INTRODUCTION

The paper argues that economic development and nation building are inseparable when the former is seen as a self-generating process of mobilising the available and potential, tangible and intangible, human and material resources, and articulation of the indigenous traditions, values and cultures rather than destroying or displacing them in the so-called modernization spree. Borrowed development models, both Western ethnocentric and Marxian varieties, can hardly respond to the imperatives of development in this sense. Development is both a process and a goal. The imperatives of development require that every individual group as well as class belonging to a particular polity must go through the process of becoming self-developed entities on the one hand, and a prospering ‘nation’ geared through the process of self-assertion, on the other. There is perhaps no short-cut to this process. Development strategies, conceived elsewhere, borrowed and then practised in the poor societies hardly provide scope of ‘going through the process’ for the majority. Attempts to do so result in process-alienation which breeds, of necessity, social and political alienation. Secondly, when
considered as a goal, the society as a whole has to make sacrifices as cost of development. There is also no alternative to this. To be precise, the cost is paid any way, in some magnitude by some groups, as some sort of ‘development’ activities are carried out. The paper argues that if the cost is not paid in a planned fashion and planned time frame, the future generations will have to pay for development in more than one way—the continued cost of development itself, the cost of ‘maldevelopment’ and the cost entailed in the opportunities lost for not building the nation simultaneously. The main suggestion of the paper is that if the nation is to be built in which economic development will play an instrumental role, there is no alternative to initiating a self-generating economic system based on development of all available local resources. A nation must learn how to survive with the locally available resources in the first instance. Till then, no amount of foreign aid can bail the nation out for long. These arguments have been developed around the case of Bangladesh—a typically least developed country with atypical magnitude of population and an example of unsuccessful experiments with predominantly aid-dependent development models.

Economic Development and Nation Building Linkages

The Western development paradigms and strategies have certain important bearings on the development process of the Third World societies. In the first place, the models and sophisticated analytical tools of social sciences, as well as the assumptions on which they are based provide little scope of looking at a particular problem in all its aspects. Things are often looked at in piecemeal fashion—political aspects separate from economic ones, the latter isolated from social and cultural aspects. The fact that the social, political and economic factors are mutually interacting and complementary hardly receive due recognition resulting not only in poor performance in development efforts but also in a grossly distorted pattern of whatever development takes place. The problems of poverty, political and economic underdevelopment in the developing countries like
Bangladesh are such that they defy economic or political solutions in isolation. Secondly, the prevailing models take a rather parochial and ethnocentric view of development and its ingredients. Thus it is fashionable to portray these societies as underdeveloped if population is large in relation to meagre visible resources, and to consider the indigenous technology, traditions and institutions as outdated and dysfunctional.

Perhaps the most harmful long-term effect of borrowed development concepts and strategies is the damage inflicted on institution building. For one, the Western development strategies tend to undermine such viable institutions as extended family networks, patronage ties, clan, tribal loyalties, corporate group linkages, churches and religious movements and the like. By undermining and often eliminating these traditional institutions before any modern ones were created, development efforts helped destroy some of the vital agencies in many of the Third World nations that might have enabled them to make a genuine transition to real modernity. What is more important, the opportunity cost is nowhere more than in the field of overall development of these societies into independent polities, had economic development been pursued simultaneously with development of the indigenous cultures and traditions.

The limitations of the prevailing social sciences have led to serious rethinking of the development models and ingredients of development. This rethinking of development, which has been going on for quite some time, looks at local resources, technology and institutions not as useless, backdated and dysfunctional but essential elements of the development process. And more importantly, such rethinking has envisaged not one but many models suited to the local conditions. For example, India’s caste system, African tribalism, corporatism, family and interpersonal solidarities in Japan, blending of Maoism and Confucianism in China all are considered to be instrumental in the overall development process. In some cases as in Tanzania and even China, there may have been a reversion to the traditional
mainstream deviating from the indigenous routes they discovered. But the trend of looking for indigenous means and strategy of development in different shapes is on.

