



**ISLAM AND POLITICS IN BANGLADESH
(1971-90)**

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ABSTRACT

The study examines and analyzes various Islamic policies and programs undertaken by the governments of Bangladesh from 1971 to 1990. The first post-independent regime led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1971-75) adopted nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism as the principles of state policy. It tried to abolish Islamic symbols from every sphere of life and adopted pro-Indo-Soviet stand. But within two years of his rule, the emergence of Islamic forces as well as slow disbursement of aid from Western donors forced Mujib to adopt some conciliatory policies towards Islam.

General Zia, who ruled from 1976-81, abolished two of the four fundamental principles—secularism and socialism and popularized ‘Bangladeshi Nationalism’ thus distinguishing Bangladeshis from Bengalis living in India. The study shows that Zia’s commitment towards Islam was intended to bolster legitimacy of his regime and to gain external support. His so-called Islamization policies attracted the masses and support from donors. General Ershad (1982-90), went further by declaring Islam as a state religion. The declaration, however, was not followed by any concrete steps towards Islamization. He failed to win the support of masses though he remain in power for nearly nine years. Thus the study shows that the Islamization initiatives made during the period were symbolic than real and consequently they failed to make much headway in transforming the Bangladesh society along the lines of Islam.

Jama’at-e-Islami Bangladesh (JIB), has been committed and striving for the establishment of an Islamic state. Although it has had a considerable influence on the Islamization programs initiated by above regimes JIB has not been able to muster popular support in order to enable it to form the government. The JIB’s support towards united Pakistan during the independence movement, strict cadre system within the party, as well as attack from different quarters including the media, liberals and *ulamas*, have contributed to JIB’s failure to win mass support. The mass support still belongs to ‘Muslim Nationalist’ like Zia. The study concludes that JIB has to come up with practical explanations on many important issues such as the status of women and non-Muslims in the Islamic state if it wants to be among the main players in Bangladesh politics.

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل مجموعة من الأنظمة والبرامج التي اتخذتها حكومة بنغلاديش في فترة ما بين ١٩٧١ إلى ١٩٩٠م.

فقد تبنى عهد ما بعد الاستقلال بقيادة الشيخ مجيب الرحمن فكرة الوطنية والديمقراطية والعلمانية والاشتراكية كأسس لسياسة الدولة. وللوصول إلى هدفها العلماني، حاولت الحكومة إلغاء رموز الإسلام ومبادئه، بل حاولت محو الإسلام من حياة المجتمع. وبناءً على ذلك تبنت الحكومة مواقف وسياسات تجمع أفكاراً هندوسية وشيوعية، ولكن ظاهرة ظهور مقاومة المنظمات الإسلامية وبطء وصول المساعدات الخارجية أرغمت مجيب الرحمن أن يبحث عن حل وسط يرضي المنظمات الإسلامية والغرب، الأمر الذي أدى إلى أن يتنازل عن تطبيق بعض الاتجاهات السياسية المذكورة آنفاً، واتخذ مجيب الرحمن بعد ذلك مواقف إيجابية نحو الإسلام ترمي إلى إرضاء المنظمات الإسلامية.

ففي عهد ضياء (Zia) الذي حكم في فترة ما بين ١٩٧٦-١٩٨١ لوحظ تواجد برامج إسلامية بل ألغى فكرة العلمانية والاشتراكية وروج لفكرة الوطنية البنغلاديشية ونادى إليها، وذلك من أجل التفرقة بين البنغلاديشيين والبنغاليين الذين يستوطنون في الهند.

وقد بينت هذه الدراسة أن التزامات ضياء (Zia) تجاه الإسلام كما يدعى مشكوك فيه، بل يمكن القول بأنه استعمل لباس الإسلام لأجل إثبات الشرعية لحكومته والحصول على تأييد خارجي من قبل الدول الإسلامية. وقد نجح بشكل أكبر في توطيد سياسات الأسلمة المزعومة التي اتبعتها ونالت قبولاً لدى المجتمع والمتبرعين.

