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FACTIONALISM IN BANGLADESH POLITICS : A TREND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Factionalism is one of the dominant aspects of Bangladesh's political life. The number of political parties in Bangladesh is now about 116.¹ The mushroom growth of political parties itself is the manifestation of the unprecedented degree of factionalism. Today there is hardly any political party in Bangladesh which has not been affected by feuds and factionalism.² While Bangladesh is not the unique example of faction-ridden politics, the nature and sources of factionalism needs to be understood in her own context. In the developed countries, as parties are well organised and a consensus on value system always prevails, factional disputes are usually settled within the party. The party systems of U.K. and U.S.A. are best examples. Even in the socialist countries, where the production relations are socialistic and there is the principle of 'democratic centralism' within the party-structure, factionalism does occur but the party has its own mechanism to minimise its impacts. On the other hand, in Bangladesh "faction management" is rather unusual. Here, factional disputes more often than not lead to party splits and the establishment

1. *The Weekly Bichitra*, Dhaka, January 10, 1986.

2. See, Ataur Rahman, "Bangladesh in 1983 : A Turning Point for the Military," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXIV. No. 2, February, 1984, p. 241

of separate parties. The result is that most of the groups calling themselves political parties are not well-knit and organized upto the grass-root level.³ The country thus lags far behind in stable party-system. Moreover, intense factionalism and party-splits are not only contributing to organizational weakness and a very low level of institutionalization in Bangladesh, but also in institutional fragmentation.⁴ Thus understanding the pattern of factionalism is vital for critical appraisal of the political process and political development in the country. Why is politics in Bangladesh so factious? What are the trends and nature of factionalism in Bangladesh politics? How does factionalism impede the growth of healthy politics in the country? What are the factors that account for the intense factionalism in Bangladesh politics? These are some of the questions that would be sought to be answered in the present paper. For the convenience of analysis, an attempt is first made to review the concept of factionalism. The next section traces briefly the major trends of factionalism in Bangladesh politics with some analysis. Finally, the paper presents a brief account of the underlying factors of factionalism in Bangladesh politics.

I

A faction is a temporary alignment of individuals constituting a fragment of a larger unity, group or organization. A group or organization becomes factious when its members become polarized on different viewpoints and they remain so for a longer period. Unlike the organization, a faction usually does not have a formally structured hierarchy and set of rules; these are often

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3. Peter J. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s: Praetorian Politics In An Intermediate Regime", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXII, No. 10 October, 1982, p. 992.
 4. Emajuddin Ahamed, "The Crisis of Democracy in Bangladesh", *The Bangladesh Today*, Vol. 2, Issue 16, 1-15 March, 1985.

fuzzy and tacit in the faction, although they may become formalized over time. But at the time of their formalization, the faction transforms into division.

Theoretically, factions can be studied from different perspectives. Social anthropologists study the factions basing it on caste, clan and tribe, while political scientists study factions as a part of the process of power game in a political organization. Harold D, Lasswell defines a faction as any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies.⁵ Jones defines faction as a collection of individuals within an organization or institution who operate together in politics long enough, or with sufficient regularity to become recognised as a discrete group.⁶ Myron Weiner also defines faction in the same fashion as a group with an articulated set of goals, operating within a larger organization, but not created by or with the approval of the parent body.⁷

From the analysis of above definitions two main features can be identified. Firstly, a distinctive type of small group is the faction. The factions are sub-groups of a group or groups in large organization. Two political parties are not factions whereas two groups in a political party are factions. Secondly, a faction is less structured than an organization, but more uniform and cohesive than the original group and thus has more unity of interests and action and a pervasive influence in group affairs.

From behavioral perspective, it has been argued that four factors affect the emergence of factions. First, when members in the decision making group conform (for one reason or another) to a

5. H.D. Lasswell, "Factions" in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Tavistock Publications, U.K 1964, pp. 255.