Once development has been put into its right place in the Third World context, its linkage with nation building becomes obvious. Most of the Third World societies are “nations in hope” rather than “nations in being”. For one, the colonial legacies left most of these countries with heterogeneous social, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups within, at least initially, artificial boundaries, and ‘territorial nationalism’ was very slow to emerge. Even when there is relative ethnic, religious or linguistic homogeneity, other forms of cleavages, social, economic, and political, have prevented the growth of national cohesion. The fervour of anti-colonial movement on broad and superficial understanding soon died down in the post-independence period. The things that are at stake from the perspective of these individual classes or groups are economic survival and their perceived identity in that order. In such a perception structure, nation building becomes the most formidable social engineering task. Any policy and programme economic or political is evaluated by individual groups in terms of the above stakes and their reaction is framed accordingly. In particular, the economic programmes play a decisive role as typically exemplified by the 27 years of Pakistan experience. One of the important advantages of economic development if conceived in terms of strategies of indigenous development, is that it can take care of both stakes. Each group or class has its own way of life, traditions and values. Naturally, if development strategies can accommodate these elements to the maximum, maximum participation can be ensured. Thus bringing the diverse elements of a polity within the mainstream economic life may very effectively cement the bond of nationhood. This is also true for a society otherwise homogeneous but where bulk of the population live below the poverty line. The situation of Bangladesh is a case in point where the critical areas of economic developments that provide useful linkage with nation building are (a) absolute and relative
poverty, (b) unequal access to productive means as well as opportun­
ties, (c) lack of mobilization and development of indigenous
resources and (d) lack of participation in development process. The
development strategies pursued in the past may be reviewed in the
light of these indicators. Before that, however, we assess the
resource potentials of Bangladesh in point of mobilization of local
resources for development.

Dimensions of Poverty : Assessing the Potential

When independence was achieved by Bangladesh, it posed a
particularly difficult challenge to development planners and policy
makers. Almost fifteen years after the 'revolution of rising expecta­
tions' hardly any progress has been made to find a response to that
challenge. Bangladesh with its per capita GNP of US $ 130 is
situated almost at the bottom of the World Bank's least developed
countries (LDC) list. It is a country with world's eighth largest
population, great poverty and very limited natural resources. Over
a hundred million people growing at a rate of 2.6%2 squeezed in a
total land area of 143,998 square kilometres (i.e. about 700 people
in per sq. km. representing by far the world's highest population
density with the exception of "city-states") survive here an average
expected life of 49.5 years3. The number of contenders to a liv­
ing worth little more than 35 US cents a day is increasing by
roughly 2.6 million annually and by the year 2050 the country will
have a population of 357 million4. The situation is more than
alarming and is getting worse still. It is indeed hard to imagine
how such a vast population can be given a prospect of a decent
living in such a small land with so few resources as the country has.

2. World Bank, Bangladesh: Economic and Social Development Prospects,
3. Ibid p. 11
Bangladesh is endowed with very limited amount of mineral resources as discovered till date. With hardly any rocks and stones and in total absence of iron ore, the land of alluvial soil has a coal reserve of barely 700 million tons lying 300 metres underground. The exploitation of these and additional reserve of equivalent quantity lying still deeper is rendered difficult not only by depth and geological and technological constraints related to deep coal mining in alluvial soil but also by questionable financial viability. Similar problems are also faced in exploration of limestone the reserve of which lying deep underground is estimated to be equivalent to about 1.5 million tons of cement. The only resource that nature has gifted the country with beside her vast potential manpower and fertile agricultural land is the natural gas the most optimistically estimated reserve of which is about 22 TCF (trillion cubic feet), including 'likely' reserves of Kutubdia, Begumgonj, Feni, Beanibazar and Kamta fields. The reserve will be exhausted in about 60 years if the current consumption rate of about 500 MCF (million cubic feet) per day is at least doubled—a rate marginally commensurate with the country's requirements. Although not much of exploratory work has been done, and even though prospect of discovery of some valuable minerals including oil and further gas is not ruled out, one would be flying in the face of evidences if it is expected that in the foreseeable future some resource bonanza will be around to provide a windfall boom to the economy.

