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CHALLENGES OF GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH

Governance is a relatively new term in political science literature that may be used gainfully to comprehend the nature of state authority and control. The concept of governance subsumes under its rubric a nation's system of rule, role and effectiveness of political authority, level of political institutionalization, efficacy of administrative and legal order, quality of political leadership and accountability of the government. In essence, governance implies the ability of a political system, its effectiveness, performances and quality. Democracy is a mode of governance that includes some form of widespread participation of the people who are governed. Democratic ethos, therefore, stresses voting in free elections that serves a variety of functions - from the choice of governors and the exercise of influence over public policies to the expression of dissent and repudiation of those persons and policies which electoral majorities no longer support.

Since politics is actually about who gets what, when and how, voting is, therefore, not an adequate means of exercising effective power.¹ A wide variety of institutional arrangements are evolved to ensure people's leverage over the distribution and exercise of political power.² But if the laws that are not enforced, policies that are not implemented, and structured inequality

1. A.T. Mason, (ed.) *Free Government in the Making* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1965).

2. Verba, S and J. Kim, *The Modes of Democratic Participation*, Sage, 1971.

persists in economic and social order of a polity, democracy often becomes phoney. Therefore, the most difficult problem that democracy faces is the use of government - its institutions, policies and officials who allocate 'valued things' to individuals and groups that make up the polity. Governance, thus, forms the core of a democratic order. An attempt is made in this paper to use governance in such perspective in order to analyse Bangladesh's current democratic politics and development dynamics.

Background

Twenty two years ago when Bangladesh was born out of a bitter and bloody struggle of independence, there were three overriding goals : (i) to fulfill democratic aspirations of the people through a participatory system of government which had not been possible in united Pakistan; (ii) to evolve an economic structure that could not only promote growth but also remove exploitation and injustice from the society; and (iii) to establish a national identity based on history, language and cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the past two decades of Bangladesh gives a predominant impression of an era of missed opportunities and misdirected efforts. Despite many sacrifices that accompanied Bangladesh's birth, and unique homogeneity of the nation - 95 percent being from the same ethno-linguistic stock, and more than 85 percent sharing a common religion - these could not be used effectively for nation-building purposes.

Rather, Bangladesh in its brief history experienced extreme volatility in politics, violent changes of government, military coups and urban mass upsurge. Bangladesh's dismal economic record in the past decades has put her almost at the bottom of Asian developing countries. On the other hand, the country's aid dependence has become overwhelming - the international donors financing the major part of the development budget. The trade performance is still poor and underlies the vulnerability of the country to external economic forces. Bangladesh's longing for an exploitation-free society and a self-reliant economy remains a distant dream. Today, more than 60 percent people are living below the poverty line, 67 percent people

are unemployed or under-employed, and 70 percent people are illiterate in Bangladesh. While the country is still trying to achieve a respectable economic growth, social justice has become a far cry. There is hardly any firm policy for poverty alleviation. The recent slogan of 'dal-bhat' is appropriate but still remains largely in the realm of political rhetoric, and yet to be matched by concomitant allocation of resources and effective programmes.

The people of Bangladesh, nevertheless, shows a remarkable resilience in the face of adversities, often live on hopes. No wonder that a successful transition to a democratic government on the threshold of the third decade of the nation's existence in 1991, rekindled new hopes and expectations among the people. Simultaneously, the emergence of a new cooperative global order opened up windows of opportunities for Bangladesh. Two and half years of democratic government headed by Khaleda Zia have already elapsed, and at this juncture much depends on the ability of the government to sustain a democratic process and to give economic development a new momentum. The great imponderables are - where will the challenges come from, and whether the present government will be able to come to terms with such challenges.

Challenges of Governance

The crucial challenge that confronts the democratic government in Bangladesh is : how to govern a turbulent polity and at the same time keep a non-coercive political order. A contradictory tradition of rule, serious erosion in institutional capacity of the state, low-level political institutionalization and unhealthy modes of political competition are the main factors that contribute to this challenge.