6. Rodney W, Jones, *Urban Politics in India: Area, power and Policy in a Penetrated System*, University of California Press, Berkely, 1974, p, 71

7. Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System*, Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 237,

shared set of basic beliefs and values, they create a common frame of reference for viewing and interpreting information inputs and appropriate responses to them. Second, one or more of this emerging faction's member must provide strong leadership which binds together differing personal interests by providing pay-offs, such as material resources, power, prestige, positions and so on, to all faction members. Third, there must be continuity in membership and interaction, which contributes to cohesion in the relationship between the members and the core leadership on the one hand, and among the members themselves, on the other. Finally, members' perceptions of a real or imagined threat to their position or power must be met successfully by recourse to collective power and resources of the faction and its leader. This conviction provides a sense of security to the members and thus enhances loyalty to the faction.⁸

II

Since factionalism in Bangladesh politics is not a phenomenon that came into being after the independence of 1971, in order to properly identify trends of factionalism in this country it is imperative to start from a discussion of the phenomenon at the pre-liberation period. The discussion in this section will be divided into two parts : pre-liberation and post-liberation period. The objective of such division is to identify whether any new factors were added to the factional trends of the political parties after Bangladesh emerged as an independent state and if so, what qualitative change they brought about.

Pre-liberation Phenomenon

The issues and conflicts that gave birth to various factions amongst the political parties of the then East Pakistan and later contributed

8. Yaacov Vertzberger, "Bureaucratic-Organizational Politics and Information Processing in a Developing State", *Strategic Digest*, Vol. XV, No. 3 March 1985.

to repeated splits were mainly ideological conflicts, Sino-Soviet rivalry during the sixties, debates on mode of production, working methods and strategies, evaluation of the past, mutual distrusts and personality clashes among the leaders. It may be mentioned that though factional feuds and splits occurred irrespective of leftist and rightist parties, the leftist parties underwent these crises at a higher degree.

Glowing instance of factionalism and splits caused by ideological conflicts was the Awami league. Though ideological conflict was not prominent during the birth of Awami Muslim league (later the word 'muslim' was dropped in 1953) in 1949, the left-right issue began to take root among the party leaders within a very short time. It happened when the members of the East Pakistan Communist Party (EPCP) joined the Awami Muslim League in large numbers in 1952, and slowly worked to win over Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (the President of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League

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and a populist peasant leader) to their side by incorporating more and more leftist planks into Awami League programmes.⁹ In May 1954, when the Pakistan government signed the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the United States, and later joined American-sponsored defence pacts (SEATO and the Baghdad Pact), Maulana Bhashani and the leftist members of Awami League became the most vocal opponent of these arrangements. During late 1954, they were able to get official resolution passed by the executive committee of the East Pakistan Awami League (EPAL) condemning the defence assistance agreement and the defense pacts.

9. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh*, Bangladesh Books International, Dhaka, 1975. p. 9

But the leftists in the AL became dissatisfied when the AL-led coalition formed the government in East Pakistan as well as at the centre in 1956. It happened because, soon after his elevation to the post of Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.S. Suhrawardy (the national convenor of the Awami league) began to defend vigorously Pakistan's alliances with the United States, and to oppose the granting of "full autonomy" to East Pakistan. Goaded by the leftists, Maulana Bhashani took the issue to the East Pakistan Awami League council. But when the council approved Suhrawardy's pro-western foreign policy by a vote of 800-60, Maulana Bhashani together with nine leftist members of the Executive Committee resigned from the Awami League and called a convention of all the "anti-imperialist democratic forces" in Pakistan in September 1957.¹⁰ In that convention, a national "anti-imperialist front"- the National Awami Party (NAP) was formed. Maulana Bhashani was made the President of both the national and East Pakistan units of the new party. During the course of the next decade some of the top leaders of the East Pakistan Communist Party (EPCP) become members of the Executive committee of the East Pakistan National Awami Party (EPNAP) and EPNAP became the exclusive popular front for the EPCP.