The situation is not much different in agriculture which is indeed the mainstay of the economy and its potential. Agriculture employs 74% of GDP and over 65% directly or indirectly of merchandise export earnings. The industry sector which contributes less than

7. Ibid.
15% of the GDP and employs 11% of the labour force also derives nearly three-fourths of its production and employment potential from the agricultural sector (via jute and cotton). A total cultivable area of barely 23.14 million acres which thus generates the life-blood of the country is gradually shrinking primarily because of the increasing pressure of population. Per capita availability of land which is already at an alarmingly low level of less than a quarter acre will come down to one-sixteenth of an acre by the year 2050. This estimate excludes the possibility of physical shrinkage of cultivable land as a result of erosion and absorption by growing necessity of building infrastructure, expansion of industry and homestead for the rising population. Above all, there is the vulnerability of this cultivable land to natural calamities including floods, cyclones and droughts. Besides the Ganges and Brahmaputra, two of the mightiest rivers of the world, the land is criss-crossed by about 230 smaller rivers which during the monsoons cause deep flooding of 6 feet or more to about 40% of the cultivable land. Again about a quarter of the land is moderately flooded every year leaving only one-third of the total cultivable land entirely free of floods. Coupled with very poor penetration of agricultural modernisation including irrigation, mechanised cultivation and high yielding inputs as well as low level of land utilisation (cropping intensity is only 155%) these natural calamities chiefly account for one of the lowest agricultural yields in the world. Agriculture continues to be critically dependent on nature. The extent of irrigation coverage is precariously low at about 15% of the cropped area. The problem is one of not only low installed capacity but also under-utilisation of the existing equipments, which implies that there is enormous possibility of command area development. Although there has been some increase in the the extent of the use of fertilizer during the last few years, scope for far greater increase awaits to be tapped. The evident under-utilisation of the country’s agricultural potential as indicated by low rate of land utilisation, nature-dictated cropping pattern and intensity primarily accounts for the chronic food shortage.
prevailing in the country. Despite some increases in the overall foodgrain production in the past decade annual shortage of foodgrains is on the increase. By 1984 the yearly import requirement of foodgrains reached 2.06 million tons and the projected shortage for 1985 was estimated to be 2.98 million tons.10

Shortage is all pervasive and the economy is critically dependent on import of key items including raw materials, fuel and transport equipments. Export in its turn is dominated by primary products and deficit in the balance of payments has been an endemic feature of the economy. By 1984-85 the deficit in current account balance of payments reached US $1.80 billion.11 Although the deficit has come down in subsequent years, it has remained above the billion mark.12 The problem is compounded by the binding constraint of very low level of domestic savings, which as percentage of GDP during the last decade has ranged between (−)3.5% and (+) 3.4%.13 In such a condition the current level of domestic investment14 has been maintained largely by inflow of external resources.15

External resource inflow has in fact been the anchorsheet of all economic activities in the country since the immediate post-independence days when with its inherited state of external dependence16 the country faced its enormous task of reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy. Development activities in almost every sector of the economy in subsequent years have been banking primarily on foreign aid. Bangladesh has been the recipient of

10. World Bank Report No. 5409 p. 122
12. World Bank Report No. 5409 p. 3
13. Ibid p. 18
14. About 10-15%
15. Supplemented in recent years by remittances.
large amount of international economic assistance during the last decade and a half flowing on an average at a rate of US $ 1.2-1.5 billion per year. The amount of total inflow of external aid to Bangladesh from 17 December 1971 to February 1985 reached US $ 17.3 billion.\textsuperscript{17} The resource plan for 1984-85 ADP showed 75\% percent of total resources available for development expenditure generating from external resources.\textsuperscript{18} Debt service as percentage of export has already reached 28\% in 1985.

