to continue with his efforts. The two leaders also discussed joint Islamic action on other pressing issues for the OIC including poverty alleviation, combating extremism and

⁵³ M. Rashiduzzaman (2008), "Bangladesh In 2008", *Asian Survey*, Jan-Feb, pp 16

⁵⁴ "OIC Secretary General holds discussions with Bangladesh President and Prime Minister"//<http://www.oic-oci.org/>accessed on 10/05/10

terrorism, Islamophobia, expanding intra-OIC trade and cooperation for the economic development. The Secretary General of the OIC, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu who is on an official visit to Bangladesh from 3rd to 5 November 2009 for the first time, attended the 23rd Convocation Ceremony of the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) which was held on Wednesday, 4th November 2009 at its campus in Dhaka. The IUT is a subsidiary organ of the OIC.

Now Bangladesh is committed to achieving the target of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for increasing the level of intra –trade among the Islamic Development Bank member countries by four percent during 2003-2004. Bangladesh proposed the setting of an advanced Islamic medical training and research centre in Dhaka. The ideological and political connections with the other Muslim countries are natural for Bangladesh like the member of large family⁵⁵.

4. Economic Relation with the Islamic Countries

Bangladesh follows active economic diplomacy with the Islamic countries. It gives high importance to its economic diplomacy with oil exporting Islamic countries for their aid and manpower imports.

The direction and trend of Bangladesh trade like other countries of the south is mainly with the Western countries. For the petroleum and petroleum products import Dhaka mainly depends upon the OPEC Islamic countries. Non-petroleum trade with these countries is marginal. Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Malaysia are the Islamic countries with which Bangladesh has notable non-oil trade relations. Pakistan is the second largest trading partner of Bangladesh after USA. Bangladesh exports to Pakistan are raw jute, tea, jute goods, etc. While imports include raw cotton, cotton yarn, textiles, rice, light engineering goods, pig iron, etc.⁵⁶ Trade volume between Pakistan and Bangladesh is still modest and currently stands at 188 million dollars.⁵⁷ Trade stood at US\$ 141 million in 1990, then rose to US\$ 188 million in 1995, then declined to US\$ 175 million in 2000 and again witnessed a rise and stood at US\$ 188 million in 2005. Data on Pakistan's exports to Bangladesh show variation while imports from Bangladesh remained stagnant

⁵⁵ M Rashiduzzaman (2005), "Bangladesh In 2005", *Asian Survey*, Jan-Feb, pp 183-184

⁵⁶ Source: Key Economic Indicators 2006, Asian Development Bank

⁵⁷ Source: UNDP 2006, ADB 2006, International Financial Statistics

around US\$ 35 million except jumping to US\$ 57 million in 2005.⁵⁸ Pakistan has registered trade surplus with Bangladesh (trade deficit for Bangladesh).

The most important part of the economic relations of Bangladesh with the rich Islamic countries is the employment of the unskilled, skilled and professional Bangladeshis. The mass exodus of people for overseas employment took place during mid-70s towards West Asian countries. Until 1976 about 6000 Bangladeshis were working in the region which has reached to 816,877 in December 1990 and at present it is about ten lakhs. The yearly average of migration to West Asian was 15,443 in 1977 which became 101,563 in 1990. Bangladeshi workers migrate to thirteen countries of the region, 98 per cent of the total migration goes to the eight countries Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Saudi Arabia has the highest number of Bangladeshi migrants, about 38 percent of the total migration.

On June 2007 Bangladesh and Bahrain agreed to sign three agreements soon to boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation. The three agreements were signed as avoidance of double taxation, investment protection and air services. Besides, Dhaka also expected to send more skilled and semi-skilled workforce to the Gulf state where some 92,000 Bangladeshis are now working.⁵⁹ The understanding was reached during official talks between Adviser for Foreign Affairs Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and visiting Bahrain's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Nezar Sadiq Al Baharna. Bangladeshi exports to Bahrain included frozen food, agricultural products, chemical products, Jute goods, other products like melamine, garment, fabric etc. In 2003-2004 Bangladesh exported goods worth of US \$ 2.21 Million compared to US \$ 3.58 million in 2004-2005. On both occasions the Mission achieved the target set by EPB. In 2005-06, Bangladesh posted US \$ 2.97 million in the first six months.⁶⁰

Exportable from Bangladesh are likely to have an access to Bahrain because of lower import duties and simpler procedures. Bangladesh is exploring good prospects in garments and textiles, pharmaceuticals, ceramics, porcelain, melamine articles, leather

⁵⁸ Source: UNCOM TRAIJE CD. ROM

⁵⁹ The financial Express, Dhaka 21 June 2007.

⁶⁰ Bangladesh Economic Survey 2005-06, Economic Adviser Wing, Finance Division, Ministry of finance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh (Dhaka, June 2005).

and jute goods, flora and fauna, top soil, agro-items like plants, bird, poultry feeds, automobile batteries, etc in Bahrain market. Bangladesh has surplus human resources in a wide range of professions and expertise. Non-resident Bangladeshis including expatriate workers send valuable foreign exchange to Bangladesh as remittance.

Bahrain is having rapid economic growth and industrial expansion for sustain it Bangladesh provides necessary human resources. Bangladeshis represent the second largest expatriate community in Bahrain.⁶¹ Bangladeshis are centered in Manama, Muharraq, Hamad Town and east Rifa. Their contribution is recognized by the Government and the people of the Kingdom. But from May 27 this year, Bahrain stopped issuing work permits to Bangladeshi nationals, except the professionals due to recession.

In Malaysia about one hundred thousand Bangladeshis are working. The Bangladeshi workers who had returned home after the Kuwait crisis have gone back to the jobs and new people have also gone on fresh contract to Kuwait. Malaysia is the Bangladesh's largest investment partner among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Trade and cooperation are increasing year by year between Malaysia and Bangladesh and both are forecasting sharp increases in their pharmaceutical exports⁶². As the ties with Malaysia grew in volumes, the Bangladesh business community seeks now a free trade agreement (FTA) put on track quickly to help enhance the two-way trade with Malaysia and help slash the widening trade deficit affecting the South Asian nation. Though the proposed FTA was mooted in 2004, it failed to materialize but now with Bangladesh-Malaysia trade relations on the surge, a comprehensive trade pact could help encourage trade and cross-border investment flow. This FTA proposal merits serious consideration and examination. "We believe in strengthening our relationship with Malaysia. In many ways Bangladesh and Malaysia share many common values, there are lessons to learn from each other," Bangladesh's Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury. He inaugurated the first Showcase Malaysia 2008 event in Dhaka in April, jointly organized by BMCCI and Malaysia South Association, where nearly 75 Malaysian

⁶¹ The financial Express, Dhaka 21 June 2007.

⁶² Financial Express Dhaka, 26 June 2010

companies, government agencies and industry captains are participating in the three-day event, largely to expose Malaysian businesses to Bangladesh⁶³. On a similar note, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Datuk Abdul Malek Abdul Aziz, who is also the patron of the Bangladesh-Malaysia Commerce and Industry (BMCCI), said a FTA would certainly add momentum to the current trade relations. Malaysia said it will continue to contribute positive efforts to promote and expand bilateral relations with Bangladesh, particularly in trade and investment. Pending projects like the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, worth \$1.2 billion, power generation, port development etc would be completed.⁶⁴

Abdul Aziz said he would take initiative to get entry of Bangladeshi products at 'zero tariff' in Malaysia, and sufficient number of visas will be provided for the participants of the fair. Malaysia is keen to see Bangladesh promotes market in that country so as to reduce the trade gap, which is currently in favor of Kuala Lumpur. Referring to the demand of Bangladeshi garments, home textile, handicrafts, halal food, spices, ceramic, melamine and medicines in Malaysia, Abdul Aziz said Dhaka could take the opportunity by participating in the trade fairs in his country. Bangladesh has good economic relation with turkey and ready-made garments (RMG), pharmaceuticals, textiles, jute and jute products, energy, leather and ceramics are the most potential sectors of business between the two countries.⁶⁵ The overseas remittances have emerged as a key driver of economic growth and poverty reduction in Bangladesh, increasing at an average annual rate of 19 percent in the last 30 years (1979-2008). In 2009 remittance crossed \$10 billion mark for the first time in Bangladesh history despite global recession.

The bulk of the remittances are sent by Bangladeshi migrant workers rather than members of the Bangladeshi Diaspora. Currently, 64 percent of annual remittance inflows originate from Middle Eastern nations. In recent years remittance is annual average growth of 27 percent in 2006- 08 financial year. Middle East is the two most favorite words to thousands of young men in Bangladesh. Young men from Bangladesh

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Nayeem Sultana (2009), *The Bangladeshi Diaspora in Malaysia: Organizational Structure, Survival Strategies and Networks*, LIT Verlag Münster, - Social Science.

⁶⁵ Bangladesh Turkey will increase economic relation/ www.developing8.org/29oct2009

go to the Middle East for economic reliance. Over the years, they send money back home to their families. In fiscal year (FY) 2007-08 we received \$4.97 billion from the Middle East as inward remittances, which is around 6.3 percent of our country's GDP. As per the latest Statistical Year Book and sources from the Bureau of Manpower, roughly 3.7 million Bangladeshi workers are currently working in the Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman, which constitutes around 25.3 percent of the total labor force of those countries. The remittances inflow from these countries doubled from \$2.4 billion in FY 2003-04 to \$4.97 billion in 2007-08. In the last fiscal year, Bangladesh received 63 percent of the total remittances inflow from the Middle East. Since 2004, remittance inflow from the above mentioned countries increased at an average rate of 20 percent.⁶⁶

Table No. 3.1. Labour forces of Bangladesh in Gulf countries:

	Labor force	No. of Bangladeshis in labor force	% of Bangladeshis in total labor force	Remittance inflow to Bangladesh (2007-2008)	%of total remittance inflow
	Million	Million		USD Million	
KSA	6.7	1.9	27.8%	2324.0	30%
Kuwait	2.2	0.3	14.2%	863.7	11%
Qatar	1.1	0.1	10.0%	289.7	4%
UAE	3.3	1.1	33.4%	1135.1	14%
Bahrain	0.5	0.1	26.2%	138.2	2%
Oman	0.9	0.2	23.8%	220.6	3%
	14.7	3.7	25.3%	4971.4	63%

(Source: The Least Developed Countries Report 2009, the State and Development Governance, United Nation (United Nations Publication)

Around five million Bangladeshis are working abroad. Of them, about three million are living in the Gulf and sending approximately 70 percent of the remittance. In the

⁶⁶ Md Motiur Rahman, (2008), *The Chronically Poor in Rural Bangladesh: Livelihood Constraints and Capabilities*, UK: Taylor & Francis.

same year, the country received \$1.73 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$680.7 million from Kuwait and \$80 million from Bahrain (as written in the Chart).

Another major region of the origin of remittance is the Western Europe. The share of the remittances coming from Western Europe accounted for three fourth of the total remittances in 1977 and the share of the West Asia one fourth. In 1990 the share of West Asia has increased to more than four fifth of the total remittances and of the Western Europe has declined to less than one fourth. Due to recent decline in international oil prices and slow down in the global economy, particularly US; Europe and Middle-East are likely to have adverse effects on Bangladesh's remittance inflows.

Bangladesh has regular negative balance of payment. The remittances have provided a relief and ameliorated the balance of payment position. The government has taken positive measures to increase the flow of remittances. Banking channels for remittances has been made more active at home and abroad. To attract the migrant workers to send their remittances through official channel 'Wage earner scheme was started in 1974. the labour attached posted in manpower importing countries promotes employment of Bangladesh in these countries. They secure employment orders, assist, and recruiting agents, facilitate welfare to national working there, monitor labor market situation and keep the policy maker abreast of the alternative.

To promote bilateral economic interaction with the spirit of South –South cooperation Bangladesh has signed bilateral joint committee or commission agreement with almost all important Islamic countries.