The ideological confusion stemming from the schism in the international communist movement in the sixties was another issue which led to the rise of conflicts inside the leftist parties of the then East Pakistan. These conflicts came to the lime light in 1963-64, when two members of the central committee of the EPCP presented a thesis on the "Two Principles of the Communist Movement". In that thesis they argued that the four major decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party were wrong. The thesis also contended that the decisions of the 12-party congress in 1957 and the 81-party congress in 1960 (both of which were based

10. Rumman Ahmed, "The Problem of 'Revisionism' in the Development of Communist Movement in East Bengal 1949-1971" *Asian Affairs* Vol. I, No. I, Jan-Jun 198, p. 122.

on the thesis of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU) were also unacceptable to true Marxists.¹¹ At the same conference, nine other members of central committee of the EPCP presented a 70-page counter-thesis, justifying the decisions of the CPSU in the context of present realities in the world, while charging that the other two members were echoing the "non-creative" line adopted recently by the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Following the Chinese formula of 1963, on the internal struggle of each communist Party ('unity-struggle or even split - a new unity on a new basis'), the pro-Chinese CP leaders in 1963-1964 were attempting to split the EPCP by forming a separate group of pro-Chinese cadres and sympathisers.¹² This conflict between pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese communists, was soon reflected in the deliberations of communist front organizations also. The pro-Chinese communists finally left the EPCP and formed the East Pakistan Communists Party (Marxist and Leninist) (EPCP-ML) in 1966, while the student front of the leftists-East Pakistan Students Union (EPSU) soon split into two separate organizations and EPNAP thereafter broke into two separate parties-EPNAP (pro-Moscow) and EPNAP (pro-Peking). It is worth mentioning in this context that the pro-Peking and the pro-Moscow factions differed with each other not only on the occasion of the schism of international communist movement but also on their own varying analyses of the then Pakistan political situation and the tactical lines which they wanted to use for bringing about socialism in Pakistan.

After the split of mid-sixties, while pro-Moscow group upheld the theory that with the international influence of the socialist countries and through the possibility of the growth of a national democratic system, socialism could be achieved peacefully through the parliamentary road in East Bengal, the pro-Peking leftists advocated

11. T. Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.* p. 12

12. *ibid.* p. 13

armed revolution for bringing about a people's democracy in a sovereign and independent East Bengal. But within a very short time the pro-Peking group went again on a series of factions and divisions. This interminable factionalism amongst the pro-Peking leftists revolved around varying analyses of the mode of production, existing class relations or the nature of state power in Pakistan, identification of main enemies, priority of issues and the objective revolutionary

Doctrinal disputes were seriously aggravated by mutual distrust and Personality cults among the party hierarchy which in large measure accounted for factionalism.

tactics and strategies. Prior to liberation war, these doctrinal disputes coupled with other factors such as, mutual distrust and personality cults among the party hierarchy led the pro-Peking leftists split into the following groups: (1) the East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (EPCP-ML) : (2) the East Bengal Communist Party (EBCP) (3) the Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (CCCR) (4) the East Bengal Workers Movement (EBWM) and (5) the Mythi group.

An analyst has rightly pointed out that "the idealistic youngmen who joined the leftist movement took Marxism as a religious faith. As it happens with interpreters of religion, differing interpretations of Marxism, often on the finest distinctions or minutest detail led to mutual accusations of heresy and fragmentation by splits."¹³ Moreover, the very fact that many communists had to work underground and that some of them were occasionally ferreted out by government security forces, led to an attitude of suspicion among them and further exacerbated factionalism.¹⁴

13. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*, Bangladesh Books International, 1980, p. 48.