وتبع عهد مجيب عهد الجنرال إرشاد (Ershad) الذي حكم البلاد في فترة ما بين ١٩٨٢ - ١٩٩٠م. وقد قرر أن يكون الإسلام دين الدولة ولكن لم تختلف سياساته عن سياسات ضياء، وبذلك يمكن القول أنه لم يكن له ميل حقيقي إلى تحكيم الإسلام أو ترسيخ مبادئ إسلامية في المجتمع، وبناءً على هذا فشلت قراراته تجاه فكرة الأسلمة. وعلى الرغم من أنه استطاع أن يستولي على الحكم لمدة تسع سنوات تقريباً إلا أنه فشل في نيل التأييد من الشعب.

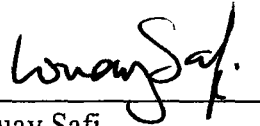
وبناءً على ما سبق ذكره، بينت الدراسة أن مبادرات فكرة الأسلمة التي دُعيَ إليها خلال الفترات المذكورة باءت بالفشل في تحويل المجتمع البنغلاديشي إلى مجتمع إسلامي، وبقيت هذه المبادرات رموزاً خيالية لا تمت إلى الحقيقة بصلة.

ومن ناحية أخرى، فقد أخذت الجماعة الإسلامية البنغلاديشية (BIJ) على نفسها حمل راية الإسلام والمجاهدة لإنشاء دولة إسلامية (تحويل بنغلاديش إلى دولة إسلامية). ولا شك أن الجماعة الإسلامية البنغلاديشية كان لها دور فعّال في إيجاد برامج الأسلمة التي ابتدأتها العهود التي قبلها، إلا أن الجماعة لم تنجح في عملية الحصول على المؤيدين حتى تفي بالعدد المطلوب لتشكيل الحكومة، ويرجع سبب فشل الجماعة الإسلامية للحصول على حشد من التأييد إلى أسباب وعوامل متعددة منها تأييدهم لفكرة الاتحاد الباكستاني خلال حملة حركة الاستقلال، وتبني الحزب لنظام مترمّت أو صارم، وتعدد الهجمات ضد الجماعة من جهات مختلفة بما فيها وسائل الإعلام والعلماء والبراليين.

وبنيت الدراسة أن الجماهير ما زالت تؤيد المسلمين الموجهين من أمثال ضياء. وبينت الدراسة في الخاتمة أنه يجب على الجماعة الإسلامية البنغلاديشية (BIJ) إصدار تفسيرات وقرارات وبيانات عديدة تتعلق بموقف المرأة وحالة غير المسلمين في دولة إسلامية فيما إذا أرادت أن تلعب دوراً فعّالاً في السياسة البنغلاديشية.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Human Science in Political Science.



Louay Safi

Supervisor

Date: 14/6/99

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Political Science.

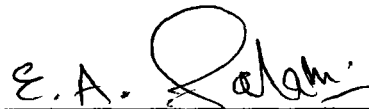


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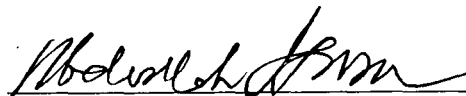


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Date: 5.7.99

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

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Date: 19.6.99

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Islam and politics in Bangladesh (1971-90).

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To my beloved parents

Prof. Kazi Md. Humayun Kabir

&

Mariam Kabir

&

My new born son

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CHAPTER 1

A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Introduction

Islam is holistic, integrating religion and politics. If the essence of politics is the striving for 'the good life', a life lived in worship and in seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt), then politics, according to Abdul Rashid Moten, is central to Islam;¹ four of the five fundamental pillars of Islam, i.e. prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage are, 'perfectly suited to promoting *esprit de corps* and group solidarity among its followers.'²

Politics in Islam must be based upon *tawhid* and the Islamic state to be totally free from all traces of Nationalism and its influences. It is a state built exclusively on principles, an ideological state. It is according to Abul Ala Mawdudi, "nothing more than a combination of man working together as servants of God to carry out His will and purpose,"³ and whereby each member understands his responsibilities to Allah (swt) and to the community. Allah commands social justice, the establishment of the system of worship, poor dues (*zakah*) and the doing of various good deeds, and forbids all kinds of exploitation, injustice, disorder and inequity.