5. Bangladesh Engagements with D-8

Bangladesh is playing major role in the group of Developing Eight group (D-8). D-8 is a group of developing nations with huge Muslim populations (about 60%) that have formed as economic development association. Other countries are Egypt, Indonesia, Iran Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey. The objectives of D-8 are to improve developing countries' positions in the world economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations. The D-8 was founded by Necmettin Erbakan, former Turkish Prime Minister and Islamist leader on June 15, 1997 after an announcement in Istanbul. The main areas of cooperation include finance, banking, rural development,

science and technology, humanitarian development, agriculture, energy, environment, and health. The second meeting was held in Bangladesh in 1997.⁶⁷

On 1-2 March, 1999, D-8 summit was held in Dhaka where the heads of the state and senior minister of the member countries attended. In June 1997 and on 25 February 2001, Sheikh Hasina attended the D8 Summit held in Turkey and Egypt respectively. In the third summit (In 2000) in Egypt Sheikh Hasina handed over the D8 chairmanship, which she held since 1999 to president Mohammad Hosni Mubarak of Egypt .In this summit the D-8 leaders agreed to ease visa restriction for businessman of the member countries and set up a special company to help member states market their goods.⁶⁸ Representatives of each of the eight developing countries except Bangladesh signed a Preferential Trade Agreement on May 14, 2006 at the fifth D-8 Summit at Bali, Indonesia. The agreement is designed to gradually reduce tariffs on specific goods between member-states, with a supervisory committee overseeing the process. The purpose of the agreement is to reduce barriers to free trade between member states, as well as promote inter-state cooperation.⁶⁹

Table No. 3.2. Bangladesh Trade with D-8 Countries:

US\$ Mn.	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Export	223.45	305.59	358.75	457.13	506.79
Import	832.23	995.84	1,035.68	1,543.19	2,029.18
Trade Volume	1,055.68	1,301.43	1,394.43	2,000.32	2,535.97
Trade Balance	-608.78	-690.25	-676.93	-1,085.06	-1,522.39
D-8 Intra Trade (US\$ Mn)	41,537.19	49,806.52	66,828.03	78,382.2	66,947.63
Share	2,54%	2.61%	2.08%	2,55%	3.78%

(Source- URL/<http://www.developing8.org/countries/bangladesh/html>)

⁶⁷ Kai, Hafez, Marry Ann Kenny (2000), *Islamic World and The West: An Introduction to political culture and International Relation*, Netherlands: Koninklijke Pub.

⁶⁸ Salahuddin Ahmed (2002), *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, New Delhi:APH Publishing Corporation.

⁶⁹ Source-www.dailytimes.com, Pakistan 2006 Tuesday, May 09, 2006

In 2008, D-8 meeting was held in Malaysia and Bangladeshi caretaker government Fakhruddin Ahmed participated in this. He proposed Creating D8 Food Fund to to enhance collective food security in D8 countries .Of course among the D8 countries Bangladesh have serious problem of food security due to its large population and natural hazards.⁷⁰

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dipu Moni attended the D-8 meeting in Kuala Lumpur and in side of meeting, she met with Turkey's Foreign Minister and discussed Turkey's plan to open an office of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) a government agency that manages Turkish development aid in Bangladesh.

In short, after 2001, Bangladesh maintained and improved its diplomatic and socio-economic relation with Muslim countries in bilateral level as well as multi-lateral level. Despite being good ally of America on war on terror, Bangladesh opposed America invasion of Iraq and have clear stand on Palestine-Israel issue. It strongly condemned the so called link between Islam and terrorism.

⁷⁰ Source. members-agree-on--growing-role-in-energy URL/<http://www.todayzaman.com/html>.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4

Islam's influences in Bangladesh's Domestic and Regional Politics: Analysis of Socio-Cultural and Economic Implications

The last state of democracy and rise of Islamic extremism had become a demoralizing and inhabiting aspect for the growth of progressive society in Bangladesh. It has paralyzed the trade, aid and foreign investment in Bangladesh, as the true liberal democratic concepts have not found a clear expression in political system in Bangladesh. The civil society is also being vertically divided between two main political parties the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Secular forces led by Awami League inclined to maintain good relation with India and right centric party BNP with its components Islamic parties came into power in last election, this coalition has strengthened cordial relation with Islamic countries especially Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

In this chapter it has been dealt that due to increasing fundamentalism in Bangladesh what's impact is visible in its so long harmonious society culture and state economy. And second part we have dealt how Islamic factor works while dealing with India and Pakistan.

1. Impact of Fundamentalism on society and culture

1.1. Religious Sociology of Bangladesh:

Although Muslims ruled large parts of India for more than 600 years, there was no organized move on their part to proselytize. Otherwise, Muslims would not have remained a minority within India. The 1881 census, the first such scientifically conducted exercise, revealed that Muslims were only about 20 percent of the total population of the then undivided India.¹ But in Bengal, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslims had outnumbered the Hindus. The assimilation of the north Indian political traditions by the Mughals, which was accelerated during the time of Akbar who admitted Rajputs into the ruling class, led to a virtual Rajputisation of the Muslim aristocracy in due course of time. In far-flung Bengal, the dilution of the strict Muslim code was even more

¹ AP, Joshi, M.D and J.K Bajaj (2003), "*Religious Demography of India*" Chennai, Centre for policy Studies.

noticeable. While this was true of the urban-dwelling Ashraf classes, at the mass level Islam was built upon indigenous roots.

Islam in Bengal absorbed so much local culture and became so profoundly identified with the delta's long – term process of agrarian expansion.²

This resulted in the growth of Muslim Sufism and Hindu Sahajiya or folksy Vaisnavism, which contributed to an efflorescence of the Bengali language. Since Chaitanya (1495-1533), the Bengali language achieved the status of a literary language and in course of time became enriched with words and phrases borrowed from Persian and Arabic, this was made possible by active encouragement from both Muslim and Hindu kings. The Bhagavata was translated from Sanskrit to Bengali with the encouragement of Muslim rulers who patronized men of letters irrespective of their faith. As a result of this secular trend, social mobility was also uniform for both the religious groups. Professions came to be shared by both groups and the elites also belonged to both. According to social anthropologist Ramkrishna Mukherjee, “The people of Bengal had now a territorial identification, a common history, a cultural and linguistic community, a common economic organization based on agriculture and industry³”.

It was at this juncture that the British intervened, and owing partly to imperial consideration and partly to societal circumstances, the seed of Hindu –Muslim cleavage were shown. British rulers wanted to destroy religious harmony to counter the emerging nationalism led by Congress and other Bengali leaders. Britishers used divide and rule policy and provoked Muslims leader like Samshul Huque, Sali Mulla Khan for separate electoral system. In 1909 in Minto Marlo reform Bruisers had implemented separate electoral system to Muslims and they always supported to Muslim league to destroy Hindu Muslim affinity. Gradually conflict of interests between the communities started getting articulated in sectarian term.⁴ The partition of Bengal in 1905 was a significant landmark. To oppose the Bengal partition Hindu and Muslims had been stood together. By Swadeshi movement Hindu and Muslims show their cultural unity. Although it was

² Richard Eaton (2003), “Who are Bengali? Conversion and Islamization in Bengal”, *In* Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke(Eds).”*Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivation, and Meanings*”, New Delhi: OUP.

³Ramkrishna Mukharjee (1976), “Nation Building in Bangladesh”, in Rajni Kothari (Ed.), *State and Nation Building*, Mumbai: Allied Pub.P34

⁴ Amalendu De (1995), “The Social Thought and Consciousness of the Bengali Muslim in the Colonial Period”; *Social Scientist*, 23(4-6),.21

annulled in 1911 in response to nationalist opposition, it was evident that Hindus and Muslims of Bengal did not necessarily share the same platform on the issue.

Various orthodox Muslim organizations, such as, Jamaat-i-Islam (1941), Jamaat-i-Ulama-i-islam (1945) and different other centers of the Pirs in Bengal, strengthened the Muslim identity among the 'Bengali Muslims' and directly and indirectly helped the Muslim league to build it up as a mass organizations, which the help of the Ulema, the League leaders tried to destroy the multi-lingual character of Islam by imposing Urdu as the language of the Indian Muslims and to popularize the demand for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims.⁵ The League-Ulama combination was so powerful that the promoters of Muslim identity could easily crush the liberal democrats and rationalists and silence the voices of those nationalist who tried to build up a modern India in close association with the Congress. The process, however, started from 1936 when several powerful Muslims elit and intellectuals came forward to oppose the secular democrats, they demanded separate Muslim state based on Two Nation Theory. So Muslim identity was revealed within this separate state structure comprising the Muslim majority Provinces, the Bengali identity was side tracked.

The Calcutta and the Noakhali riots between Hindus and Muslims in the wake of the partition considerably mauled inter-communal harmony, which was further aggravated by millions of Hindus and Muslims becoming refugees in each other's lands. The Two Nation Theory was at the core of the demand for Pakistan. It became clear as early as 1948 that the imposition of Urdu- which had a particular ideological connotation in the context of the Pakistani state. On the people of East Pakistan would be potentially disruptive for Pakistan's nation-building project. It was this conflict that culminated in the liberation of East Pakistan in 1971 from the so called colonialism of West Pakistan. The most significant aspect of this liberation struggle was the fact that both Muslims and Hindus fought side by side. No wonder then that the first constitution of Bangladesh as framed in 1972 was secular in its orientation and content.⁶

Alongside linguistic nationalism there was also a parallel stream of Islamic nationalism, a dichotomy that scholars have explained in terms of Bengali nationalism

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Partha S.Ghosh (1989), *Cooperation and Conflict In South Asia*, New Delhi: Manohar, Pub, P16.

versus Bangladeshi nationalism⁷. If the first few years Bangladesh witnessed the ascendancy of the former and succeeding phase was marked by a massive tilt towards the latter. Ever since the restoration of democracy in 1991 the two phases have alternated with varying digress of force depending upon which party controls the reins of power: the Awami League or the BNP. Broadly speaking, the AL led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed represents Bengali nationalism and BNP represents Bangladeshi nationalism based on Islamic identity. Among the other parties, the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Islami Oikyo Jote (Islamic Unity front) are resolutely Islamic⁸. Though the mass base of the Islamic parties is limited they bolster the forces of Bangladeshi nationalism because of their vocal and visible presence. In its foreign policy orientation, Bengali nationalism stands for friendly relations with India and, during the cold war, with the Soviet Union. Bangladeshi nationalists led by BNP are anti-Indian and pro-Islamic. Their ideology draws heavily from countries like Saudi Arabia, perhaps more for money than for anything else. There is also a clear tilt towards Pakistan. During the cold war, Bangladeshi nationalists were Pro-United States (US). In the post cold war phase, both Bengali and Bangladeshi nationalists are in favor of good relations with the US. So far as their respective approaches to India are concerned, although the AL-BNP dichotomy remains, it is much less pronounced if the latest parliamentary elections of 1 October 2001 are any indication.

1.2.Recent Pro-Islamic Trends:

Apparently nothing much has changed in the politics of Bangladesh and both the forces of Bengali and Bangladeshi nationalism are evenly poised. In the 2001 election the votes between AL and BNP were more or less balances, although because of the electoral arithmetic BNP secured a larger number of seats. Awami League got 46.9 percent votes and 201 seats. BNP's own vote share was roughly 37 percent. While the pro-Islamic forces interpreted the electoral results as their victory, that is in fact not true. In the parliament of 300 members the Jamaat-i-Islami, the most dominant amongst the Islamic

⁷ Rounaq Jahan (1980), *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issue* Dhaka: University Press.P32.

⁸ Partha S. Ghosh (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh" *South Asian Survey*, 12 (2):248.

parties, got only 17 seats.⁹ But in spite of this lackluster performance of the Islamic parties there are indications to suggest that Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise in the country.

According to Indian intelligence there has been an unprecedented growth of madrassas in duration of BNP Government, which number about 100,000 now. Saudi Wahabism and pro-Pakistanism was swelling¹⁰. The most visible expression of pro-Pakistanism was the rehabilitation of forces that opposed the liberation war, a process that started almost immediately after the assassination of Mujib-ur-Rehman. Correspondingly, there is a systematic disparagement of the forces that stood for liberation and secularism. Allegedly this transformation is being carried out through the maneuvering of the Muktijuddho Bishoyok Mantranalaya, the ministry concerning the liberation war. That the message is reaching the people, at least those who prefer to avoid controversy, is evident from such innocuous sights in Dhaka like Mujib's busts even in privately owned complexes being covered with gunny bags. Under the BNP government's dictation, history of the liberation war has rewritten to prove that it was Zia-ur-Rehman who was the real hero of the liberation war and not Mujibur Rehman because it was the former who first gave the call for independence of Bangladesh on 26 March 1971.

In the growing Islamic assertiveness, Jamaat-i-Islami and its students wing the Islami Chhatro Shibir (Islamic students Camp), are in the forefront. Although the Jamaat's Public utterances are democratic; their actions indicate the direction the party is moving towards. The debate over the role of Islam in Bangladesh has rent its politics asunder as never before. It goes much beyond the intellectual debate of Bengali nationalism versus Bangladeshi nationalism.

The militancy of the Islami Chhatro Shibir has reached such proportions that Chittagong and Rajshahi Universities are virtually under siege. Shibir activists do not allow free student union elections fearing that the results may not go in their favor, thereby defeating their purpose of spreading terror through which they want to browbeat everybody¹¹. For 14 years there has not been any student union election in Chittagong

⁹ POT, (2001) *POT (Public Opinion Trends)* (New Delhi), 26(249), 22 October.