14. *ibid*

In the late sixties, a great mass upsurge which seemed to be a mass revolution occurred in East Bengal and the Ayub regime collapsed. The Awami League, the party of the rising bourgeoisie of East Bengal took the leadership of movement. Their six-point programme evoked tremendous enthusiasm among the people of this region. On the other hand, the inability of the leftists to mobilise support among workers and peasants caused their prospect of capturing political power to fade. So they started to think that theoretical inadequacies were responsible for their failure. Thus arose the doctrinal controversies which further fragmented the leftist movement.¹⁵

The radical left parties of East Bengal again faced factions and splits on the question of participation in the liberation war of 1971. In fact, the pro-Peking leftists became totally confused and disillusioned with the support given by the Chinese government to the Yahia Regime. The two largest pro-Peking groups, EPCP-ML and EBCP were divided in their analyses of the character of the Bangladesh liberation struggle and identification of the main enemy. Though several groups of pro-Chinese communists fled to India and formed the Bangladesh Mukti Sangram Somonnoy Committee (the coordination committee of the Bangladesh liberation struggle), one faction of EPCP-ML led by Abul Huq put forward the thesis that the Indo-Soviet treaty of August 1971 had qualitatively changed the character of the Bangladesh struggle, making Bangladesh a direct colony of "social imperialists". Huq also viewed that Bangladesh revolutionaries should support China and prevent the Indian Government ("the agent of social imperialist) from conquering East Pakistan.¹⁶ Another faction of the EPCP-ML led by Mohammad Toha argued that the original plan of creating an independent, sovereign people's democratic republic of East Bengal by liquidating class enemies and defeating the Mukti Bahini and Pakistan forces simultaneously would have to

15. *ibid*,

16. *ibid*, p. 45

be continued.¹⁷ Like the above faction of EPCP (ML), the Matin-Alauddin faction of EBCP also adopted the line of simultaneous killing of two-class enemies, the Mukti Bahini and the Pakistan army.¹⁸ They separated themselves from the other leaders of the EBCP and formed a new party, calling it the East Bengal communist Party Marxist-Leninist (EBCP-ML). It is, however, fact that the pro-Moscow groups almost as a whole went to india and joined actively in the liberation war.

In short, during the pre-liberation period of Bangladesh, almost all the political parties experienced factionalism on many occasions and all the factions culminated in subsequent party splits. Among factors which caused the factionalism, doctrinal disputes got the priority. Except AL, all the parties were politically ineffective because of doctrinal disputes amongst themselves which retarded the growth of their organisation and because of their failure to take a correct stand on the issue of Bengali nationalist movement.

Post-liberation Phenomenon

Creation of factions and splits within the parties after liberation continued in the same style as it appeared in the pre-liberation period. Ideological infights inside the parties resulting in splits as well as debates on mode of production, existing class relations, differences of opinion concerning the tactics and strategies, personal animosities and agrandisements, aspirations for positions and frustration in the party hierachy continued as well. Besides, factions and splits within the pro-Chinese communist parties continued due to their varying analyses concerning the Bangladesh political secne. Moreover, the 'dalchut' (frequent change in party affiliation) trend is also worth mentioning since it has contributed to a qualitative change in post-liberation period of Bangladesh.

17. *ibid.*

18. *ibid* p. 146

After independence, first incident of ideological infights took place within the Awami League. It should be mentioned here that since the early 1960s, some members of the AL student wing—the Student League (SL)—had been arguing for an independent socialist Bangladesh and for armed rebellion against West Pakistan. Just after a few months of liberation, some member of that group of SL led by A. S.M. Abdur Rab and Shajahan Siraj raised the slogan of “scientific socialism” and began to criticise the AL’s policies. They formed a separate group of SL. But the other group of the SL which was led by Nur-E-Alam Siddiqui, advocated for Mujibbad (Mujibism).¹⁹ Although both the groups at first seemed to be loyal to Sheikh Mujib and he (Mujib) tried to reconcile them, yet in the end he chose to support the Siddiqui group of SL. This split was soon followed by another split in the AL affiliated *Mukti Joddah Sangsad* (Association of freedom fighters) and labour front, the Sramik League. In October 1972 the dissident group formed a new party called Jatio Samajtantrik Dal (JSD). The JSD theoreticians highlighted the contradiction between the ruling elite—AL and other agents of imperialism and the proletariat, and saw parliamentary politics as a means of perpetuating the rule of exploiting classes.²⁰