The nation inherited a dual tradition of governance - extreme populism on the one hand and authoritarianism or personal rule on the other. The country started with a populist government at its birth headed by the charismatic leader - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Three years could hardly elapse, and he had to resort to authoritarian rule to deal with growing

political opposition and economic crisis. The subsequent rule could be categorized into three modes of governance : (i) direct military rule or martial law regime; (ii) multi-party democracy with strong executive; and (iii) authoritarian rule with a democratic facade. The country had been under direct military rule for more than seven years. This period witnessed strong institution-destroying proclivities of the ruling elites to consolidate power. The military rule could not produce a record of good governance - its promise of order and discipline in the society and initiation of some basic reforms remained unfulfilled. On the other hand, transition from military rule to civilian regime led to many distortions in the political process of the country.

Both multi-party system of Ziaur Rahman and authoritarian rule of H.M. Ershad produced strong executives, 'rubber stamp' parliaments, subservient bureaucracy, weak judiciary and ruptured political institutions. The authoritarian regime of General Ershad, particularly witnessed a serious erosion in norms and values of major institutions of government. The bureaucracy, for example, was trampled, interfered and used for regime interests. Its professionalism, morale and service were considerably eroded. The police and paramilitary forces were used to maintain political control of the regime. The judiciary was rendered ineffective and its independence was infringed. The parliament had acted as a legitimizing facade without real power.

The dual tradition of governance also produced a major distortion in political participation. While democracy has been the most favorite political ideology to Bangladeshi people, authoritarianism and military rule negated the realization of that idea. On the other hand, desperate efforts to replace military-authoritarian regimes led to organized and wide spread agitations, strikes, violence and hartals. The paradox of such political evolution led to a dominant perception among Bangladeshi politicians and political parties that agitations, strikes and hartals have become the main instruments for change of government. Our politicians, therefore, could hardly see or spell out democratic governance in positive terms linked to effective public order

and authority. Democracy has often been presented to the mass of people as an abstract ideal - a struggle to change or overthrow a government. As a result, the present government is also faced with enormous difficulties to restore order and discipline, and revitalize the institutions of participation.

Despite such difficulties, the present democratic government has made some notable success in this crucial aspect of governance. It has been able to reinvigorate the bureaucracy which has now come to the center-stage in the conduct of government. The law-enforcing agencies have regained their confidence in maintaining neutrality in the implementation of laws. The independent character of judiciary has been upheld, and a bill is underway to ensure its full independence. The parliament which forms the core of good governance is gradually regaining its image and status. The value and importance of the parliament are increasingly being recognized not only through the discussions and debates that are held in it, but also because of the formations of various parliamentary committees and sub-committees which are overseeing the affairs of the various ministries in order to make the government more responsive and accountable. The government has also succeeded in containing political opposition without resorting to explicit coercive methods. The Anti-Terrorism Act which initially created some alarm among the opposition parties, seems to be acting more as a deterrent to violence than to muzzle the opposition.

The one sensitive area where the government seems to be wavering and facing dilemma is in the restoration of order and discipline in the universities and colleges. Over the past decade, the students had become the predominant and easy recruits to political activism in Bangladesh. Most of the political parties also resorted to the convenient route of political mobilization - politicizing and activating university and college students. They made less conscious efforts to raise, train or socialize workers from grass root levels. The universities and colleges in Bangladesh have, therefore, become hotbeds of political agitation, opposition and instability. While students have their political muscle felt in politically competitive settings of many countries, they seem to have growing preponderance in

Bangladesh politics - not as one cohesive group but as adjuncts to different political parties. There is, therefore, a growing concern whether the political parties including the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party will be able to keep their student fronts under control - or these will continue to be a major source of instability for effective governance.

Another important challenge to democratic governance in Bangladesh comes from the mode of political competition. Successful democracies in Asia and Africa show that political elites and inter-elite competition play a crucial role in making the democratic system work. In fact, the characteristics of elite political culture provide the basis for understanding political stability and change in a society. Therefore, the attitudes of political elites towards the institution of government and rules of the game, their evaluation of basic policy outputs of the political system, and their interactions towards other persons and groups often determine how the political process will unfold, and whether peaceful coexistence of political opponents will occur.