¹ Abdul Rashid Moten, *Political Science: An Islamic Perspective* (London: Macmillan LTD, 1996), p.19

² Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.2, cited in Ibid. p.19

³ Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, *The Process of Islamic Revolution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1980), p. 9

The individual ethical and moral behavior prescribed in the *Sharia* applies to the entire community, and it is the responsibility of the state to enforce and implement such behavior.⁴ As Esposito observed, 'the traditional Islamic world view provided a holistic approach towards life, a life in which religion was intimately and organically related to politics, law and society.'⁵

According to Muhammad Iqbal, "In Islam... the essence of *Tawhid* as a working idea is equality, solidarity and freedom. The state from the Islamic standpoint is an endeavor to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them into a definite human organization."⁶ In Islamic political philosophy the starting point is the unity and sovereignty of Allah (swt). None is entitled to make laws on his own authority and none is obliged to abide by them.⁷ The Holy Quran says:

"The Authority rests with none but Allah, He commands you not to surrender to any one save Him. This is the right way (of life)." (Yusuf, 12:40)

"They ask: 'Have we also got some authority?' Say: 'all authority belongs to Allah

⁴ Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, trans. and ed. Khurshid Ahmad (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1960), pp. 153-54

⁵ J. I. Esposito, "Introduction: Islam and Muslim Politics," in J. L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.5

⁶ Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Asraf, 1962), p. 154

⁷ see Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, "Political Theory of Islam," in *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p.137 and Ismail Raji al Faruqi, "Tawhid: The Principle of Political Order," in *Tawhid: It's Implications for thought and Life* (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982), pp. 170-172

alone!" (Al-Imran, 3: 154) "Whoso does not establish and decide by that which Allah has revealed, such are disbeliever." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:44)

The above verses of the Quran and derived opinions of scholars are the foundations of Islamic political theory. To Mawdudi, a basic principle of Islam is that human beings must, individually and collectively, surrender all rights of overlordship, legislation and authority over others. The meaning of worship in Islam is both extensive and comprehensive; it is not restricted to the physical performance of religious rituals only but embrace all aspects of activity, faith, thought, feeling and work and in conformity with Allah (swt).

In the contemporary Third world, religion contributes to the process of mass politicization by providing sacred symbols that may acquire political significance. The political parties find in these sacred symbols an important key to mass support. Mahatma Gandhi in emphasizing the importance of religion in politics, said, "I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."⁸ In his statement in 1922, Gandhi said it even more clearly: "For me there is no distinction between politics and religion."⁹ It is observed that the leaders of many developing nations live in the two worlds of religion and politics

⁸ M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or, the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (2nd Ed.) (Ahmedabad: Narajivan, 1948), p. 615 in Donald E. Smith, "Ghandi, Hinduism and Mass Politics" in Donald Eugene Smith (ed.), *Religion and Political Modernization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 135

⁹ Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 158

simultaneously. In order to raise their countries from poverty, they seek to modernize and to acquire for their societies' education and the advanced technical knowledge depend on the west. At the same time to establish rapport with their tradition-bound people, they have to appeal to native pride, communal and ethnic sentiments, as well as religion.¹⁰ As Donald E. Smith has observed "In traditional societies, religion is a mass phenomenon, politics is not," and thus "religion can serve as the means by which the masses become politicized."¹¹ The later phase of Mujib rule and the post Mujib ruler- Zia and Ershad- seem to fit the above description.