Even after its split on the issue of “scientific socialism”, the AL could not become free from ideological factions. In the parliamentary party of the AL, Tajuddin Ahmed led a group that opposed accepting aid from the “imperialist nations”, particularly U.S.A., and took a generally pro-Indian and pro-Soviet stance. The Tajuddin group believed that the policy of mixed economy should be abandoned in favour of a pure socialist one. But there was another parliamentary group within AL. It was led by Syed Nazrul Islam and

19. The term “Mujibbad” was used by the young Awami Leagers for the four principles of nationalism, democracy socialism and Secularism. which Mujib claimed to be his ideals, For detail See, Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*, UPL, 1980, p. 70.

20. U.A.B. Razia Akter Banu, “The Fall of the Sheikh Mujib Regime: An Analysis”, *The Indian Political Science Review*, Vol. XV, No. 1, p. 13.

Khandokar Mostaque Ahmed. The Nazrul-Mostaque group was less anti-American and was willing to accept foreign aid as well as to continue the mixed economy.²¹ In 1974, though Mujib forced Tajuddin to resign, making him a scapegoat for the economic crisis, in January 1975, Mujib turned to pro-Moscow axis through his introduction of one party system, BAKSAL. It is also reported that one section of the rightist Awami Leaguers had collaborated with the international linkage and with disgruntled officers of Bangladesh army to bring about the August coup of 1975.²²

During the period of 1972-75, in addition to the ideological cleavages there were also acute factional strifes within the party for power and patronage. These strifes were extended to all the constituent organizations of the party, such as the student, youth and labour front. These factional strifes found expression in mutual recriminations, dismissals or resignations from the government and the party, and even intra-party killings. Most of these intra-party factional fights were contained either by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's personal intervention or by the accommodation of factional leaders in power positions.²³ It is, however, fact that though due to Mujib's charisma all the factions within AL remained together the party lost its effectiveness as an organization to implement government programme or mobilize public support."²⁴

After the political changes of 1975, AL went under several splits. Most of these were for ideological causes though other factors such as struggle for key position in the party hierarchy, personality cults and tactical considerations were also involved. In 1976, when the military government of Ziaur Rahman promulgated the Political

21. T. Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath* p. 178.

22. Lawrence Lifschultz, "The Intrigue Behind the Army Coup which Toppled Sheikh Mujib", *The Guardian*, Aug 15, 1979.

23. Rounaq Jahan, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

24. Abul Fazal Huq, "Bangladesh ; Constitution, Politics and Bureaucracy" *The Rajshahi University Studies*, (Part A) XI; 1980-83, p. 218.

Parties Regulation (PPR) Act. Khandaker Mostaque formed Democratic League and General M.A.G. Osmani (a member of Mujib cabinet who resigned from the parliament after the fourth Amendment of the constitution) formed Janata Party. On the other hand, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Mohiuddin Ahmed and others revived the Awami League. After the revival of AL, there was again continuous fight amongst the party leaders. On the issue of BAKSAL ideology the party was divided on two occasions; once in 1978, under the leadership of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and second in 1983, under the leadership of Razzak and Mohiuddin.