In Bangladesh, elite competition in political arena is not only fierce, the attitudes of the competitors are not also very congenial for sustaining a democratic environment. Politics is often viewed as an all-or-nothing game, and the competition is fought in a zero-sum game format. There is hardly any perception of sharing or accommodation in the process. Opponents are often labeled as hostile, dogmatic and dangerous. Without vigorous socialization, unclogging channels of access and accommodation of counter-elites, it would be extremely difficult to get rid of this mode of interaction and establish consensus and stability in the political system. While Bangladesh is fortunate to enjoy considerable homogeneity as a nation, its political elites often espouse seemingly irreconcilable beliefs, symbols and values - creating stress and instability. There is, therefore, a fear that opposition forces in Bangladesh may increasingly become dysfunctional and violent, and the party in power intolerant and repressive - resulting in a 'crisis of governance'.³

3. Atul Kohl, *Democracy and Discontent: The Crisis of Governance in India*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Character of Political Parties

A major hindrance for consolidation of democratic governance in Bangladesh comes from the distorted growth and low-level development of political parties. While there exists a large number of parties, very few could really develop clear and cohesive socio-economic programs, stable membership, organizational discipline and democratic practice. Most political parties emerged from above as vehicles for gaining, sharing or maintaining power. Most of them also resorted to easy route of political mobilization - politicizing and activating students, urban workers, public sector employees, unionized teachers and city slum-dwellers. One major consequence is that parties are able to mobilize persons for strikes, demonstrations, and other politically volatile and disrupting activities. The parties, therefore, developed less interest in conscious mobilization and political socialization of workers from grassroots levels.

The past one and half decade of strong executive rule and authoritarian regime also witnessed relentless assaults unleashed against political parties to factionalize, weaken or hinder their growth. Factionalism directly affected the party system in Bangladesh in major aspects of setting and achieving politically determined goals. In fact, today's Bangladesh Nationalist Party was also founded by Late President Ziaur Rahman with a new nationalist ideology as a conglomeration of diverse individuals and groups drawn from the Muslim League, the Awami League, JSD and a host of small leftist parties. In an effort to prolong and civilianize his regime, General Ershad also created the Jatiya Party by factionalizing the Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party and other left parties and recruited their leaders mainly through offer of ministerial posts and other patronage. From early 1991, when the democratic process started operating, it was expected that political parties would give attention to their growth and consolidation through relevant programmes of socio-economic uplift. So far, the prospects of qualitative change in the programmes, orientation and behaviour of political parties are not very encouraging.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party vowed to implement its election promises like consolidation of democracy, materialization of 19-point socio-economic programmes of Late President Ziaur Rahman and pursuing a strong nationalist stand in foreign relations, particularly vis-a-vis India. The ruling BNP has, been able to achieve some notable successes during the past two and half years of its rule. The change over to parliamentary system of government in a consensual manner, particularly in collaboration with its main political rival Awami League, and its success in containing internal party dissensions and factional infighting bear testimony to the successes of the BNP. The party, however, has not yet been able to keep the dynamism and spirit in materializing long-term socio-economic programs for the country. There is also a growing perception that the BNP has to deal more consistently and firmly in external sphere particularly in resolving Ganges water issue and trade imbalance with India - in order to keep its strong nationalist credential. The future challenge to the party seems to come from internal factionalism, and dilemmas in keeping its students front under control.

Among the opposition parties, the Awami League has the strongest organizational network and a broad support base. The party, however, has not been able to match its performances commensurate to its support. In fact, the party's accomplishments over the years has been frustrating in many ways. The party is less focused and articulated in its socio-economic programs. It allegedly attaches debatable priority to retrogressive issues in setting its political agenda. Although emerged as a grassroots party, it seems to be less inclined to follow democratic practice, and shows weakness in taking strong stand on vital national issues. This in fact, was one of the major reasons for its defeat in the last parliamentary elections vis-a-vis the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The party seems to have suffered another set back with the split of Dr. Kamal Hussain group which formed a new political party, namely, Gono (People's) Forum.

The Jatiya Party - which lost power with the collapse of Ershad regime in the late 1990s is currently in a confused state with no clear direction and

leadership. The party's stand on national issues is less-focused at this stage. Although emerged primarily as an instrument for General Ershad's political consolidation, the party has a good grass root support. It has also a good number of able politicians who came in the fold of the party in the heyday of Ershad regime. The party is now going through an agonizing process of change and transformation. Its mid-level and grass root supporters are under increasing pressure to break out of the current impasse or gradually be co-opted by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The Jamat-e-Islami is a highly organized and cohesive party with a chequered political history. Despite many setbacks, the party, within a span of a decade, has occupied a definite space in Bangladesh politics. The preponderance of religious contents gives a conservative image to the party which also enables the critics to condemn it as a fundamentalist party. The party's socio-economic programmes are still ambiguous and in many respects lack relevance. The party has also not yet been able to draw broad-based support, and it has yet to get rid of the legacies of its controversial role in Bangladesh liberation movement. Despite these difficulties and limitations as a political party, Jamaat has already played an important power-broker role in Bangladesh politics, and is gathering support for its strong anti-Indian and pro-Islamic stand.