¹⁰ Moonis Ahmar (2003), "Pakistan and Bangladesh: From Conflict to Cooperation", *BISS Papers* (Dhaka), 19 March.

¹¹ Ibid

University, while militancy has grown under the Shibir leadership. In a country where the political pulse of the nation is read through its student's politics, the straws in the wind point the direction clearly.

In Rajshahi, the hardcore and rabble rousing Islamic militant Bangla Bhai, whose real name is Siddiqui Islam, leads one of the most militant Islamic organizations called Jagroto Muslim Janata Bangladesh (emergent Muslim masses of Bangladesh). In early life Bangla Bhai was member of banned Islamist group Jamaat-al-Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB). From Afghanistan he acquired tactical, weapons and bomb-making skills. Even the Khaleda Zia regime, which was supportive of such forces, was finding Bangla Bhai a bit of a nuisance. Strangely, however, the police and the fierce Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) were unable to track him down. BanglaBhai attacked on office of Pratham Alo due to its progressive outlook. Muhammad Yunus, a respected professor of economics in Rajshahi University, and president of the Bangbandho Parishad has been killed by activists of Islamic Chhatro Shibir. While the government of Bangladesh was under strong external compulsion to act, fundamentalist Islamist parties allied with the BNP along with Bangla Bhai's supporters within the BNP, opposed the drive immediately after it was launched. Senior leaders of the Jamaat, IOJ and Bangladesh Jatiya Party questioned the role of the police in arresting 'religious-minded people' and framing them as militants.¹² Some of them even said that some influential BNP leaders had ordered the crackdown to cover up the government's failure to arrest the real culprits behind the grenade attack on the Awami League rally on 21 August 2004.¹³

The declared objective of the JMB is to capture power through armed revolution to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh. Similarly, the JMJB will "build a society based on the Islamic model laid out in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith." The JMJB's attempt to impose Islamo-fascism on communities in the northwest of Bangladesh consciously emulated Taliban culture, taken from Bangla Bhai's experience in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Bangla Bhai clearly accepted the Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. The Government, under pressure from the media opposition parties and donors uneasy about the vigilante activities in Rajshahi on May 9 ordered a report from the Rajshahi District

¹² News report, 'Drive against militants: Strain within the Coalition over Govt. Crackdown,' The Daily Star (Internet edition), 5 March 2005.

¹³ Hiranmay Karlekar (2005), *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Superintendent of Police on Bangla Bhai and JMJB, and the Home Ministry engaged an intelligence agency to monitor them. On February 23 2005 the Government declared JMJB and JMJB to be “banned organizations”. On August 17, 2005, JMJB, under Islam's leadership, launched a nation-wide attack by exploding 500 makeshift bombs. Along with Shaykh Abdur Rahman, Islam is alleged to have masterminded the bombing. In late 2005, a series of suicide bomb attacks rocked Bangladesh. JMJB and Jamaat-al-Mujahedin Bangladesh have claimed responsibility of these attacks. The Government of Bangladesh proclaimed a large prize for the capture of Bangla Bhai. On 6 March 2006, Bangla Bhai was captured by police and Rapid Action Battalion in Mymensingh District and was sentenced to death on 29 May.

1.3. Marginalization of Minorities

Minorities of Bangladesh have never actually had their fair share of representation in the country's public life. At present as statistics clearly show the situation is at its worst. In the BNP led alliance government of 2001, there was not a single minority community minister in the 70- member council of ministers. There was not a single minority community Ambassador or Vice Chancellor in public University. And in police department their participation is still remained near about three percent while in the army it is as low as one percent. Due to minority quota system seven minority members reached in national assembly in 2001 election. In the 1991 BNP cabinet also there was no minority representation. There was only one cabinet minister from the minorities in the 1996 AL government. Now the situation is such that even Awami League is reluctant to give tickets to Hindus, leave alone the other parties. It is irony that in the name of democracy the minorities lost their leverage in the country's democracy, which systematically became majoritarian.

The Hindu Anxiety

Since the Hindu community is the largest of all the minority communities, virtually constructing the whole, it is important to see how they view the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in their country.

According to Bangladesh census conducted in 2001, Hindus constitute a little over 9 percent of the population, a drop by 6 percent since the creation of Bangladesh¹⁴. This

¹⁴ International Religious freedom Report-2009/access from <http://www.ustr.gov/image/>

trend started before the assassination of Mujib although it picked up after that. The Vested Property Act of the early years of Pakistan, which was stringently enforced after the India-Pakistan war of 1965 through the promulgation of Enemy property (Custody and Registration) Order of 1965, was not withdrawn after the creation of Bangladesh¹⁵. On the contrary it was given a new lease of life through the passage of the Bangladesh Vesting of Property and Assets Order, 1972. The provisions of the order and its unscrupulous implementation seriously disadvantaged the minority communities, particularly Hindus, and also Christians.

The Hindus increasingly found themselves in an insecure situation, resulting in their constant but clandestine migration to India. The extent of the missing Hindu population was estimated around 1,220,000 during the period 1974-81 and about 1,730,000 during the inter-census period of 1981-91. On this basis it has been calculated that about 475 Hindus disappeared every day from the soil of Bangladesh between 1974 and 1996¹⁶. The connection between the communal politics of Bangladesh and the migration of Bangladeshi Hindus to India finds reflection in other sphere of government policies also. There is evident of officially sanctioned discrimination against Hindu living near the India-Bangladesh border. They are debarred from applying for bank loans on the ground that they would migrate to India after getting the loans. While there is some truth in these allegations, the fact is that there are numerous Muslim defaulters too. In the 1996 election and thereafter the controversy has figured as an electoral issue aimed at maligning the Hindu minority.¹⁷

The result of the 2001 elections, which the BNP and its pro-Islamic allies won, led to insecurity amongst the Hindus. Many cases of eviction from land, looting, burning of Hindu temples and property and rape were reported, resulting in hundreds of Hindus migrating to India. On 6 October 2001, at a press conference in Dhaka the Hindu-Bouddha-Kristan Oikya Parishad made a severe indictment of the BNP and its allies for making the lives of the minorities miserable. The Hindu community suffered from a double disadvantage- first, its faith and second, it's supposed AL link. In the aftermath of

¹⁵ Meghna Gunathakutra (2009), "Assault on Minorities in Bangladesh" in the book *The Fleeing People of South Asia: Selection from Refugee Watch*, Shibaji Pratim Basu, New Delhi, Anthem Press.

¹⁶ Monirul Hussain, Lipi Ghosh (2002), "*Religious Minorities In South Asia*" New Delhi: Manak Publication

¹⁷ Meghna Guhathakurta (1994), "The Aid Discourses and politics of Gender: A Perspective from Bangladesh" *The Journal of social Studies* 65, July.

the election of the 2001 election the amount of vandalism, rape, loot and murder the Hindu communities were increased. Human right activist Shariar kabir came to Kolkata on November 11, 2001 and spoke to BBC about the Hindus crossing over to India because of recent attack on the minorities. Upon his return to Dhaka Kabir was arrested at the airport.¹⁸

Since the BNP's ability to maintain a majority depends on the support of the Islamist parties, coalition politics have greatly benefited the Islamists. The traditional political class has largely failed to counter this disturbing trend and provide pragmatic political alternatives to Islamist rhetoric. Instead, the historically nationalist parties have begun to integrate Islamist discourse into their own political platforms. Mass demonstrations and party political posters have used religious phrases to lure the devout. At political rallies, supporters of the Bangladesh National Party, chanted "La ilaha illallah, dhaner shishe bismillah" ("There is no God by Allah, vote for the paddy-sheaf [symbol for the Bangladesh National Party], in the Name of God"). In retort, members of the mainstream opposition Awami League chanted "La ilha illallah, nuakar malik tui Allah" ("There is no God but Allah, the boat [symbol of the Awami League] belongs to Allah").¹⁹

Ahmadiyya Community

Radical Islamists have also targeted the Ahmadiyya community, a Muslim reformist and revivalist movement founded in Qadyan, India in the nineteenth century. The Ahmadiyya's millenarian interpretation of Islamic texts has placed them outside of the confines of Islamic orthodoxy²⁰. Since 2004, the government has sought to ban Ahmadiyya publications and prohibit Ahmadi children from attending schools. The Bangladesh Khilafat Andolen (Caliphate Movement) and Islami Shasantantra Andolen (Islamic System Movement), two extremist Islamist organizations, have joined the Jamaat-e-Islami in demanding that the government declare the Ahmadiyyas "infidels." Human Rights Watch has warned of "an unprecedented climate of fear [which] now pervades Bangladesh's minority." On the 24 December 2004, anti -Ahmadiyya element proclaimed Dr Kamal Hossain an enemy of Muslims because he was arguing a case in the

¹⁸ "Complaint case on sedition charges against Shariar Kabir", Daily Star, 23 November, 2001

¹⁹ Riyaz Ali (2004), *God willing: The Politics Of Islamism in Bangladesh*, USA : Rowman & Littlefield, p39.

high court in defense of Ahmadiyyas. Earlier, another anti Ahmadiyya rally at the same venue on 12 December 2003 had demanded the arrest and trial of writer and scholar Humayun Azad for having written the novel Pak Sar Zamin Saad Baad as well as the president of Bangladesh's National Press Club at Dhaka on the ground that the two had said things derogatory to Islam. At the same rally, M. Asadullah, joint secretary of the Hifazate khatme Nabuat Andolan ,thundered, No news-paper will be spared now if it publishes any write- up against us and warned the journalist not to support the Ahmadiyyas, 'otherwise Touhudi Janata (people believing in on god) will teach you good lesson.'²¹ The administration did not took action against anyone in this regard .The administration inaction in cases involving atrocities on minority clearly indicates that Jamaat enjoyed veto power in then BNP –led coalition government.

Women's Situation:

For women, increasing fundamentalism in Bangladesh is a threat to the little rights and freedoms that they currently have. Women are already repressed by gender-biased social norms and extreme poverty. Biased mentalities of fundamentalist that do not recognize women as equal citizens could be compounded by localized Sharia interpretations of Islam, where family laws 'frequently require women to obtain a male relatives permission to undertake activities that should be theirs by right. This increases the dependency women have on their male family members in economic, social, and legal matters.'

2. Fundamentalism and the Growth of Jamaat -i-Islami, Madrassas

Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh is the largest Islamist political party in Bangladesh and largest Islamic party in subcontinent. The Jamaat's militants fought alongside the Pakistan army against the Bengali nationalists in 1971. The leaders of the Jamaat returned to Bangladesh during the Zia and Ershad regimes because they were invited to come back. Ershad had introduced a string of Islamic reforms and he needed the Jamaat to counter the Awami League, he had to find ideological underpinnings for what was basically a military dictatorship.

In 2001, election the Jamaat emerged as the third largest party in the country and its militant youth organization, the Islamic Chhatro Shibir became especially bold and

²¹ Ibid

active. Jamaat-i-Islami's program consists of four components, the first of which is the adherence to a self declared immutable understanding of Islam incorporating faith, politics, social customs and economic practice. This declaration of intent to "uphold Islam in its entirety" is the cornerstone of the Jamaat-i-Islami's strategy to lay the foundation for an authoritarian hierarchical structure with its own leadership at the helm. The third component is Jamaat-i-Islami's network of social, educational, informational, and economic institutions, which, in effect, create a state within a state. In a replication of the relationship between the Arab Muslim Brotherhood and militant Islamist networks in the Middle East.

Jamaat's stand on the 'War against Terrorism' however contrasts sharply with that of the more established parties. Shortly after the US attacks on Afghanistan began in October 2001, the Jamaat created a fund purportedly for "helping the innocent victims of America's war." According to the Jamaat's own announcements, 12 million taka (\$210,000) was raised before the effort was discontinued in March 2002. Any remaining funds, the Jamaat then said, would go to Afghan refugees in camps in Pakistan.

During the Mukti Dibas (Liberation Day) celebration on 16 December 2004, Jamaat activists forced all the roadside hawkers near the Baitul Muqarram mosque in Dhaka to fly Jamaat flags along with the national flags, if not without the latter. There have been demands from certain pro-Islamic sections to change the national anthem (written by Rabindra Nath Tagore, who was an Indian and Brahmo, an offshoot of Hinduism) and the national flag.²² Political Islam in Bangladesh has always had some local promoters. The Islamist political parties, the most powerful of which is Jamaat-i-Islami, have used the tension between the Bengali and Islamic dimensions of Bangladeshi identity to further their objectives. Several of the terrorists accused in August 17, 2005 bombings say they were once members of Jamaat-i-Islami. Many student of Hathazari Madrasa, some of their graduates who had pursued higher education in Pakistani Madrasas did volunteer for the Afghan jihad during the 1980s. Jamaat-i-Islami along with its religious and social alliances is the propagator of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh. The party is deeply rooted in Islamic fundamentals but structured according to the Western political model. The Jamaat wants to purify the society "from the inside

²² Partha S. Ghosh (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh" *South Asian Survey*, 12:2 p248.

out”. As a “Reformist Party”, it seeks to resacrilize political life and to build a stage governed by the Quran and the Sunnah.