Just after the liberation of Bangladesh the Marxist-Leninist groups faced an ideological as well as a strategic ambiguity. All of them were agreed that the war of independence left the revolution unfinished. But they differed with one another seriously in considering the next step. Some believed that the next step would have to be a class war,

Lack of ideological Commitment, inadequate socialization process, love for power and crave for patronage and privilege are among factors that account for frequent change in party affiliation.

while others thought that even the nationalist phase was not complete. As the leftists are always habituated with their doctrinal disputes, they began to interpret the situation from varying angles. Moreover, the failure to capture the leadership of the Bangladesh revolution (which according to their own theories, should have been in their hands) created among the senior leftists a sense of lack of political efficiency and involved them again in doctrinal disputes rather than in organizational work.²⁵

At present more than two dozens leftist parties are working in Bangladesh. Some of them are open mass party and some are underground. Fragmented as they are, they still remain factionalised as they

25. T. Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.*

were in the pre-liberation East Bengal. Identification of the principal contradiction of Bangladesh society, isolation of the main enemy and selection of the potential allies, development of proper strategy of action—these are some of the doctrinal issues on which the various Marxist-Leninist parties are now differing, shifting and splitting. (The splits and reorganizations of some of the political parties are shown in charts 1 & 2).

The most recent trend in the factional politics of Bangladesh is that a section of political leaders are showing a growing tendency to change their party affiliation very frequently and joining the government party (the party in power). Such is the situation that very often the same man happens to be a member (even a minister) of several regimes. In doing so, they on the one hand, create factions and splits in the parties they belonged to and on the other, cause factions within the government party. Most of the factions and splits amongst the various political parties that occurred during the last few years in Bangladesh are the result of this trend. Several factors may be accounted for this: lack of ideological commitment, inadequate socialization process, "love for power" and "love for office" and crave for patronage and privilege under the umbrella of particular regime. All evidences suggest that factionalism in Bangladesh politics continues to be in the track of intensification.

III

What makes politics in Bangladesh so factional? The trend of factional politics in Bangladesh, as discussed earlier do not suggest that any particular variable is involved in factionalism and party fragmentation. For the sake of analysis, one may however look at factionalism from two perspectives; first from the macro-perspective of overall sociopolitical process of the country and other, from the micro-perspective of political organization, recruitment, political education and socioeconomic background of the party members etc.