In the coming days, alignments and realignments among the four major political parties - and their activities in and outside the Parliament will play a crucial role in sustaining the democratic system in Bangladesh. The healthy growth of political parties is, therefore, essential at this stage of Bangladesh's democratic evolution.

Political Culture

"The political culture ... consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situation in which political action takes place. It provides the subjective orientation to politics".⁴ The

4. S. Verba, "Comparative Political Culture", in L.W. Pye and Sydney Verba, (eds.), *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton University Press 1965), p.513.

political culture of a society is an important factor in understanding political allocations and change or for predicting degrees of stability of a political system. Some cultural traits are more compatible with political democracy while others create stress. In Bangladesh, factionalism and over-politicisation pose serious obstacles for sustaining a democratic system. These have become endemic in our political institutions, and prevail at all levels of political activities. While some form of factionalism exists in political organizations of most countries, in Bangladesh it often takes an extreme and all-pervading character - seriously constraining people's ability to work together. The factional trait is particularly visible in political arena as access to power opens up opportunities to control a poor society's free-floating economic resources.

Factionalism also goes hand in hand with over-politicisation to vitiate the political system. While the political process affords people to participate in various levels of government, over-politicisation creates impediments in government's ability to govern and implement policies effectively. These two traits of our political culture are also detrimental to the idea of 'consociation' or consensus where different groups or parties, sharing different - even conflicting values and goals live together in relative harmony, guarantee certain kinds of toleration and ensure stability of a political system. In Bangladesh, factionalism and over-politicisation often lead to wasteful and counterproductive controversies and increase the probability of instability and violent politics.

Violence and corruption

Over the past decades, violence and corruption have become the most enduring patterns of political activity in Bangladesh. They have become the major impediments to democratic governance in Bangladesh. The magnitude and pervasiveness of violent politics are serious concerns because there is a rough correlation between the number of persons injured or killed for political motives and the stability of a regime. If distrust and fear become a pervasive phenomenon and scramble for scarce resources

grows acute, they lead to wide spread violence, coup and military rule in developing states.⁵ Experiences of many Latin American countries indicate that when violence becomes endemic, the coup becomes the dominant mode of regime changes. There are also instances where in the face of extensive violence in the society, civilian and military leaders often plan and execute coups.

Aggregate data on various forms of violent politics presents a grim picture of Bangladesh. It can be gathered from the major daily newspaper reports that on an average one hundred people die and two thousand suffer wounds in violent political clashes in a year in Bangladesh.⁶ These clashes often occur between political groups, and student fronts of various political parties. In fact, student-centered violent politics has become a serious concern. It surpasses electoral political violence that is associated with the conduct of elections for public office. Bangladesh has also been facing primordial violence involving its ethnic minority tribal groups in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The causes of violence in Bangladesh range from economic factors to structural, intellectual and political variables. They seem to be deeply political and social in character and require complex political solutions. But the key factor in the dynamics of violence is relative deprivation and inequity. The magnitude of violence in Bangladesh is often induced by relative deprivation where frustrations and discontents of the societal groups and younger generation can be easily politicized.

Corruption represents the seamy side of politics not often exposed to public view. But in Bangladesh it has become so rampant, and its costs are so high, that it poses a threat to effective governance. In fact, corruption inhibits the operation of market forces, create bureaucratic bottlenecks, prevent planning objectives, introduce irrational elements into development

5. Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, *Understanding Political Development*, (Boston, L. Little Brown, 1987).

6. 58 people died and 1857 suffered wounds in violent political clashes during January-December 1990, as quoted in Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Arms Transfers, Military Coups and Military Rule in Developing States", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 36, no.4, December 1992.

programmes, leads to leakages in the utilization of aid money, creates frustrations among honest officials. In short, it keeps countries like Bangladesh a "soft state",⁷ unable to confront developmental problems realistically.