The Madrassas fill an important function in an impoverished country such as Bangladesh, where basic education is available only to a few. Today, there are an estimated 64,000 Madrassas in Bangladesh, divided into two kinds. The Aliya Madrassas are run with government support and control, while the Dars-e-Nizami or Deoband-style Madrassas are totally independent. In 1999, there were 7,122 such registered Madrassas in Bangladesh. The funding sources of Quomi Madrassahs are masked in secrecy but they do not accept any government funds. The Bangladeshi Quomi Madrassahs received patronage from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Libya.²³ The consequences of this kind of madrassa education can be seen in the growth of the Jamaat.

The fact that millions of young Bangladeshis now graduate from Madrassas run by fanatics is also bound to change perceptions of life and society – and attitudes towards ‘infidels’ in general²⁴. It did not fare well in the 1996 election, capturing only three seats in the parliament and 8.61 percent of the votes. Its election manifesto was also quite carefully worded, perhaps taking into consideration the party’s reputation and the fact that the vast majority of Bangladeshis remain opposed to Sharia law and other extreme Islamic practices. In election, the party tried to reassure the public that it would not advocate chopping off thieves’ hands, stoning of people guilty of committing adultery, or banning interest – at least not immediately.

Like the HuJI, the ICS also draws most of its members from the country’s many Deobandi Madrassas and it also has its own network of international contacts. The ICS is a member of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations as well as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth and has close contacts with other radical Muslim groups in Pakistan, the Middle East, Malaysia and Indonesia. At home in Bangladesh, it has been implicated in a number of bombings and politically as well as religiously motivated assassinations

²³ Rolin G. Mainuddin (2002), *Religion and politics in the developing world: Explosive interactions*. UK: Ashgate publishers.

²⁴ ibid

2.1.Foreign factors

Islamism in Bangladesh has not developed in isolation. Oil-rich Middle Eastern countries have funded both public and private Islamist initiatives, effectively exporting their brand of Salafist Islam to Bangladesh.²⁵ The rising price of oil has translated into greater resources for Islamists, which have usually been channeled to Bangladesh through Islamic development organizations and banks like Al Arafah Islami Bank and Al Haramain Islamic Foundation. Currently, many Bangladeshi Islamists run financial institutions, schools, hospitals and industries backed by funding from abroad. Some politicians have started dressing in Arab-influenced attire, suggesting a conflation of Islamism with Arabism. In 1992, the group spawned a Bangladeshi branch of the Pakistan-based Harakat ul-Jihad Islami (Movement of Islamic Holy War), a Sunni extremist group involved in terrorism in Kashmir. Its leader Fazlur Rahman, a powerful cleric from the Chittagong, was one of the signatories of Osama Bin Laden's 1998 declaration of "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders." Harakat ul-Jihad Islami has since claimed responsibility for the August 21, 2004 assassination attempt on Sheikh Hasina Wazed.

On the night of December 21, 2001 – only a few weeks after the fall of the Taliban-stronghold of Kandahar – a ship, the m.v. Mecca, arrived in Chittagong port. Onboard were several hundred, Taliban and Al Qaeda cadres along with arms and ammunition. It was supposed to have been a secret operation, but news about it gradually leaked out through local NGOs.²⁶ Further, on September 23, 2002, seven 'foreign aid workers' were arrested in Dhaka. The Dhaka police initially said that the men, who were from Libya, Algeria, Sudan and Yemen, Dhaka residents familiar with the arrest of the seven men claimed that students at their facilities were also undergoing military training²⁷. The arrival of the m.v Mecca was the outcome of an arrangement between Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and its Bangladeshi counterpart, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). After US attack on Afghanistan, Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives came fleeing to Pakistan. And ISI contacted the DGFI and had sent terrorist to

²⁵ Riyaz Ali (2004), "*God willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh*" USA: Rowman & Littlefield, p.43.

²⁶ Riaz Ali (2008), "*Islamist militancy in Bangladesh: a complex web*" USA: Routledge Press

²⁷ Riaz Ali (2008), "*Islamist militancy in Bangladesh: a complex web*" USA: Routledge Press

Bangladesh. It reflects the close ties that exist between the security services of Pakistan and Bangladesh and even more so the growing links between Bangladesh's Islamist militants and various extremist outfits in Central and West Asia.

2.2.Global Funding

Since 1990s money has started flowing in from the rich Middle Eastern countries resulting into a mushrooming growth of these Madrasas but after 2001, this has acted as an incentive and the Qawmi Madrasas have now sprung up across the country. Their total number has gone beyond 10,000. These Madrasas are a major factor behind the rise of Islamic extremism in Bangladesh. They spend a large share of their fund for arms training as part of preparations for 'jihad'. Some Islamic NGOs get foreign funds for other activities like promoting Islamic culture by providing 'iftar' to people at mosques during the fasting month of Ramadan and sacrificing animals on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.²⁸

In Bangladesh, 34 foreign funded major Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGO) are registered with the NGO Bureau, out of which 15 are very active in spreading Islamisation in Bangladesh. Some of the prominent ones are Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), Al Markajul Islami, Ishra Islamic Foundation, Ishrahul Muslimin, Al Forkan Foundations and Al Maghrib Eye Hospital. These NGOs get donations in excess of Taka 200 crore every year²⁹. These donations mainly come from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates (UAE) but some western countries like the US and the United Kingdom's Muslims are also major contributors. The number of such NGOs has reportedly increased significantly after a Jamaat-e- Islami leader became social welfare minister. The local NGOs also get foreign donation but they do not give any report on it to the government as they work as affiliates of the foreign funded ones.

Funds are even raised directly from foreign lands. A section of Islamic scholars, leaders of religion-based political parties including Jamaat-i-Islami and heads of Madrasa go to Middle Eastern countries every year for fund-raising from zakat, fitra and individual donations in the name of religious education, charitable organizations and orphanages. No record of this money is maintained as it generally comes through unofficial channels like hundi.

²⁸ ibid

²⁹ Jaideep Saikia (2006), *Bangladesh: treading the Taliban trail*, New Delhi: Vision Books, p25.

Intelligence sources believe that NGOs like Al Haramain Islamic Foundation and Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society fund militancy in the name of building mosques, setting up Madrasas, other educational institutions, hospitals and healthcare centers. Bangladeshi economist showed that the “fundamentalist sector of the economy” earns annual profits of some \$1.2 billion.³⁰ Seven charitable organizations, International Islamic Relief Organization, Wafa Humanitarian Organization, Rabita Trusts, Qatar Charitable Society, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLFRD) and Al-Aqsa Educational Fund has listed as having links with terrorist organizations in different countries. Of these, all except HLFRD and Al-Aqsa have links with al Qaeda, which is accused of supporting Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), banned by the Bangladesh Government. Although Muslim Aid in Bangladesh is registered and supervised by the NGO Bureau of the Government of Bangladesh, despite these accusations the government has not started any inquiry into the matter.

To put a check on the finances of these Islamist groups, several western nations have been putting pressure on the Bangladesh government to ratify the International Convention for Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism convention. The country had earlier acceded to 11 other anti-terrorism conventions, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on December 9, 1999. It had ratified the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, Convention on the Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft. Now the government has decided to accede to the International Convention for Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism also. In a 2005 joint report of National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Defence Force Intelligence (DFI) of Bangladesh it was confirmed that 10 Islamic charities and NGOs were promoting and financing militancy in Bangladesh. Surprisingly, Maulana Abdus Sobhan of the Muslim Aid Bangladesh was also named who a MP belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami, Who is allegedly supporting the establishment of militant or radical Islam. The Islamic Foundation UK and Jamaat-i-Islami have similar goals to implement Sariya law in nation, and share close ties, one can infer the flow of funds between these

³⁰ Elora Shehabuddin (2008), *reshaping the holy: democracy, development, and Muslim women in Bangladesh*, USA: Columbia University Press, pp98.

organizations for supporting Islamic militancy. In fact, a close link between Muslim Aid branches in different countries and terrorist funding has come to light.

3. Cost of Domestic Terrorism on Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign Direct Investment can stimulate the economy and bring in much needed liquidity in the system. For past few years, Bangladesh has not been very effective at drawing foreign investment in the country. According to World Bank, FDI inflow in Bangladesh dropped by 16% as against a regional increase of 18% in 2007.³¹ To change this, the government has to adopt a multi-pronged strategy. It would have to bring in the required economic and energy reforms and deregulate its energy exploration sector and open the natural resources for exploitation from foreign countries, an issue that has always remained a source of contention for the foreign investors. More significantly, the government should seek out new investments through improving foreign relations with its neighbors. Mega-projects like TATA's plan of US\$ 3 billion in Bangladesh and trilateral pipeline between Myanmar, Bangladesh and India are being shelved.³² Recent showdown between Burmese and Bangladeshi Navies in Bay of Bengal has put a brake to the significant energy and transit projects that both countries were exploring. Improving relations with its regional neighbors like Myanmar, China and India can lead Bangladesh to maximize its potential of economic growth.

General Mastanism and the associated terrorist activities of the miscreants have the most negative impact on the economy of Bangladesh. The Businessmen are oppressed by the high incidence of toll extraction by political and local miscreants: they are alleged to be forced to pay involuntary tolls at every stage of business operations. It increases the cost of doing business directly or indirectly and lowers business competitiveness. New investment in productive activities is heavily discouraged, because of the up-front involuntary tolls that have to be paid to the miscreants when any one goes for a new construction or a new establishment.

The political confrontation in Bangladesh give rise to destructive programmes that lead to terrorist activities like bomb attacks or setting fire to property. These destructive activities not only hamper the profitability of existing production activities, they also

³¹ Niranjan Dass (2006), "*Terrorism and militancy in South Asia*" New Delhi: M.D. Publications.

³² *ibid*

reduce the incentive to invest in this country. More importantly, terrorist activities by miscreants, along with political violence have created a negative image about the investment potential in the country to both local and foreign investors. Although private investment in this country started to increase since the early 1990s due to economic liberalization, the investment/ GDP ratio became stagnant in recent years.³³

Growth of terrorism and the poor image of the country are the important factors behind this poor performance of investment in recent years.

Table No. 4.1. Investment Scenario in Bangladesh:

	Private investment as % of GDP	Foreign Direct investment (in million US \$)
1997-98	15.31	249
1998-99	15.5	198
1999-2000	15.6	194
2000-2001	15.9	174
2001-2002	16.1	41(Jul-Feb)

Private investment had also been lower in the district of CHT and South-Western parts of the country where the terrorist groups were more active. This point is substantiated by the state of per capita bank advances indifferent divisions and selected districts Bangladesh. It is quite evident that bank advances are unevenly distributed across different regions of the country. Per capita bank advances are quite low in the districts of the CHT. The same is true for the districts in the south-western part of the country. The CHT is one of the regions with the most potetial in terms or its resource base and capacity to have a positive impact on the overall development of the country. Terrorist activities in the region are one of the important factors in this regard. Private investment is much lower in this area.

The 11 September terrorist attack affected economy of Bangladesh in many other indirect ways. First, the US resorted to help from Pakistan to carry on the war against the

³³Niranjan Dass (2006), *Terrorism and militancy in South Asia*, New Delhi: M.D. Publications

Taliban of Afghanistan. In return, Pakistan received some additional benefits from the US regarding export of RMG, which the country otherwise would not have received. As a result, many orders for RMG were diverted from Bangladesh to Pakistan. Thus, the gain of Pakistan was achieved at the cost of LDCs like Bangladesh. Foreign investment depends not only on the image of a country, but also on the image of the region. Terrorism in the south Asian region may have some negative impact on the economy of Bangladesh as well by discouraging FDI. Terrorism has become an important concern in recent years. Terrorism by miscreants due to general weakness in the law and order situation is supposed to have the most widespread negative impact on the economy. Terrorism by Islamic fundamentalists, mostly being propaganda, also results in a negative image for foreign investors and tourists.

Bangladeshi workers migrate to thirteen countries of the region, 98 per cent of the total migration goes to the eight countries Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Saudi Arabia has the highest number of Bangladeshi migrants, about 38 percent of the total migration.