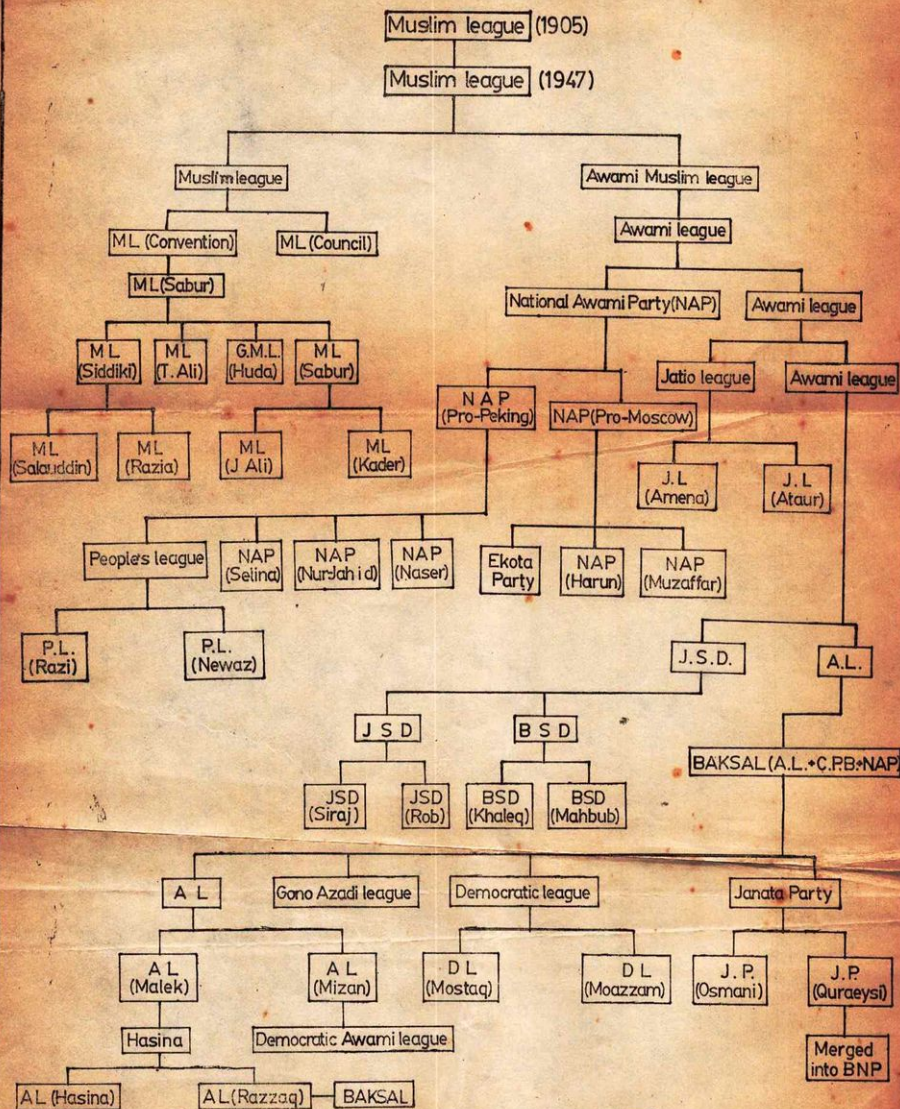
From the overall socio-political perspectives several scholars have viewed that since the political history and traditions of this country is uncongenial to the growth and development of cohesive political parties, factionalism has easily expanded its roots into the deep. An analyst has mentioned that in Bangladesh, political parties have never been the decisive instrument for framing public policy or for projecting its alternatives except for short interludes. Moreover, the political parties have had fewer opportunities for functioning openly since competitive politics has often been restricted. Some of the parties now functioning in Bangladesh originated during the British period and most of them had their origins during the Pakistan period. The main thrust of party activities were thus directed against the common foe—the colonial powers—rather than for a positive phenomenon.²⁶ Another analyst has mentioned that “the centuries-old fight against alien rulers has fostered an oppositional mentality among the people of this country and even with independence, most of them have not yet been able to shed that mentality.”²⁷ The result is that Bangladesh political culture has borrowed a trend of treating each other with suspicion and jealousy than with broad-based mutual trust. In Bangladesh, factionalism thus runs amuck not only in politics, social and voluntary organizations are also facing the same problem. In fact, it has developed as an ingredient of the ‘parochial political culture’ of Bangladesh.²⁸

From the micro-perspective of the political parties, several factors may be taken into consideration. These are: party ideology, leadership, organizational structure, working method, its internal atmosphere, recruitment, political socialization process and the socio-economic

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26. Emajuddin Ahamed”, “National Community and Political Institutions : A Research Note”, paper presented in a Seminar on “*Nation Building in Bangladesh : Retrospect and Prospect*”, October 13-14, 1985, BISS, Dhaka.
 27. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Group Interests and Political Changes, Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi 1982,
 28. Emajuddin Ahamed, *op. cit.*