Bangladesh is not only one of the poorest countries of the world in terms of per capita income and relative external indebtedness,\textsuperscript{19} but she also features substantially and sharply increasing inequities in distribution of income and wealth. The latest available data show that the highest quintile of population received 36.9\% of income in 1976-77 while their lowest counterpart received only 6.2\%.\textsuperscript{20}

Distribution of land ownership is further skewed against the disadvantaged as in 1978 the top 10\% of the owners occupied 49\% of the total cultivable land as against only 2\% being owned by the bottom 10\% of owners. Inequalities exist between urban and rural income distribution as the average income of the urban population is about two-thirds higher than their rural counterparts. While the inequitable land distribution mainly accounts for skewed distribution of wealth and income in rural areas, urban inequality is caused by the income differential between the modern sector including large and medium scale industry, trading and intermediary, foreign trade an services on the one hand, and the informal sector including petty traders and manufacturers, self

\textsuperscript{17} Collected from Ministry of Finance, External Resources Division. The amount disbursed during the period was US$ 12.3 billion
\textsuperscript{18} Budget Speech of Finance Adviser, \textit{Bangladesh Observer}, 1 July 1985
\textsuperscript{19} Per capita nominal external indebtedness is not perhaps very high compared to many other countries. But relative to per capita annual GNP the indebtedness will perhaps be one of the highest.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{World Bank Report 1985} p. 228
employed and unemployed as well as under-employed labour force on the other. Within these two sectors themselves there are further inequalities, for example between the wage earners and the rest.

The inequality in the distribution of income and wealth in the context of overall poverty implies that the disadvantaged are in absolute terms much worse placed than they would have been if the level of average per capita income was higher. In such a backdrop measures for alleviation of poverty assumes greater urgency than any other because for the overwhelming majority of the people it is a hard struggle for sheer survival.

Review of Strategies and Trends of Economic Development

This section reviews the past development strategies and performance of the economy keeping in view the main nation building related variables: (a) poverty (b) income distribution, (c) employment situation and (d) mobilisation of local resources-vis-a-vis dependence on foreign assistance.

Before 1947, excepting for a few commodities like cotton, oil seeds and some manufactures, most of the goods required by the people of Bangladesh for their consumption were produced by the rural people themselves. Rice grown here was more than sufficient to meet the consumption requirements of the people. In the early years of Pakistan the peasant cultivators who tilled their lands with their own draught animals, tools and implements continued to function without any development assistance from the Government as in the British colonial period. Government investment in rural infrastructure and land improvement was minimal. Land productivity therefore did not go up. Agricultural productivity, however, grew at an annual rate one of percent mainly through the increase in labour inputs consequent on population growth. Fluctuations were there due to natural calamities but since the supply did not fall appreciably below the food requirement, stability in food prices could be maintained without resort to import of food. Some industrial expansion took place in
processing activities and the growing consumer goods industries in Pakistan were beginning to find markets in Bangladesh in the 1950s. By end of the decade, however, Bangladesh had already become dependent on foodgrain import to meet the consumption needs of her increasing population. The earnings from raw jute were more or less stagnant while the need for increasing imports for agriculture and mainly in non-agricultural sector increased fast for maintaining economic stability in the country. On the whole, it may be said that food situation, poverty, income distribution pattern all just began to deteriorate in the 1950s. Apparently there was some scope for popular participation through the programme of V-AID (Village Agricultural and Industrial Development). But the programme was basically bureaucratic in approach so that even the village level organizational infrastructure could not effect people's participation.