4. Islam in India Bangladesh Relation

India and Bangladesh has cultural, linguistic, racial affinities and historical legacy which is strengthened by geographical proximity but Religious factor plays a dominant role in Bangladesh India relation. In the post-independence period, particularly in the post-Mujib period, Islam has become a vital feature in the relations. With the rise of religious revivalist parties both in India and Bangladesh, the religious factor started affecting the relationship between the two to a greater extent. Anti-Indian feelings of Bangladeshis have been the legacy of the anti-Hindu feelings. This religious difference however has been a source of irritant in the recent past accentuated by the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Godhra communal violence of 2002. Religious difference, political dominance and the physical size of India has continued to evoke a sense of apprehensive notion about India. The question of security and exchange of economic goods and services further contribute to this notion of dichotomy. India played a vital role in liberation war of Bangladesh spent not only 7000 crore of Rupees but also sacrificed the

lives of 3630 soldiers of her army and about Ten Thousands Jawan had been wounded but it is noticeable that role of India was already politicized during the liberation war.³⁴

The creation of Bangladesh earned for India paradoxical image. On the one hand it was seen as active supporter of liberation war and on the other as an unprincipled self keeper. Behavior of Indian soldiers and behavior of Indian bureaucrats are discussed and exaggerated in many time and many ways. Inevitably the Islamic fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh which had for tactical reason endorsed the Indian intervention also received in the spring of 1972, during the Hindu religious festival there were report of communal violence in several part of Bangladesh. In summer of 1973 the Muslim Bangla Movement was launched by right wing of Islamic forces to revive Muslim sentiment and to resist the policy of secularism propounded by ruling Awami league.³⁵ The activists of Muslim Bangla were confined to threaten Bangladeshi Hindu and Indian diplomats with anonymous letter and advising them to escape to India later they became vocal and slogan appearing in the wall of Dhaka. The slogan “we shall not allow Sikkim to be repeated in Bangladesh”. Muslim Bangla movement had opened its centers in London and Mecca and tried to collect fund to raise a guerrilla army to promote the objectives of movement the SANGRAM magazine was published. Leftist Parties utilized the growing anti India and communal sentiment to fulfill their interest. According to Rasidduzzaamam, Islamic identity became the center of resistances against India pre dominances in Bangladesh politics.

The most controversial issue in the aftermath of the liberation war was 1972 treaty. This treaty was considered as a price that Bangladesh paid to India for its contribution in 1971. Some Bangladeshi analysts argue that this treaty compromised Bangladesh’s sovereignty. But in later, Mujib -Ur-Rahman not only engaged in anti-India rhetoric but used Islamic idiom to enhance his domestic credential which were frequently put to question.

After the assassination of Mujib the Bengali nationalism turned into Bangladeshi nationalism. The elements of 1947 were working very sharply. Zia was known for his anti Indian, pro-west and pro-Islamic attitude. Bangladesh improved its relations with

³⁴Salam Ajad (2008), “Role of Indian People in liberation war of Bangladesh”, *Dialogue*, 10(2):138.

³⁵Partho S. Ghosh (1989) *Cooperation and conflict in South Asia*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers

China and Pakistan. Bangladesh endeavored to consolidate preserve and strengthen fraternal relation among Muslim countries, based on the Islamic solidarity.³⁶

Zia secured the support of Islamic revivalist section for getting the legitimacy at home. In the 1979 election many candidates from the Muslim League fought the election under the banner of BNP with the slogan 'Defeat Awami League and keep Islam safe in the hands of President Zia'. There were other symbolic measures which includes display Quranic verses and the prophet advice in public places and government office. Flying of Eid -Mubarak festoon with national flag on Eid festival, propagating the principles of Sariyat through radio and so on Zia-Ur- Rahman began to preface his public speeches with Bismillah -ar Rahman ar Rahim in the social level³⁷. There were a tendency to assert the Muslim characteristic of Bengali language as against Hindu the traditional mode of education through the Madarras also get a new impetus and resurgences of Islamic parties. The tension over Border dispute and sharing Ganga water made worst image of India at that time. Zia ur Rahman tried to internationalize these issues. He took the Farrakka issues to OIC Foreign Ministers Conference in Istanbul in 1976. In the tenure of Genral H. M. Ershad anti-India sentiments remained in politics. Ershad declared the Islam as state religion. During his regime the water sharing issues continued to make India image bad in the eyes of Bangladesh.

The restoration of democracy in 1991 brought in its own dynamic to India image in Bangladeshi view. Relation and Image became of Flavor in domestic politics and national discourse. Democracy and political mobilization made India an essential factor in domestic politics in the election campaign, India factor dominated for example, Awami League manifesto that talked of secularism and return to 1972 constitution was attacked by BNP as selling the country to India. Since Awami League is perceived as pro-Indiaism, Anti-Indianism is a major tool for BNP. Awami league led by Sheikh Hasina represents Bengali nationalism and while the BNP led by Khalida Zia represents the Bangladeshi nationalism³⁸. The Jamaat-i-Islami, Islami Oikyo Jote are resolutely Islamic, they always make propagations against India. Bengali nationalism and its supporter's

³⁶ Sanjay Bhardwaj (2003), "Bangladesh Foreign Policy vis-a-vis India". *Strategic Analysis*, 27(2), Apr-Jun

³⁷ Smurty S Pattanaik (2005), "Internal Political Dynamics and Bangladesh's Foreign Policy towards India", *Strategic Analysis*, 29(3):395-426.

³⁸ Sanjay Bhardwaj. (2003) "Bangladesh Foreign Policy vis-a-vis India" *Strategic Analysis*, 27(2):76,

stands for good image of India, the Bangladeshi nationalism that represent the ethos of 1947 have clear tilt with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The ideological front the Awami League and BNP differ fundamentally in their interpretation of historical emergence of Bangladesh, unlike Awami League BNP acknowledges his history begins it not from 1971 or 1947 but from establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal. Defeating of Sirajuddaola is considered a low point in history of Muslims of Bengal. The next two centuries witnessed the humiliation of India Muslim (particularly Bengal) at the both the British and majority Hindus. In BNP eyes the creation of Bangladesh did not invalidate the basis of Pakistan 'Two-Nation Theory'. Awami League is seen by many a stooge of India and obstacle to the development of an independent identity for the people of Bangladesh. Under the BNP government the history of Liberation war was being rewritten that it was Zia-ur-Rahman who was the real hero of liberation war and not Mujib ur Raman, because it was the former who first gave the call for independence of Bangladesh on 26 March 1971.³⁹

In the case of Bangladesh this has a history. Among the earliest desires of the leaders of Muslim Bengal, as the movement for Indian independence began to gather pace over a hundred years ago, was for separate treatment from the Hindus. The desire was articulated by Urdu speaking, westernized, politically conservative Bengali Muslims, supporters of British rule, who had little respect for Bengali culture or language. And it was articulated through their support for Lord Curzon's 1905 partition of Bengal, despite antagonizing the Hindus on this issue; in their demand, a year later, for separate electorates and representation for Muslims in the elective bodies; and the key role they played in the movement leading to the partition of India in 1947. The formation of the All India Muslim League in December 1906 in Dhaka was at the initiative of the Nawab Salimullah of that city, 'to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussulmans of India'. A Bengali Muslim leader, A. K. Fazlul Haq, moved the resolution at the 1940 Lahore session of the Muslim League demanding 'independent states' in the areas in which the Muslims were numerically in majority, a resolution which is usually cited as the origin of the partition. The heart of the Two-Nation Theory beat strongest in Bangladesh. For India to expect a secular Bangladesh is to go against the trend of this

³⁹Partha S Ghosh (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh", *South Asian Survey*, 12(2) p.248

entire history and produces corresponding resentment there. The society is also divided in BNP men and Awami League men so public attitude toward India is similar to Political Parties. But due to growing Islamisation in the countries within society, the Awami League is unable to remain their secular image to take the benefit in election, party started to speech against India and uses Islamic symbols and gestures in election campaign. Awami League mention “Allah is great” as a slogan in their banners.

The Babri Masjid demolition in India and the riots that followed in Bangladesh show how deep-rooted this factor is in the minds of the people in Bangladesh. Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, proclaimed, “The situation arising out of the demolition of the Babri mosque is fraught with a possibility of an adverse impact on Indo-Bangladeshi relations” and Mumbu Rahman Mizami, the secretary of Jamaat-i-Islami called upon the Muslim world to boycott India economically unless the Babri Mosque was built.⁴⁰ Leading newspapers of Bangladesh wrote in their editorials, “As far as Bangladesh and other SAARC members are concerned, it is time they got together, put all their grievances down on paper and let the world know how the Indians have behaved to crush each of them culturally, economically and politically.

India, the bully of the subcontinent, has at last exposed itself to be nothing but crude Hindu State. The Jamaat-i-Islami observed that the Babri Masjid incident showed that India could not accept the existence of an independent Bangladesh. India wanted to see Bangladesh as subservient to it. According to these extremists, only Islamic values could help their independence and sovereignty. Godhra riots took place in India 2002. The growth of religious tension in India had a spillover effect and Bangladesh witnessed a major outbreak of communal violence in Bangladesh. Therefore, Fundamentalist outfits in Pakistan and Bangladesh have called for a renewed jihad against India. Khaleda Zia has turned to the Organization of Islamic Conference and the US to take “strong action against India”. There is great likelihood of militancy in Kashmir going up in time to come as a ‘revenge’ for Gujarat. For the present, Musharraf is lying low and would continue to do so until the time is ripe to revive the insurgency. In a speech Jamaat-i-Islami leader said that India and US should be destroyed. India is enemy of Islam and Muslims are not safe in India. In 2004 the pro-Islami section was demanding to change

⁴⁰ Sanjay Bhardwaj (2003) “Bangladesh Foreign Policy vis-a-vis India” *Strategic Analysis*, 27(2), Apr-Jun

the Nation Anthem that was written by R.N. Tagore and the National Flag. The growing number of Maddersa in the Bangladesh is ever controversial the funds come from the Jeddah based Islamic Development Bank⁴¹. There are several Islamic militant outfits operating in Bangladesh most important are Harakat -Ul- Jihad, Islami-Chhatro- Shibir, Samjukta- Islamic-Organization and the Islamic- Markaz- Party which aim at the wiping out all enemies of Islam including The United State and India.⁴²

As a countered among India's influence of socio-politics and culture there has develop neighbors a strong proclivity to assert the separateness of their identity. This may find recourse in the adoption of an ideology that contrasts with that of India as when Bangladesh adopted Islam as the state religion and criticized India for what it called an attempt to foist an alien culture that obliterates the distinct culture of the Bengali Muslims. Or it may lead to demonstrative distancing, a refusal to settle issues on terms which seem reasonable. Indians often bewail this. Commentators from India continue today to bewail the passing of secularism but to do so is an anachronism. They are of a mind with those who call Bangladesh 'an anachronism within an anachronism'. Such comments lead to further feelings of insecurity in Bangladesh.

Thus, Bangladesh swung between the two poles of secularism and Islam, Bengali and Bangladeshi; the so-called forces of 1971 and those of 1947, pro-India and anti-India.

4.1. Insurgency in India and its connection with Bangladesh

Since the 1950s, erstwhile East Pakistan has been facilitating, encouraging and supporting various northeast insurgency groups. In the book Myth of Independence, former Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto laid claims to Assam and suggested that he wanted some areas of India's northeast to be included in Pakistan and added:

One (of the problems) at least is nearly as important as the Kashmir dispute: that of Assam and some districts of India adjacent to East Pakistan. To these East Pakistan has very good claims, which should not have been allowed to remain quiescent... The eviction of Indian Muslims into East Pakistan and the disputed borders of Assam and Tripura should not be forgotten. Bhutto advocated a policy of "Special relationship with non-Hindu population of Assam until this wrong (of Assam being as integral part of

⁴¹ Partha S Ghosh (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh", *South Asian Survey*, 12:2 p.248

⁴² Ibid

India) can be finally righted.” His statement was an open admission of Pakistani designs to convert Assam in to a Muslim majority state by pushing in hordes of infiltrators and finally annexing it.⁴³

There are sufficient indications that this policy was played out successfully. In 1956, Naga National Council leader A Z Phizo, who was spearheading the Naga insurgency fled to Dhaka and from there he escaped to London on a false passport provided by Pakistan.⁴⁴ The Naga insurgents had been receiving weapons and training in East Pakistan until the formation of Bangladesh. Similarly, East Pakistan provided a helpful hand to the Mizos. When the Mizo National Front (MNF) failed to win the district council in 1963, its leader Laldenga and his supporters reached out to Pakistan for arms and training.⁴⁵ According to one account, in 1966 about 200 trained volunteers had returned to Mizo hills from East Pakistan.⁴⁶ When the MNF was declared unlawful by the Indian government in February 1968, the Mizo National Army was forced to go underground and crossed the borders into the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Exploiting the proximity and favorable terrain, Laldenga and his volunteers were trained by the Pakistan army.