In Bangladesh, corruption is prevalent almost everywhere in government. People often enter politics because it is the main avenue for economic power, and the process of economic development is led and directed by the political process. Corruption, therefore, takes place at various arenas of political system - legislative, electoral and administrative. In an extremely unequal but highly competitive Bangladeshi society where elections determine which groups of people will wield power, corrupt patterns are likely to emerge. People spend money or contribute to party funds not out of a sense of commitment to healthy democratic politics, such instances are indeed rare. Money is spent by candidates or provided by contributors chiefly because they expect something in return. Political parties and influential politicians, if they are to survive, require patronage. They are, therefore, involved in financial arrangements that at least border on corruption.

Of all the levels of government, most instances of political corruption are likely to take place in the administrative sector. Administration is where most of the political process is played out. The reasons are obvious in a country like Bangladesh. Structural conditions like administrative expertise, access to privileged information, clientelistic relationships with interest groups, ability of the bureaucrats to structure policy alternatives and the discretion they are given in the implementation of policy, are among the main factors that contribute to the centrality of bureaucratic arena. Therefore, persons, in or out of government, who would use corruption as an instrument of politics turn primarily to bureaucracy. In Bangladesh, therefore, civilian and military bureaucrats, often engage in forms of 'auto-corruption' by utilizing their positions to their own personal or corporate gains. They also turn their structural advantage to give benefits to politicians and legislators.

7. Gunnar Myrdal, *The Asian Drama*, (New York, 1968).

Political leadership

The quality of political leadership is another crucial factor in the evolution of democratic governance in Bangladesh. Examples abound when leadership with vision has made far-reaching impact on the patterns of economic and political changes of a nation. In Bangladesh, political leadership has an added significance because the people love heroes and often rally behind them at points of crisis. This happened in different phases of Bangladesh's history - in 1937 for Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq, in 1946 for Mr. Jinnah in favor of Pakistan, in 1971 for charismatic Sheikh Mujib for Bangladesh, in 1975 for Ziaur Rahman, and in 1990 for uncompromising Khaleda Zia. Paradoxically, Bangladesh people has also a tendency to oppose and malign their heroes. While a part of the responsibility goes to emotional nature of the people, the failures of leaders to produce tangible results in the face of hard realities of statecraft and adverse socio-economic conditions are often the main reason. This underlines the need for rational and effective leadership for governance of this country not leadership based on populism alone.

The victory of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1991 has been possible to a great extent for an uncompromising and strong leadership of Khaleda Zia in her fight against authoritarian rule of General Ershad. Now is the 'testing time' for her leadership. While Khaleda Zia's personal integrity and sincerity seem to be unquestionable, she is yet to show a clear vision, and prove her consummate skill and dynamism in tackling the enormous problems faced by the nation.

Development and Social Uplift

In many ways, Bangladesh is a unique case of a Third World developing country. It faces nearly all the conceivable problems of development - a disproportionately large population in a small territory, a huge under-utilized manpower with practically no resource-base, and grossly inadequate farm land whose potential is ravaged almost annually by recurrence of floods and other natural disasters. The country has a poor

infrastructure and is languishing seriously in industrial and technological fields. The country's limited markets for a few exportable items also suffer from the vicissitudes of external economic climate. The external economic dependence of the country is overwhelming not only for resource inflows, but also for some of the critical supplies including food, petroleum and other industrial products.

Poverty is the greatest challenge to Bangladesh's survival as a nation. Economic growth is, therefore, imperative. Almost a decade of authoritarian rule has produced colossal economic mismanagement and distortions in the social fabric. Since its takeover, the democratic regime of Khaleda Zia gave a new thrust to privatization and improvement in policy environment. Through stabilization and structural adjustment policy, it took a series of new measures to retrieve the economy. The government adopted some important austerity measures, rationalized the tax-structure, introduced the new Value Added Tax (VAT) system, and streamlined credit facilities of nationalized banks and other financial institutions. New incentives were also given to encourage private investment particularly from foreign countries, and some measures were initiated to check widespread loss of confidence in an increasingly corrupt and mismanaged public sector.