In the sixties significant structural changes took place in the top echelons of the economy of Bangladesh. The Second Five Year Plan of Pakistan was launched in 1960 whereby a systematic attempt was first initiated to raise productivity. The new ruling regime was comprised of the civil-military bureaucracy, big business group who mostly represented the vested interests of the West Pakistan feudal and bourgeois classes. Such composition of the ruling group, its inclusion in the US-sponsored military alliance and dependence on foreign aid, particularly military and economic, had predetermined its economic development strategy. The Government adopted three types of policy measures. First, to obtain surplus for capital formation in a situation of underdeveloped agriculture and narrow tax base. Agriculture was called upon to generate surplus for non-agricultural development. The second element of the strategy of the government was to protect the emerging capitalist class from foreign competition and allow it to concentrate its efforts of industrialisation in the most profitable consumer goods industries. This was done through direct control of foreign trade and foreign exchange rates. The third element was the direct involvement of the state in the economy as a producer.
Consequent on these policy measure, GNP grew on average at the rate of about 4% per annum which was higher than the rate of growth of population. Per capita income, therefore, rose though at a very low rate. The distribution of income within the country, however, changed significantly due to differential rates of growth of sectoral income, concentration of economic activities in selected areas and also due to the differences in the demand and supply of the various productive factors and their income. The economic conditions of the 1960s may be summarized as follows: First, development of the decade failed to ensure a pattern of growth of agriculture consistent with the increase in population. Secondly, the industrial growth ignored relative factor endowments in the country and resulted in over capitalisation of the manufacturing enterprises. Thirdly, the pattern of development encouraged transfer of easily available technologies suitable not in all cases from resource endowment and social cost-benefit point of view. The new class of entrepreneurs were hardly concerned with the alternative or appropriate technologies. They also took little care of cost consideration since they were assured of a protected market within the country. Fourthly, the sixties also ushered in an era of economic development where growth and even the normal productive activities were made dependent on aid disbursements in increasing scale. In so far as the aid donors were unable to guarantee steady flow of aid until the take-off stage, the state of aid dependency made the country vulnerable to external shocks. Fifthly, the labour participation rate in the country had declined from about 34% to 28%. This meant a failure to generate adequate opportunities for the growth in employment in the country. Sixthly, the growth of the organized sector of business was accompanied by polarisation of income and mounting social tensions culminating in the war of independence of 1971.

A question may pertinentlty be raised as to what went wrong with the development strategies of the sixties. The period of chronic
political instability of the 1950s was followed by a period of a political calm brought about by the military regime of Ayub Khan. Such an environment, later on given a populist image by Basic Democracies (indirect representative government), suited the needs of Harvard model of growth-based development strategy. In such politico-economic environment, the majority were deprived of the right to economic and political participation as economic opportunities mainly bestowed upon by the Government were open to a few. The economic and political alienation was accentuated by the deliberately created adverse terms of trade experienced by agriculture that otherwise sustained 90% of the people here. In particular, economic alienation and deprivation gave rise to grave concerns among the people of Bangladesh about their survival and self-determination.

The post-independence period witnessed the short-term but colossal task of rehabilitation and reconstruction to bring the economy back to the 1969-70 level and the long-term task of building a viable economic system amidst resource scarcity and a fast growing population. The destruction and dislocation of the economy brought about a sharp fall in the flow of goods and services within the country, GNP declined by about 94% between 1969-70 and 1972-73. The economic recovery following the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war ravaged economy enabled Bangladesh to attain an average growth rate of more than 7% in the seventies. However, different sectors of the economy were unable to attain a uniform pattern of growth in this decade. In particular agricultural production suffered the most following a number of spells of natural calamities and also frequent changes in agricultural development strategy specially in input pricing and distribution policies. Allocation for agricultural development as percentage of total expenditure went

down over the decade. The share of industry and power sectors have in recent years gone up while those had remained more or less constant in the cases of physical and social infrastructure sectors until 1977-78 after which there was significant decline in their shares of expenditures.