Against this backdrop this paper makes an attempt to examine why and how "Islam" has been used in Bangladesh by regimes as a core value for earning legitimacy, rather a state ideology. It also seeks to examine why the Islam based political parties are unable to reach the masses.

Islam in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh is of recent creation, its contact with Islam began in the early centuries after the *Hijrah*. Since the 8th century AC Arab traders have often visited the Bengal coast and reportedly established a Muslim colony in Chittagong, the present port city of Bangladesh.¹² Islam spread rapidly with the gradual process of

¹⁰ Guenter Lewy, "Nasserism and Islam: A Revolution in Search of Ideology," in Donald Eugene Smith (ed.), *Religion and Political Modernization*, p. 274.

¹¹ Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Political Modernization*, p. 269.

¹² Abdul Mannan Talib, *Bangladeshe Islam* (Dhaka: Adunik Prakashani, 1987), p. 63.

conversion, intermarriages and further immigration. The Muslims, thus, primarily settled in Bangladesh from abroad and subsequently converted many local residents to the faith of Islam. The combination of these two elements led to the formation of a Muslim community in Bangladesh. The two groups became united through intermarriages and, therefore, having a "common cultural-cum-ethical-cum-legal pattern," the emergent Muslim community sharing the blood of both.¹³

Bangladesh politics must be understood against the background of British imperialism and colonialism. By nineteenth century European states had penetrated and increasingly dominated the Muslim world from North Africa to Southeast Asia. Muslim subjugation by Christian Europe confirmed not only the decline of Muslim power, but also the apparent loss of divine favor and guidance.¹⁴ Upon colonization of Bengal from 1757 the position of the Muslims was affected adversely by the British East India Company's policies. The colonial policy of trade and commerce destroyed the flourishing weaving industry of Bengal, for example, which was particularly disastrous for Muslims because they made up the majority of those involved in trade and commerce. The land policy of permanent settlement, in particular, led to the domination of Muslims by the Hindu *Zamindars* (landlords).¹⁵ During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Bengali Muslims

¹³ Syed Serajul Islam, "Islam in Bangladesh: A Dichotomy of 'Bengali' and 'Muslim' identities," *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. XLI, No. 3 (1997), p. 220

¹⁴ John L. Esposito, "Modern Islamic Sociopolitical Thought," in Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Shape (eds.), *Prophetic Religion and Politics: Religion and the Political Order* (Vol. 1) (New York: Paragon House, 1986), p. 154

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 220

apprehended that, as an economically backward community, they were exploited by Hindu landlords, businessmen and industrialist. So they took shelter under the banner of the Muslim League, which championed the cause of Islam and Muslims in India. The League, with the support of Muslims in East Bengal, eventually succeeded in bringing Pakistan into being in 1947 on the basis of the 'Two-Nation Theory.'

Bangladesh, which became independent in 1971, is the second largest Muslim state in the world with Muslims constituting eighty seven percent of its one hundred ten million people. Generally, the people of Bangladesh have strong attachments to Islam. A large number of people in Bangladesh do not perform mandatory religious practices, but most display their devotion to Islam in public. The impact of Islam is felt in every sphere of life in Bangladesh. In fact most of the social forces operating within the country contribute towards Islamic values in some way or another. In Islamic societies, religious education is inculcated "both at home and at school, in the mosque and in the street, and through all communication media."¹⁶

Independent Bangladesh witnessed the declaration of secularism as one of the fundamental principles of state policy and all Islamic parties were banned as part of that policy.¹⁷ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the secular founder-leader of

¹⁶ Muhammad Qutb, "The Role of Religion in education," in Muhammad Naqib al Attas (ed.), *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Jeddah: Hodderand Stoughton, 1979), p.49

¹⁷ Kazi Shahdat Kabir, "Islam, Islamization and Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh," An unpublished paper, 1997.