In recent years, Bangladeshi immigrants into India have increased and the sudden growth of Muslim population in Indian districts bordering Bangladesh is a direct outcome of this trend. Capitalizing on this opportunity, Pakistan has intensified the activities of ISI and contributed to the mushroom growth of Islamist groups in Northeast. Exploiting cross-border ethnic linkages and favorable terrain, various militant groups manage to seek and secure safe havens in contiguous Bangladeshi territories. The emergence of military rule in Bangladesh re-established the old link between Pakistan’s ISI and Northeast insurgency. Periodically various Bangladeshi governments (while maintaining their complete non-involvement) have been promising to intervene and close those bases. However, in a significant departure from this customary position, in April 2000, Mohammad Nasim, Home Minister in Sheikh Hasina’s government admitted that with the help of an unnamed foreign intelligence agency Indian separatists had long been

⁴³ Z.A. Bhutto (1990), *The Myth of independence*, London :Oxford University Press.P169

⁴⁴ Nirmal Nibedon (1985), *Night of Guerrillas*, New Delhi: Lancer Book.p10

⁴⁵ B.G. Verghese (1997) *India’s Northeast: Resurgent Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance, development*, New Delhi: Konark Press, P40.

⁴⁶ V.I.K. Sarin (1980), *India’s North-East in Flames*, New Delhi: Vikas Publication House.P154

provided training a Bangladeshi soil. Accusing India of encouraging and training the Chakmas, he declared that after Sheikh Hasina came to power in 1996 both countries agreed not to cooperate with each other's separatist groups.⁴⁷

The conservative ascendancy in Bangladesh affects India- Bangladesh relations in two ways. On the one hand, it makes Indian Hindus feel sympathetic towards their Bangladeshi counterparts; if they fall in the category of Hindu fanatics, then it lead to communal conflicts in India. Mercifully, since the hotbed of Hindutva politics is located in Hindi belt the impact of this connection is still limited. On the other hand, Islamic fanaticism in Bangladesh is closely connected to the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism. Indian and other foreign intelligence establishments see a substantive involvement of Pakistan's inter-services intelligence (ISI) Directorate in these activities. The eastern and north-eastern regions of India have become vulnerable to terrorist threats or conducive to situations that breed terrorism.

In the wake of anti- Hindu atrocities in Bangladesh in the aftermath of the 2001 elections, even the people of an otherwise staunchly secular West Bengal protested. The growing number of Madrassas in the districts bordering Bangladesh is ever controversial. Buddhdeb Bhattacharjee, the Marxist Chief Minister of west Bengal, has alleged that these madrassas are the hotbed of ISI activity. In January 2002, when Kolkata's American Centre was attacked by Muslim terrorists, Bhattacharyajee underlined the connection. An intelligence report of the government of India identified 208 Madrassas and 458 mosques in 10 districts on the indo-Nepal and India- Bangladesh borders. The growth was the highest in Malda district, where 172 mosques and 55 Madrassas were identified.⁴⁸

The reality, however, is rather different. For instance, in July 1999, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar pointed out that the porous border between India and Bangladesh has been used by the insurgent groups for movement to and from their camps. In June 2001, media reports highlighted the presence of a number of camps in Bangladesh operated by National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).

⁴⁷ *POT- Bangladesh*, 10 may 2000, P. 553.

⁴⁸ Hiranmay Karlekar (2005), *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan*, New Delhi: SAGE publication.

After some time, Indian nationals were arrested in Khagrachhari in CHT on suspicion of being members of the national liberation front of Tripura (NLFT). There are suggestions that the ULFA has several lucrative income generating projects in Bangladesh to sustain its insurgency activities in India. The NLFT which has spearheaded the anti-Bengali agitation in Tripura has been maintaining bases in th Sajek range of CHT. An insurgent group, Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO), consisting of Rajbangs his is fighting for a separate state of Kamtapur and is operating close to the enclaves. KLO has developed strong links with a number of militant groups in the North east as well as with the ISI.

There are several Islamic militant outfits operating in Bangladesh. The most important amongst them are: harkat-ul-jihad-e-islami Bangladesh, which has connections with Harkat-ul-jihad-e-islami and harkat-ul-Mujahedin of Pakistan, islami Chhatro Shibir (the youth front of jamaat-e-islami), Samjukta (joint) Islamic jehad committee, Islamic Oikyo jote (a conglomeration of eight Islamic organizations that emphasize a Taliban type movement in the country) and the Islamic Markaz Party, which aims at wiping out all enemies of Islam including the United States and India.⁴⁹ According to a retired senior Indian intelligence official:

Till now, the international community has not paid as much attention as it deserves to the signs of Bangladesh emerging as a new hub of pro-bin Laden jihadi terrorism. The situation in Bangladesh is similar to the one in Indonesia before the Bali explosion of October 2002. The Khaleda Zia Government, like the Mewati Sukarnoputri Government in Indonesia before October 2002, refuses to acknowledge the growing activities of the jihadi terrorist elements from its territory and has been avoiding any strong action against them while continuing to pay lip-service to Bangladesh's support to the so-called war against international terrorism. Like Pakistan, Bangladesh too is lacking in its implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1373 against terrorism. Unless the international community pressurizes her to start acting against the jihadi and

⁴⁹ Partha S Ghosh, (2005), "Conservative Ascendency in Bangladesh", *South Asian Survey*,12:2 p.248

other terrorist elements operating from Bangladesh territory, this region and the world are in for another surprise similar to the Bali explosion⁵⁰.

In India's northeastern region, the role played by ISI and Bangladesh's Directorate General of Force Intelligence (DGFI) in fomenting Islamic militancy is a constant concern for Indian intelligence. The Nellie massacre of Muslims in February 1983 and the demolition of the Babri mosque in December 1992 have contributed in creating a favorable ground for the DGFI's activities in India's northeast. This is especially true in the case of Assam, the largest state in the region (with a population of 26.6 million) which also has a large concentration of Muslim population (about 30percent compared to India's average of 14 percent).⁵¹ The region in general is a battle ground of various instrument groups- at least 100, many of which have their hideouts and training camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Thus, Indian fears are not misplaced. The porous border between Bangladesh and India in the region makes things even more difficult for India's counter-insurgency operations.⁵²

Fundamentalist Islamic outfits in the northeastern region, however, are still small, and just how much they have been indoctrinated by hardcore Pakistani agents is a moot point. The surrendered Muslim militants of Assam have reportedly confessed that they were disillusioned with Pakistan and Bangladeshi training, while their trainer's agenda emphasized the killing of Hindus and India leaders, Assamese Muslim fundamentalists were more worried about how to improve the condition of their community in the region. Besides, often the Pathan and Punjabi trainer's ridiculed Assamese Muslim trainees for their being small built. Interestingly, the most powerful insurgent group, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), is Hindu dominated, and curiously, according to its charter, non-Assamese Indians cannot become its members while non-Indians can.

In Bangladesh the government tried to sidetrack the issue of Islamic militancy by referring to India's conduct in the politics of the nation, particularly when the BJP led NDA was in power (1999-2004). According to the Bangladeshi Home Ministry, some

⁵⁰B Rahaman (2003), "Bangladesh and Jehadi Terrorism-An Update" *Agni: Studies in International Strategic Issue*, 7(2), Sep.-Dec.

⁵¹ Sanjib Baruah (2005), *Durable Disorder: Understanding toward Politics of Northeast India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁵²B Rahaman (2003), "Bangladesh and Jehadi Terrorism-An Update" *Agni: Studies in International Strategic Issue*, 7(2).

anti- Bangladesh organizations based in different parts of India are actively working on spreading chaos and creating a crisis in Bangladesh to damage its image internationally. In such a situation, the country should make maximum efforts to improve law and order and curb the activities of the hard-line fundamentalist groups. It further said that an intelligence agency informed this Ministry that the anti-terrorism drive in Afghanistan which strengthened the strategic presence of the United States of America in this region, India's stand against the militants in Kashmir and the current situation in Central Asia are having a negative impact on Bangladesh.

Such allegations, however, have snowballed and India in turn has accused Bangladesh of allowing the ISI and the Taliban in the garb of Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami to spread their nets in the country and to instigate anti-Indian and pro-Islamic activities. Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in November 2002 affected India-Bangladesh relations because Dhaka tended to suggest that she was in league with India in spreading such confusion in the country. In December 2002 there were a series of bomb blasts in Mymensingh district. Reuters reported them as the handwork of Al-Qaeda. The Bangladesh government, however, denied any Al-Qaeda link with the incidents and forced Reuters to withdraw its report.⁵³

4.2. Bangladesh and Pakistan's Proxy War against India:

Bangladesh seems to be getting overtaken by Islamic fundamentalist parties, which do not portend well for the future of good relations with India. The strengthening of such parties along with others with their pan-Islamic links with militant Islam is not only India's concern but as witnessed above within Bangladesh also. It is in this perspective that has to be viewed the discernible contours of Pakistan exploiting Bangladesh and its territory as an alternative base for continuance of its proxy war against India.

Pakistan Imperatives is Using Bangladesh as alternative base for Proxy War against India. The more significant ones being: First, Pakistan's proxy war activities against India are under close watch by the United States within Pakistan. Second, US intelligence agencies teams operating within Pakistan in considerable numbers post-9/11 are exercising close scrutiny and surveillance of Pakistan's Islamic Jehadi organizations and

⁵³Haroon Habib (2000), "Report on Bangladesh anger Dhaka" *The Hindu*, 4 April, accessed from http://www.hinduonnet.com/the_Hindu/2002/stories/20020404htm/

their linkages with the ISI. Third, India's extensive border fencing along the International Border and Line of Control is significantly impeding cross-border terrorism and proxy war activities of Pakistan. And last but not least, along the entire western borders of India, except for a few safe havens in the Kashmir valley the ISI and Islamic Jihadis cannot make headway anywhere else.

Pakistan therefore, has to change its base for its proxy war against India whose continuance is an essential strategic requirement for the Pakistan Army's continuing grip on power in Pakistan, notwithstanding commitments given to the United States. Bangladesh' politico-religious factors provide a force-multiplier effect in terms of Bangladesh's utility as an alternative base for Pakistan's proxy war. After 9/11 Pakistan's ISI and its Islamic Jehadi organizations enjoy pan-Islamic linkages with corresponding groups in Bangladesh and Bangladesh's Armed Forces are increasingly coming under Islamic fundamentalist influences.⁵⁴ They seem to perceive that Islamic fundamentalist terrorism is a better weapon to keep India's might at bay.

"Islamic Madrassas" under the guise of religious instruction schools provide a nucleus network for Islamic Jehadi and ISI proxy war against India⁵⁵. There are a host of geo-strategic and politico-religious factors operating in favour of Pakistan in using Bangladesh as a proxy war base against India. The position of the Awami League and the BNP over the question of support for Indian insurgents has been somewhat different. Under the AL, Bangladesh was more sympathetic towards India. In December 1997 ULFA leader Anup Chetia was arrested when he tried to illegally enter Bangladesh. Even though he has not been extradited to India, Bangladesh rejected his demand for asylum and sentenced him to a six year prison term. Sanjeev Deb Berman, a senior ATTF member, who was illegally staying in Bangladesh since 1993 was arrested in 1998 by the Sheikh Hasina government. As India was seeking his extradition, in January 2002 the Begum Khaleda government released him on bail. Taking cue from the new climate, Barman quickly applied for political asylum. The failure of the Bangladeshi government

⁵⁴M.K.Dhar (2007), "Bangladesh: A Need to Rediscover the Secular Forces", *World Focus*, Nov-Dec. P.18

⁵⁵ Ibid

to block the move was not viewed well by New Delhi. Following Barman's example, Anup Chetia also had sought political asylum."⁵⁶

In the past, suggestions were made that while Begum Khaleda was in power in early 1990s the Bangladesh government did allow the ULFA to operate from its soil. Portrayal of militants as 'freedom fighters' by the BNP in the past provided a political climate for a possible shift in Bangladesh policy. Thus, the return of Begum Khaleda to power in October 2001 did raise the prospects of a renewal of this benign indifference towards militant activities.