On the whole, the economic indicators relevant for nation building experienced deterioration. The percentage of below poverty population, landless and unemployed increased significantly. Disparity in income distribution and ownership of and access to productive means including land also widened. All these happened despite the fact that a good number of populist and participatory programmes in the rural areas including the IRDP, Swaminar (self-reliant) programme, canal digging, Gram Sarkar (village self-governing local body) programmes were initiated under the succeeding regimes. At non-governmental level also many experimental programmes of participatory character were undertaken. The fact of the matter is that although these programmes were undertaken in the name of the poor mass, only few—the elite and the fortunate ones—had the decision making and participating role in implementation and other stages. What happened actually was that the scope of these decision making, implementing, allocative and distributive roles widened to incorporate the greater number of contending economic and political elites and other pressure groups. The employment opportunities for the poor also expanded to some extent in the rural areas, thanks to the generous inflow of aid for Food for Works (FfW), Rural Works Programme (RWP) etc. But for all practical purposes, these populist programmes widened the gap between the rulers and the ruled because of the domination of elites and sub-elite in the hierarchy. Many of the programmes had apparently greater scope of people's participation. But, may be because of too much of bureaucratic involvement, over-ambitious targets with the imperative of quick results, people's parti-

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
cipation did not come through. Moreover, most of the programmes had more of rhetorical and populist content than operational, technical and financial feasibility aspects. An analysis of the Annual Development Programmes of the last few years shows that a large number of development projects has been undertaken before careful scrutiny and approval by the Planning Commission. Even in 1980-81 budget, only 27% of the total projects in the ADP had been examined and approved by the Planning Commission. In 1977-78, only 62% of the projects under implementation had finally obtained approval. Since most of the important development project were dependent on foreign assistance, the slow disbursement performance of aid acted as bottleneck in the way of their quick completion.

Local resource mobilisation accordingly could not make any significant headway. No genuine and committed effort was made to mobilise the vast manpower into physical and social infrastructure building projects excepting the FfW and RWP. In point of water resources, the major constraint was the diversion of upstream water and consequent reduction in the availability of waters in the internal rivers and water bodies. A shift of emphasis on small-scale water sector projects in place of large-scale capital-intensive ambitious projects of the 1960s was observed, but most of the projects were aid dependent and local participation the those projects was minimal, that also at elite level. The canal digging programme did not make any significant headway in harnessing the water resources although it had great potentials in agricultural infrastructure building.

Given the preponderence of foreign aid in development programmes, some issues in foreign aid utilisation may be worth pointing out. Perhaps Bangladesh has no alternative to depending on foreign aid at least in the foreseeable future. But the point is, foreign aid cannot be a substitute for local resources. We must define our goal, we must define the strategy, we must start with whatever resources

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
and manpower we have. It is only when we have charted a path and have defined our own long-term goals of national self-development that foreign aid should be utilized as complementing to local resources. It may sound idealistic and impracticable. But can there be any doubt that we may expect to obtain more aid and on favourable terms only when we have started a self-generating process by ourselves? In the absence of it, foreign aid perpetuates more aid dependency and the long term consequences cannot be good for any nation, not for nation building at least.

The finding of a recent study on Transfer of Technology and Development sponsored by the Planning Commission and conducted by a group of University Professors may pertinently be mentioned. The major findings of the study were:

a. Transfer of technology for an aid dependent country like Bangladesh is not possible. Lion’s share of the aid money goes to foreign consultants. The study estimates that on average 90% of the aid is eaten up this way.

b. Aid dependency is self-perpetuating, there is no sign of lessening of its incidence. And more importantly, over more than a decade, all sectors and all groups have become dependent on foreign aid directly or indirectly. Apart from economic resources and failure to mobilise local resources, there is an interesting reason behind this. The width and spread of the constituency favourable to external resource inflow is increasing substantially. They are the major beneficiaries of foreign aid and as such an in-built demand for aid is prevailing.

c. Although scope for transfer of technology and creation of local expertise is kept in the formal agreement, there is little scope of investigation into the possibility of transfer of tech-

The debate over foreign aid is nothing new. Same is true about the question of self-reliance as an alternative to foreign aid. As has been argued earlier, the door of foreign aid probably cannot be shut altogether. What is needed is to create appropriate mechanism so that targets, strategies and implementing mechanism are geared to the objective of making external resources complementary, not alternative to domestic ones.