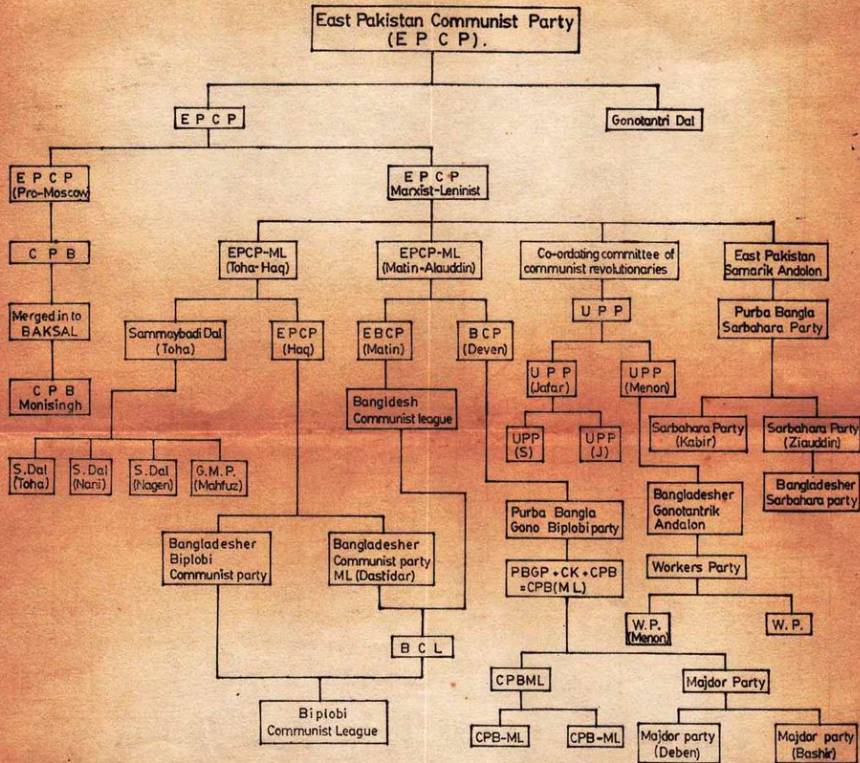
Splits in the Muslim league & Awami league

Chart-1



Splits in the Communist Party

Chart-II



background of the party members. Since some of these issues have been discussed earlier, here we will just highlight the lack of sound internal atmosphere of the political parties of Bangladesh. It is a fact that though apparently all the parties in Bangladesh are vocal for the cause of democracy, still, the underlying fact is that in most of them, no democratic atmosphere prevails. Lack of suitable arrangement for the selection of leadership and decision-making is also common to all those parties. Consequently, once in the leadership, leaders desire to enjoy their position for life terms. On the other

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hand, those aspiring for the lucrative positions tend to come to the forefront. That is why in each annual council these parties experience either splits or creation of several new factions. In many cases the frustrated members who do not get expected position in the party hierarchy, leave the party and join any other party or form a new one along with their followers. Lack of adequate socialization also aggravates the situation and contributes to the increase of factionalism.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that factionalism in Bangladesh politics to day has taken a garve shape. There seems to be an agreement among analysts that this extreme and widely prevalent nature of factionalism has proved dysfunctional to all of her development efforts, though in the context of enormous social, economic and political problems of Bangladesh healthy growth of political institutions is one of the vital pre-requisites to the success of these efforts. It is, however, fact that some sort of factionalism is common to all

organizations. Moreover, in a developing society like ours factionalism may exist as a transitional phenomenon also. But the crucial concern is its degree. Analysing the case of India where factionalism is also a reality in politics (though in a different form), Myron Weiner has suggested that three factors may keep a political party free from intense factional conflict and split.²⁹ One is, the unique role of the party leader as a unifier. Weiner views that the leader has three key functions. He is, first, the compromiser of factional disputes. Second he is a source of prestige to the members of the party. And, third he is an absolute source for the articulation of values held by the group and he may articulate a new set of values. A second unifying factor, as Weiner has suggested, is the level of tolerance. Where the level of tolerance is high, a split is not likely in a party, but when tolerance is low, a split is likely. The third unifying factor is the consensus on the basic party thesis. If any of these three links is broken, a split in the party is likely to occur. These are no doubt pragmatic views and appear to be relevant also in the context of Bangladesh. But Weiner has stressed only on the micro-perspectives, while the macro-perspectives are equally relevant for the case of Bangladesh. The reality of Bangladesh suggests that along with the micro-factors of the political parties, consensus on the fundamental state principles, continuity of open political activities, election at regular intervals and above all a continued political process based on competitive party-system are required for facing the challenge of intense factionalism in the politics of Bangladesh.

29. Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India : The Development of a Multi-Party System*, Princeton University Press, 1957, pp. 241-246.