At present, the Awami League has regained its power in December 2008, This time, the Awami League has come to power with a 2/3 majority in its parliament, which led it to take independent decisions upon the foreign policy, which is a major determinate of cordial relations between India and Bangladesh. After assuming the power, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina secured to India that Bangladesh, would not allow militants to operate from their soil and the agreements signed with India would lead to cooperation in combating terror. "I clearly declared, as you know, that Bangladesh will not allow anybody to use the soil of Bangladesh to launch any kind of terrorist activities," said Hasina. "We should cooperate with each other so that if there is anyone from Bangladesh, India should look into it and Bangladesh will also do the same," she added. And after that she took action and handed over long time waited some Indian insurgent leaders including Arbind Rajkhova, the chief of ULFA to India in December 2009.

Recently in January 2010, Bangladesh Prime Minister made a first visit to India. This visit has proved instrumental in reviving the friendly relations between India and Bangladesh. Three agreements out of five are directly related to check the criminal and terrorist activities.

These agreements are:

- Agreement to provide mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- Transfer of persons, who are sentenced by each other.
- Agreement to fight against terrorist activities, organized crimes and illegal drug-trafficking.

⁵⁶ Bangladesh is increasingly becoming hostile territory for Northeast groups, says Saleem Samad at <http://www.tehelka.com/channels/currentaffairs/2002/mar/25/ca032502bangla.htm>.

- Agreement in the form of memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in the field of power generation.
- Agreement to enhance cultural exchange programme.

5. Islam as a Factor in Bangladesh Pakistan Relation

The nature of relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan have been characterized by Bangladesh's scholars as based on "rivalry not enmity", still developing. "Old ethos new country" etc.⁵⁷ Pakistan views the emergence of Bangladesh as purely Indian affair.

Bangladesh Pakistan Relation since 2001

Bangladeshi politics is divided in forces of 1971, led by Awami League and forces of 1947, represented by BNP and other Islamic components. Since the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh in 1990, BNP is following the policies of its military regimes which were mostly based on Pro-Islam, anti-Indian and pro-Pakistan. By constitutional amendment and by day to day politics, the ethos of liberation war including secularism underwent a tremendous change under these military regimes and under the BNP government. BNP does not believe in policy of secularism and Bengali nationalism and has strengthened good relation on the basis of religion in internal politics as well as external relations. BNP always has good relation with Pakistan while Awami league differ fundamentally in it.

During her tenure, Sheikh Hasina at the United Nations Millennium Summit condemned the military leadership of Pakistan, as part of a general request to take action against undemocratic changes of government. On her return to Dhaka, she demanded that Pakistan apologize for the atrocities committed by its army during the Liberation war, and bring to justice those involved. This led to an impasse in their relations due to Pakistan's withdrawal of its Deputy High Commissioner in November 2000, his refusal to apologize on behalf of Pakistan, massive demonstrations in Dhaka and his departure after being declared persona non grata by the Bangladesh government. Pakistani ruler Parvej Mussaraf had to cancel his scheduled visit to Bangladesh and reacted harshly, criticizing Hasina for intervening in Pakistan's internal affairs.

In 2002, Pakistani president Pervej Mushraff paid three days visit to Bangladesh. In his three-day visit, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf expressed regrets for the

⁵⁷ Ibid

excesses committed by the Pakistani army during the 1971 Liberation war⁵⁸, and his call to give a phase of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. Gen Musharraf visited a war memorial at Savar, near the capital, Dhaka, and left a handwritten note in the visitors' book. "Your brothers and sisters in Pakistan share the pain of the events in 1971," he wrote. The excesses committed during the unfortunate period are regretted. Let us bury the past in the spirit of magnanimity. Let not the light of the future be dimmed. Later he repeated his regrets at an official banquet in Dhaka⁵⁹. His words received a mixed response, with the Bangladeshi government welcoming them but the country's opposition denouncing his gesture as inadequate.

In sharp contrast to the Awami League government stand, at that time BNP Foreign Minister welcomed Musharraf's statement of regret, and suggested that we would not embarrass a guest by discussing issues like an apology for 1971. It's the spirit of the people of the two countries that will decide that. Moreover, according to a Pakistani daily, Bangladesh offered to sell its Mig-29 fighter planes and sophisticated frigates to Pakistan.

The internal political scene in Bangladesh and its liberation has been marked by extreme volatility, violent changes of government, military coups, and agitation politics by the opposition, both constructive and destructive. Given the peculiar character of Bangladesh's domestic politics and the Awami League's belief that Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence at the behest of Musharraf worked towards ensuring its debacle in the October 2001 elections, the General's visit assumed special significance. Most opposition parties in Bangladesh led by the Awami League, including the left parties vehemently opposed his visit. The Chhatra League, the AL's student outfit, along with prominent members of civil society, declared Musharraf as *persona nongrata* and denounced his visit as being unwarranted. Severe clashes between the police and the student wings were a precursor to a nationwide *bandh* that greeted Musharraf paralyzing large parts of the country already plagued by a dismal economic performance. The student agitation finally ended with the resignation of the Vice Chancellor and the Proctor of Dhaka University.

⁵⁸ Stuart Butler (2008), *Bangladesh*, UK: Lonely Planet publication.

⁵⁹ Pakistan and Bangladesh: from conflict to cooperation www.ipcs.org/.../bangladesh/bangladesh-pakistan-relations-the-dawn-of-a-new-era-826.html

Mushraff's visit had an importance for Indian Government because Mushraff met an Indian militant. This alleged meeting with United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) leader Anup Chetia was facilitated by the then Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. This fact later came in light during the visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in Jan 2010. Pervez Musharraf had a one and a half hour meeting with detained UFLA leader Anup Chetia at his hotel room during a visit when BNP and (Jamaat-i-Islami) was in power,⁶⁰ the minister of Awami League said. In the tenure of BNP, Bangladesh Pakistan relation reached in a maximum height.

Begum Zia herself had visited Pakistan in January 2004 to attend the 12th SAARC summit. Its Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz paid a bilateral visit to Bangladesh in November 2004 and also attended the 13th SAARC summit in Dhaka in November 2005⁶¹. Shaukat Aziz termed this bilateral visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister to Pakistan historic as it took place after long 12 years. Khaleda Zia also met Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf at Aiwan-e-Sadar (president's house) on the concluding day of her three-day visit to Pakistan. Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, and his Bangladeshi counterpart Khaleda Zia, held talks in the Pakistani capital Islamabad on cooperation in defense, security and promotion of trade between their two countries. But this time lot of emphasis was given on economy and trade.

Khaleda Zia's visit to Pakistan from 12-14 February 2006 was high only on symbolism, but deficient in substance. Khaleda Zia's Pakistan visit preceded her visit to India and was the first high-level visit from Bangladesh in 12 years to Pakistan, though President Pervez Musharraf had visited Bangladesh in 2002. Pakistan and Bangladesh signed four MoUs and agreed to finalize the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by 30 September 2006 aimed at enhancing bilateral trade⁶². The MoUs were as following:

- Agricultural research: To enhance cooperation in agricultural science and technology and agricultural production, including livestock and fisheries through joint activities and programmes.

⁶⁰ BNP arranged Musharraf-Chetia meet in Dhaka' accessed from [http/ www.bdnews24.com/details.php?/html on 18 June](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?/html on 18 June)

⁶¹ Sreeradha,Datta, "Khaleda's Pakistan visit Shifts Focus to Economic Synergy" access from [http/ www.idsa.in/ Publications/html on 18 June 2010](http://www.idsa.in/Publications/html on 18 June 2010).

⁶² Pakistan, Bangladesh Sign 4 Memoranda", *Daily Times*, 14 February 2006, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006\02\14\story_14-2-2006_pg7_1

- Tourism: Tours to be conducted in both countries by travel writers, tourism professionals, members of academia, print and electronic media personnel.
- Import-export: To analyze business and trade conditions and to facilitate investment.
- Setting up of a standardized and quality control authority in Pakistan and a standards testing institution in Bangladesh: To strengthen bilateral cooperation in standardization, quality assurance and conformance testing and certification.⁶³

Bangladesh and Pakistan signed some agreements to make defence relations for enhancing its military capability by acquiring tanks, fighter aircraft, submarines, frigates, missile corvettes, patrol craft, maritime patrol aircraft, SAM systems and advanced radars. A meeting was held on 28 August 2006 in Rawalpindi, between the Chief of Naval Staff, Bangladesh Navy, Rear Admiral M Hasan Ali Khan and Senior Federal Minister for Defence, Rao Sikandar Iqbal.⁶⁴ Both sides reviewed existing defence ties between their respective countries and emphasized the need for greater interaction and cooperation between the navies of the two countries. Bangladesh is a major importer of Pakistani arms and ammunition. This visit highlighted Bangladesh Navy's interest in Pakistani shipbuilding, particularly their submarine projects, as Bangladesh intends to acquire four modern submarines.

Bangladesh-Pakistan Trade Relations

Pakistan and Bangladesh have a bright future for promotion of bilateral trade provided the people to people contacts are rapidly increased which creates confidence among them. Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, President, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Bangladesh and leader of eight members Business Mission to Pakistan said this while visiting Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury said Bangladesh is the largest exporter of readymade garments in South Asia, which is exporting its garments of about \$ 5 billion to USA and EU. "We know Pakistan has a great expertise in textile sector, hence we want to have joint ventures to establish our business relationship with brotherly Islamic country," he

⁶³ Ahmed Hassan, "FTA by Sept 30 with Bangladesh: Aziz, Khaleda Hold Talks," *Dawn*, 14 February 2006, <http://www.dawn.com/2006/02/14/top1>.

⁶⁴ Bangladesh Military Forces, 30 August 2006, http://www.bdmilitary.com/main/reports/news/2006/news_2006_08.htm

said. The frequent exchange of trade delegations and individual businessmen to each other country would greatly be instrumental in understanding each other problems and developing personal equation which would ultimately contribute towards strengthening the two-way economic and trade relations.”

During the 8th meeting of Joint Economic Committee (JEC) held in Dhaka on 12-13 September 2005, both countries decided to increase the bilateral trade to US \$1 billion by 2007. It has already increased from about US \$147 million in 2001-2002 to US \$267 million in 2004-2005 to US \$217 million during the eight months (July-Feb) of financial year 2005-2006. In automobile sector Bangladesh could be a good market for Pakistani motorbikes and four stroke auto-rickshaws. Major imports from Bangladesh to Pakistan include tea, jute, medical and pharmaceutical products. There is a duty-free import of Bangladeshi tea by Pakistan. There are also prospects for the development and establishment of direct shipping service between the two countries in order to promote commercial and trade links. Efforts to expand technical cooperation in various fields were identified by Joint Working Group. In 2006, four MoUs were signed on cooperation in areas of agriculture, tourism, promotion of trade, and product standardization and quality assurance were signed during the visit of Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh to Pakistan. There are MoUs signed between Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Livestock and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council. To give a boost to bilateral trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh both countries have decided to finalize a bilateral FTA by September. Bangladesh hopes to reduce trade gap through this agreement. It expects that the bilateral FTA will allow increased access of Bangladeshi goods into Pakistani market. It was discussed at the bilateral talks that a Pakistani delegation led by its commerce minister will visit Bangladesh soon to make a successful FTA deal.

Bilateral trade was an important agenda of the Khaleda Zias visit. According to official statistics, in last fiscal year (2004-2005) Dhaka's imports from Pakistan were worth US\$138 million as against Islamabad's imports of US\$63 million from Bangladesh. During 2003-2004, the imports by Bangladesh were worth US\$112.4 million while exports to Pakistan were only US\$ 45 million. Bangladesh and Pakistan also signed four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on cooperation in agriculture, tourism,

export promotion, and product standardization and quality assurance.⁶⁵ Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sought strategic business partnership with Pakistani entrepreneurs in potential sectors, including textiles, and to help increase bilateral trade to \$ 1 billion by the next year. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the FPCCI and the FBCCI was also signed during the visit to enhance cooperation between the apex trade bodies of the two countries.

In Bangladesh the forces of cultural nationalism and religious nationalism collides with each other. So, distinctive features come as the party rule in domestic policies and foreign relations. There are three factors which are working to shape the nature of politics and nature of society and culture.

First is the state itself. Although BNP is politically dependent upon the Islamic forces, it is not Islamic party per se. Ideologically BNP and AL divided but this is not visible on the surface. The second factor is the tradition of Bengali liberalism, which can tolerate totalitarianism in any form, in this case Islamic ideology, only up to a point. Third factor that may come in the way of pro Islamic forces taking over the rain of power is the element of international dependence that the country has created for itself. In the country where substantive part of the development budget is contingent upon foreign aid; donor can effectively influence the discourse on the role of region in the affair of state.

⁶⁵Sreeradha Datta, "Khaleda's Pakistan visit Shifts Focus to Economic Synergy" access from <http://www.idsa.in/Publications/html> on 18 june 2010.