**Future Vision**

In the last more than half a century, the improvements that have come in the living standard of the common men of Bangladesh are the results of a spill-over of the technological improvements elsewhere in the world. Our own efforts have achieved very little change in the desirable direction. We have used up the infrastructure that we inherited from the British period and some of the natural resources (like forest). We have neither allowed the private sector to grow nor have we retained even the previous standards of management in the public sector. In terms of structure of the economy, very little desirable change has taken place. The burden of the public debt is growing and there is a critically adverse balance of trade. Income and asset distribution is inequitous. Despite this dismal picture there are reasons to be optimistic about the future development of the society and economy of Bangladesh. If not for any other reason, a note of optimism is warranted at least for the fact that there is an intimate organic link among land, man and water of the country that has produced a wonderful resilience of the people in sufferings from drought, flood, hunger and famine. They cannot overcome the calamities of nature but they have the traditional habit of living with them. And objectively speaking, any debate on development strategy of Bangladesh should refer one way
or other to these three principal elements: water, land and people. It is in this perspective that few recommendations are made:

a. *A Self-generating Economy*: In the past, goals of growth of total and per capita income, reduction of poverty and increase in employment were intended to be achieved through: (a) adoption of central planning as an instrument for guiding and effecting resource allocation, (b) development of a mixed economy framework in which the private capitalist class were to play a dominant role, (c) encouragement of industrial development especially within the public sector but with adequate accommodation for nationa and foreign private capital, (d) emphasis on import substitution industrialisation, (e) promotion of rural development through, (i) community development programmes, (ii) small farmer development strategy, (iii) integrated rural development programmes, and (iv) other specialised programmes like RWP, FFW etc. All these strategies over time depended heavily on foreign aid and there was little scope and effort for mobilisation of local and indigenous resources.

A clear policy statement that emerges from the above is movement for a self-generating economic system in Bangladesh. The point is, at least in the field of basic minimum needs, e.g., food, cloths, shelter and other necessities, self-reliance in Bangladesh is possible. We have seen in the earlier discussion that we are far from reaching an optimum position in the number of crops that may be grown in a year and the yield rate per acre that may be attained. Even with traditional input package, and indigenous technology, food autarky is possible if adequate land utilization is planned, water is controlled and efficient water management is ensured. This apparently ambitious but actually humble aim may be achieved through providing basic infrastructure to agriculture much of which relates to water control and water management, which in turn is possible through non-conventional mobilisation of the vast manpower of the country, specially in the rural areas. The potentiality of increased food production has been studied in some details by different quarters.
including the World Bank. The picture of development by the end of the century stands as follows: By changing the inputs alone, that is to say, by introducing new seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, it would be possible to double rice output; if irrigation were also practised to the fullest extent, output could be trebled, while with the further addition of drainage and flood control it would be possible to quadruple output.

Faaland and Parkinson predicts on the basis of the assumption of increasing double cropping:

it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that output of grain might increase at an accelerated rate compared with the past and that there would be a good chance of increasing domestic food grain supplies more rapidly—perhaps up to 2 percent more rapidly than population. Also for the agricultural sector, generally, i.e., including all crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries, an average annual rate of growth of value added of 3 to 5 percent ought to be attainable until the end of the century.27

While such increased food production will raise the level of consumption of the producers, deducting the available surplus by say, one percent for that and another 3 percent for the growth of population would leave one percent out of 5 percent increase in food production for other development purpose. Even becoming more conservative in estimate, one can state that food sufficiency itself attained through the process would become a commendable achievement in the objective of a self-generating economic system.