The growth in agriculture had an initial setback because of cyclonic disaster of 1991. This year's bumper harvest clearly puts the government in comfortable position as the principal measure of well-being in Bangladesh has always been food availability and affordable price. The main worry comes from the industrial sector which is virtually stagnating. Productivity in the industrial sector is suffering from extreme inefficiency of labor, frequent strikes and hartals, and lack of firm policy towards restoration of order and discipline. The country's jute industry is in grave crisis because of low productivity and severe mismanagement. The investment climate showed some signs of improvements because of greater opportunities and incentives provided by the government. But, so far the country has not been able to attract significant foreign investment. There is a growing concern that Khaleda Zia's government has to show more dynamism in order to make a significant breakthrough in the economic front.

The concern for the country's difficult employment situation is increasing. Unemployment and underemployment among the educated youth is, indeed, serious and potentially explosive. The rural employment scene is also alarming. The overwhelming majority of the rural work force is either unemployed or seasonally employed. In fact, increasing joblessness coupled with escalating social inequalities pose serious threats to Bangladesh's democratic future. While one can argue that Bangladesh has always been an unequal society, the fact remains that the people of this landmass has also a historical legacy to rise against inequity and deprivation.

Bangladesh presently ranks very low among the least developed countries in terms of human resource development measured by such indicators as literacy, health, nutrition, quality of life, status of women, employment and income.⁸ While there is an abject poverty pervading the society, the inequity in the distribution of income and wealth is glaring. The available data shows that 42 percent of Bangladesh's national income is distributed to the highest quintile while the lowest quintile gets only 12 percent.⁹ In terms of land distribution, the top 10 percent of owners occupy 49 percent of land, while the lowest 10 percent own only 2 percent.¹⁰ In recent years, some progress has been made in poverty alleviation through the government's structural adjustment measures and social uplift programs of scores of NGOs. Greater awareness has also been created to address rural and urban poverty issues which are now in the process of being incorporated into the agenda of political parties. The human development initiative is being promoted as a vehicle towards poverty alleviation in Bangladesh by the government and the international donors.

8. UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 1992.

9. *Report of the Task Force on Bangladesh Development*, (UPL, Dhaka, 1991).

10. World Bank, *World Development Report*, 1992.

Conclusion

The economic conditions and social deprivation will surely determine the overall mood of the people in the coming years. But the future of democracy in Bangladesh will depend largely on the ability of the present government to produce a record of better governance, and on the ingenuity of political leaders and parties to negotiate or work out power conflicts in a peaceful manner. These will not be very easy in Bangladesh given the mistrust, antagonism and prejudices that have grown over the years. In mitigating these constraints, political elites in Bangladesh should play a creative and mediating role - keeping conflictual relationships within reasonable bounds. They may keep the pot of conflict simmering but not boiling, because political conflicts that violently split elites lead to crisis of governance, and often results in the demise of democracy.¹¹

The future is, therefore, fraught with many uncertainties. One good sign is that the dominant perception within the military is clearly in favour of democratic government to work. This is, in part, due to global wave of democratization - and in part, because of counter-productive exercises that military institution has to undertake in military rule for the fulfillment of political ambitions of some of its fellow members. The bureaucracy obviously has now come to the center-stage. It seems to have gained preponderance in the conduct of government policies. While during the Ershad regime, the bureaucracy viewed the military as a threat to their aspirations, the bureaucracy seems to have come closer to the present democratic set-up. But will the bureaucracy genuinely help the political government to realize the desired goals to good governance and equitable development? The fact is that beyond any one's passion for bureaucracy there exists bureaucracy itself. Its existence usually implies a rooted, institutionalized pattern of social conduct. Like all such patterns, it resists

11. John A. Peeler, *Latin American Democracies: Columbia, Costa Rica, Venezuela* (Chapel Hill, University of North California, 1985).

change and perpetuate rigidities. While the politicians in Bangladesh often tend to be rapacious and short-sighted, the bureaucrats become regressive. There is, therefore, a fear that in the years ahead, if the country becomes too turbulent to govern because of widespread political dissensions and disorder, the military may be drawn into the vortex of partisan politics. Alternatively, fresh elections may also pave the way for change of government. While such eventuality looms large in the horizon, the present democratic government still enjoys enough legitimacy and abundance of goodwill, and in all probability, will get ample time for a fair trial to make democratic governance work in Bangladesh.