Conclusion

Islam is the largest religion of Bangladesh which constitutes nearly 88% of the total population. Bangladesh after Indonesia is the second largest Muslim democracy in the world, where the people take pride in following a path of moderation but religion has always been a strong part of identity and this has varied at different times. A survey in late 2003 confirmed that religion is the first choice by a citizen for self-identification; atheism is extremely rare. Islam is the official religion of The People's Republic, as stated in the Constitution of Article 2A (inserted by the Constitution Eighth Amendment Act, 1988).

Islamist politics in Bangladesh have emerged in the wake of three processes: (1) Economic crisis, including the uneven process of development and distribution of advantages between groups and classes; (2) A crisis of political legitimacy, previously a decline in popular support for the religious groups and now for the state; and (3) After nine eleven global changes in Muslim world. In these contexts we can see the Bangladesh foreign policy after 2001.

Since Mujib tenure Bangladesh did not lose any opportunity to express its solidarity with the Arab countries vis-à-vis Israel and upheld the Palestinian cause. In the October 1973 Arab-Israel war Bangladesh strongly supported Arabs. In a symbolic gesture Bangladesh sent tea and a military medical team to Cairo. Mujib personally visited the war Zone within weeks of the ceasefire. These efforts paid fruitfully. Most Arab and Islamic countries excluding Saudi Arabia and Sudan recognized Bangladesh during Mujib time. Even after Arab states negative attitude towards Bangladesh, it consistently avoided any link with Israel. Despite opposition from Pakistan Mujib attended the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit at the Lahore. The Muslim leaders pressurized Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto to recognize Bangladesh. A high OIC Ministerial level delegation, headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, who was also a brother of the Emir, came to Dhaka to escort Bangabandhu to the Summit. This was a major diplomatic gain for Bangladesh, and fully consolidated her position in the Muslim world. Iran, Turkey and Libya recognized Bangladesh after Pakistan.

When Zia assumed the power, his first and most pressing objective was to establish legitimacy for his government. His aim was to balance and offer the alternative to the Awami League and its Pro-India, socialist, secularist, Bengali nationalist philosophy. Zia formulated philosophy which could describe as much less friendly and more suspicious relation with India and good the objective of Bangladesh politico-security diplomacy towards Pakistan was to amplify its sense of security and increase its maneuverability against India. Pakistan responded positively towards Dhaka's overtures of normalization because it wanted to minimize Indian influence over Bangladesh relation with Pakistan.

In Bangladesh there are several factors that compel to Bangladesh for having good relation with Islamic Country. First and Important is religiosity of the masses. In the election of 2001 Jammata-i-Islami Secured seventeen seats in Jatiya Sansad and occupied two Major portfolios in Cabinet. It shows that Islamic Identities in Bangladeshi society has increased. If we observe the long history of Bangladesh, Secular forces and Fundamentalist forces co existed in similar time. Emergence of Indian nationalism had emerged from and the ethos of secularism in very high of Swadeshi Movement and this is fact that serial of communal right had been occurred (Noakhali, Barishal, Calcutta) in the last of Indian freedom movement. Many Muslim leaders like Moulana Bhasani advocated for Separate nation based on two nation theory. Birth of Bangladesh was based on ethos of Secularism but after the assassination of Mujib domestic and foreign policy has been dramatically changed by successive rulers. The religious identities have overtaken to Bengali identities. Identity in Bangladesh is particularly challenging. Bangladesh has the distinction of having undergone two national movements-one in 1947 which created Pakistan and the other in 1971 which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh-in a short span of 25 years. Having been put to mutilation twice has impacted upon the fashioning of identities in a peculiar way-perhaps; it is the confusing situation of the old being dead and the new not yet being born, and, in the interregnum the national space has been occupied by muffled constructions of secularism, socialism and democracy initially only later to be replaced by military dictatorships coupled with a strident Islamic hegemony. In this milieu, it becomes absolutely essential to understand the identities in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi society is being vertically divided between two main political parties the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Secular forces led by Awami

League inclined to maintain good relation with India and right centric party BNP with its components Islamic parties came into power in last election, this coalition has strengthened cordial relation with Islamic countries especially Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In recent time Bangladeshi workers bring not only remittance but also Wahavism from Muslim countries.

In last BNP government ascendancy of conservatism has been increased in society. Even a segments of Muslim namely Ahmaddiya community as well as Hindu and other minorities has been marginalized in this tenure. The Hindu community suffered from a double disadvantage- first, its faith and second, it's supposed AL link. In the aftermath of the election of the 2001 election the amount of vandalism, rape, loot and murder the Hindu communities were increased. The Islamist political parties, the most powerful of which is Jamaat-i-Islami, have used the tension between the Bengali and Islamic dimensions of Bangladeshi identity to further their objectives. The declared objective of the JMB is to capture power through armed revolution to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh.

Since the BNP's ability to maintain a majority depends on the support of the Islamist parties, coalition politics have greatly benefited the Islamists. The Madrassas fill an important function in an impoverished country such as Bangladesh, where basic education is available only to a few. Today, there are an estimated 64,000 Madrassas in Bangladesh, divided into two kinds. Islamism in Bangladesh has not developed in isolation. Oil-rich Middle Eastern countries have funded both public and private Islamist initiatives, effectively exporting their brand of Salafist Islam to Bangladesh. Bangladeshi economist showed that the "fundamentalist sector of the economy" earns annual profits of some \$1.2 billion.

"We did not join the government in power simply to enjoy the share of bread and butter; and ownerships of the cars-houses. Our major aim is Islamic revolution. Should Jamaat ever come to power (on our own); we shall introduce Sharia-law (into the country)." - Chief leader ("ameer") of Jamaat-i-Islami and agriculture minister Mullah Motiur Rahman Nizami, Bangladesh, during a speech in 2003.

The rightist and the centrist parties want to have and act as a pressure group to have close relations with the Islamic countries. Another push factor is the absence of any

Islamic country as a close neighbor unlike other Islamic countries. The consciousness of this isolation has made its unique contribution to Bangladesh's desire for Islamic solidarity. India nearest neighbor of Bangladesh is secular in nature. Although it is true that India has much population of Muslims. Pakistan has great importance for Bangladesh. Despite many up and downs Bangladesh-Pakistan relation become strong after the assassination of Bangbandhu. In last BNP government, many official visited took places for improving relation. In 2002, Pakistani president Pervej Mushraff paid three days visit to Bangladesh. In his three-day visit, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf expressed regrets for the excesses committed by the Pakistani army during the 1971 Liberation war and his call to give a phase of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. His words received a mixed response, with the Bangladeshi government welcoming them but the country's opposition denouncing his gesture as inadequate. With the rise of religious revivalist parties both in India and Bangladesh, the religious factor started affecting the relationship between the two to a greater extent. Anti-Indian feelings of Bangladeshis have been the legacy of the anti-Hindu feelings. This religious difference however has been a source of irritant in the recent past accentuated by the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Godhra communal violence of 2002. The Awami League is unable to remain their secular image to take the benefit in election, party started to speech against India and uses Islamic symbols and gestures in election campaign. Awami League mention "Allah is great" as a slogan in their banners and in her Manifesto she proclaimed that she would have good relation with Islamic countries on the basis of religion.

In recent years, Bangladeshi immigrants into India have increased and the sudden growth of Muslim population in Indian districts bordering Bangladesh is a direct outcome of this trend. Capitalizing on this opportunity, Pakistan has intensified the activities of ISI and contributed to the mushroom growth of Islamist groups in Northeast. Pakistan is exploiting Bangladesh and its territory as an alternative base for continuance of its proxy war against India.

The other factor includes political and economic reasons. Politically the Islamic countries are important for Bangladesh individually and collectively. Islamic countries collectively supported Bangladesh on the water dispute with India when it was raised in the UN General Assembly in 1976 and its candidature to the Security Council in 1978.

Bangladesh has willingness to lead Muslim world therefore in 2004, Bangladesh's candidate has contest for the position of Secretary General at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Prime Minister herself expressed special interest in this election but Bangladesh could not get success. Economic conditions of Bangladesh compel to it having good relation with Islamic countries. On the basis of religion these relations consolidate. The Persian Gulf is a very important region for all the nations of the world because of its oil wealth. Its significance is higher to the poor developing countries. Bangladesh being one of them pursues active diplomacy in this region. Economically the oil rich Arab Islamic countries are very helpful in different ways. They provide economic aid most of which is in the form of grant to Bangladesh. The economic relations of Bangladesh with the rich Islamic countries are the employment of the unskilled, skilled and professional Bangladeshis. The mass exodus of people for overseas employment took place during mid-70s towards West Asian countries. The bulk of the remittances are sent by Bangladeshi migrant workers rather than members of the Bangladeshi Diaspora. Currently, 64 percent of annual remittance inflows originate from Middle Eastern nations. In recent years remittance is annual average growth of 27 percent in 2006- 08 financial years. Middle East is the two most favorite words to thousands of young men in Bangladesh. In fiscal year (FY) 2007-08 around five million Bangladeshis are working abroad. In the same year, the country received \$1.73 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$680.7 million from Kuwait and \$80 million from Bahrain.

Viewing the importance of OIC for its national interest, Bangladesh plays a vital role in OIC for getting economic and financial assistance, aid, oil, foreign exchange remitted and other benefit for its development from concerned institutions of the OIC. Besides its Bangladesh has willingness to get political and diplomatic support of the Islamic solidarity for the achievement of its foreign policy objectives in the international organizations. Now Bangladesh is committed to achieving the target of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for increasing the level of intra-trade among the Islamic Development Bank member countries by 4 percent during 2003-2004. Bangladesh proposed the setting of an advanced Islamic medical training and research centre in Dhaka. The ideological and political connections with the other Muslim countries are natural for Bangladesh like the member of large family. The push and pull factors guide

Bangladeshi foreign policy towards Islamic countries. Dhaka adopts Islamic posture on every opportune occasion. In multi lateral level Bangladesh is playing major role in the group of Developing Eight group (D-8). D-8 is a group of developing nations with huge Muslim populations (about 60%) that have formed as economic development association.

The year 2001 witnessed a shift in Bangladeshi foreign policy due to the shift in global politics and domestic requirements. It was a time when Bangladesh was forced to re-look at its foreign policy and to effect appropriate changes to meet the requirements of the 21st century. This can be observed at different levels. After the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September, 2001 (9/11), the US declared a “war on terror” wherever it existed. The dramatic change in the US foreign policy and increasing global terrorist network impacted directly or indirectly the foreign policy of all countries. Bangladesh has also been categorized as a high risk terrorist state. Bangladesh on its part has been trying hard to project itself as a moderate Muslim majority state. Bangladesh never recognized to Taliban regime in Afghanistan. On one hand Bangladesh supported to America on ‘War on Terror’ but she opposed the policies of America in Iraq, in Palestine and so called relation of terrorism with Islam. The Islamic countries particularly Saudi Arabia influence the decision making process of the government. The Islamic countries indirectly influence the Islamisation process in Bangladesh as an external factor. In international forums and the UN, Bangladesh highlights and takes definite stand on problems of Islamic countries. Bangladesh condemned the US invasion of Iraq specially killings of Iraqi citizens. Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh condemned the attack and said that they were very upset at the continued killing of civilians in Iraq ... that was unfortunate, that was unacceptable. In a press conference Agriculture Minister of Bangladesh Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami said that we condemn and strongly protest the baleful and brutal US-British attack on Iraq, which is an independent Muslim country in the Middle East... [Iraq is] a member state of OIC and sovereign... This aggression is violation and ultra vires of the UN Charter and International Human Rights. Thousands more demonstrated in Bangladesh, where there were calls for a boycott of American goods.

Since Mujib Period Bangladesh has clear stand on Israel-Palestine issue. Dhaka considers Israel as an 'enemy state' since 1971 and the tradition is continued by al

subsequent governments in the country. Bangladesh is the only Muslim majority nation to have a complete ban on Israel even though this is a direct violation under the WTO protocols. The later similar attitude is adopted by other Muslim countries. Bangladeshi people have emotional stand beside their Palestinian brothers and Government tried to made diplomatic approaches to the USA, the UK and China for immediate halt to the “barbaric” attacks on the people in Gaza. Prime minister asked about the role of OIC in resolving the humanitarian crisis in the valley and emphasized to Muslim unity as she said “We need more unity between the Arabs and Muslim countries.”

In Short, In Bangladesh both major parties have similar attitude in having relation with western countries and USA due to economic region, these countries also look at the impoverished South Asian Muslim country, with its population of 127 million, as one big potential market for its products and for large investment. So Bangladesh as certified as Moderate Muslim countries can play a bridge between Western Countries and Islamic World. Present Awami League governmt can do this job better.

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