Massive and comprehensive rural development programmes purely depending on locally available resources will have very favourable affect on other areas—non-farm cottage activities for farm implements, farm inputs, marketing and transport activities. This will relieve the unemployment situation and the problem of inadequate

participation in development programme. At least the concept and stated objective of the current decentralisation programme holds out the hope of a self-reliant local-level planning based development strategy. The Upazila system is still in the process of evolution and its evaluation will emerge only in the process of its implementation. It may be claimed at this early stage, however, that it is a novel experimentation which holds good prospect of local participation because a number of important functions and decisions including development administration has been bestowed with the local authority. The future of the Upazila system is uncertain at this stage, so will be for that matter the fate of any other experimentation. The point is, the process of experimentation cannot go on infinitely. One way of bringing in a viable and stable system of decentralisation may be through a process assuring national consensus and participatory democracy involving specially those who are directly involved and affected by the changes. If and when this can be done the system so introduced would no longer be vulnerable to changes or remodelling with the changes in the political authority.

b. Industrial Development: There are three issues that need to be considered with respect to industrial development: (i) sectoral and locational priorities, (ii) choice of technique and (iii) ownership of assets. Given the resource constraint of the country, the sectoral and locational considerations should reflect the concern for (i) employment expansion, (ii) provision of essential consumables, (iii) promotion of self-reliance and (iv) income growth. It must be noted that sectoral priorities are not determined by technocratic consideration alone. In the ultimate analysis allocation of resources between sectors depends upon the class character of the forces dominating the state power. Much has been said about the distorted character of industrialization in Pakistan, but given the class base of the ruling elite it was not surprising that a substantial part of industrial production took place keeping in perspective primarily the concerns and interests of the upper and lower-income strata.
A closely related issue is that of locational priorities which also brings in the question of scale identification of growth centres, existing and potential, which is necessary in order to achieve balanced regional development and reduce the existing regional imbalances. In Bangladesh there is considerable scope for dispersing industrial settlements away from the present points of concentration in the Dhaka-Narayanganj, Chittagong and Khulna regions. Also the need for promotion of small and cottage industries, specially agro-based and agro-oriented ones has been emphasized.

In the context of industrial investment planning, choice of technique is an important issue. While it is obvious that in the long run the optimum strategy would be to develop indigenous technology, in the short and medium run there seems to be no other alternative but to rely on a selective borrowing and import of technology from abroad. Two things are important now. Firstly, the exact choice of technology and choice of sector in which the technology is to be used would depend on the trade-off balance, social cost and social returns. Secondly, factor intensity of relevant sectors should be studied in its total implication for the economy. One actually needs to analyse carefully the forward and backward linkages of all industries.

c. Population Policies: Size of the population itself in relation to land space, natural resources, institutions and the level of technology is the most important dimension of the development efforts of Bangladesh. The basic component of population policies should, therefore, be to provide for proper utilisation of existing human resources such that all individual members of the society can be accorded a minimum level of living and a base created for gradual improvement.

The existing Population Planning Programme of the country is basically elitist and negative. It is elitist because decision regarding the need for population control is made by a class far removed from the people and there is little attempt to involve the latter in it.
The elitist approach ends up attempting to trust pre-fabricated programmes upon the society instead of trying to ascertain the reason that have given rise to the problem in the first place. The negative character of the conventional population control approach comes from the fact that positive dimension of the existing human resources is not properly emphasized. The prevailing information, education and motivational aspect of population control programme tend to rely primarily on a negative approach and also lacks in a comprehensive treatment of the problem.

In view of this, population planning must be accompanied by development of the existing human resources through providing basic minimum needs including employment opportunities. Control aspect of population planing will then automatically follow. Economic measures must be accompanied by adequate reforms in the existing family and inheritance law of the country. The essence of what is being suggested is that the problem of population cannot and should not be seen in isolation from the overall socio-economic context of the country and hence should form integral part of the comprehensive national development effort. The broader is the horizon of parameters considered to be effecting the population problem the greater is the possibility of attaining success in population planning.