Bangladesh claimed, however, that secularism does not mean the absence of religion. The 75 million Bengali people, according to Mujib, will have the right to religion, but "our only objection is that nobody will be allowed to use religion as political weapon."¹⁸ However, at the end of his rule he initiated some programs espousing Islamic values but it was too late and too little. In 1975, after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the collapse of the secular regime, the uses of Islamic slogans by the post-1975 military rulers increased. In 1977 General Ziaur Rahman consolidated his power and amended the constitution to give it an 'Islamic character.' Similarly, after Zia, the Ershad regime also became interested in continuing the process of so called Islamization. He categorically stated that the principles of Islam would be incorporated into the constitution of Bangladesh.¹⁹ But the Islamisation program undertaken by the Mujib, Zia and Ershad regimes were symbolic, since none of the regimes based its state policy on Islamic principles.

On the other hand, Jama'at-e-Islami, a pioneer of Islamic resurgence in South Asia and an influential political party in Bangladesh, has been working among the people of Bangladesh for about fifty years. The history of Jama'at-i-Islami is inextricably linked with the life and works of its founder, Mawlana Sayyid Abul 'Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979). Mawdudi believed that an Islamic revolution is necessary to establish an Islamic State and society. The Islamisation of society, for

¹⁸ U.A.B. Razia Akter Banu, *Islam in Bangladesh* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 148.

¹⁹ Emajuddin Ahamed and D.R. J.A. Nazreen, "Islam in Bangladesh, Revivalism or Power Politics," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 8 (August 1990), p. 797.

Mawdudi, was a prerequisite for establishing a true Islamic state.²⁰ According to Jama'at's literature, it is not a religious or political party in the ordinary sense of the term but an ideological movement for transforming society on Islamic principles. Jama'at-e-Islami is the Islam based political party, which does not explain Islam in traditional and ritualistic terms, rather it wants to implement Islam in its spirit as well as the letter.²¹ During the independence movement in 1971, the Jama'at and most other Islamic political parties in East Pakistan openly collaborated with the central government to fight for united Pakistan. Therefore, the Jama'at-e-Islami was banned and its supporters were branded as traitors by the ruling Awami League after Bangladesh became independent. But in 1975, after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in a military coup, the Jama'at-e-Islami was formally revived. Through a convention held in Dhaka from the 25th to 27th May in 1979, the Jama'at emerged with its traditional spirit, system and characteristic adopted by its founder, Sayyied Abul Ala Mawdudi.²²

Review of Literature

Several studies have been done on Islam in Bangladesh but the study of Islam and politics therein requires more research and analysis. Scholars have dealt with one aspect or the other of Islamization. Scholars like Emajuddin Ahmad and Nazneen,

²⁰ John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p. 143.

²¹ U.A.B. Razia Aktar Banu, "Jama'at-e-Islami in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects," in Hussain Muttalib and Tajul Islam Hasmi, *Islam, Muslims and The Modern State: Case Studies of Muslims in Thirteen Countries* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1994), p.83

²² Md. Yusuf Ali, *Introducing Jama'ate Islami Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Publication Department, Jama'ate Islami Bangladesh, 1989), p.5

A. S. Huque and M. Y. Akther, Partrha S. Ghosh, Syed Serajul Islam, S. M. Shamsul Alam and Asim Roy argue that the Islam was pressed into use during the time of Mujib, although 'secularism' was introduced as one of the state principles. S. M. Shamsul Alam argues that the concept of secularism introduced by the Mujib regime was completely different from the Western concept of secularism. In Bengali, the word *dharma nirapekshata* (Secularism) means 'religious neutrality'. For Alam, during the Awami League (AL)'s rule 'secularism took the form of equal opportunity for all religion'. This completely reflects the bad experience with religious politics during the Pakistani period.²³ However, Syed Serajul Islam argues that steps taken by Mujib towards Islam do not necessarily mean that he was Islamizing Bangladesh, rather in the face of tremendous unpopularity he was trying to gain the support of the masses to prolong his rule.

He further stated that despite the declaration of Bangladesh as a secular state, the Mujib government did not eliminate religious practices from Bangladesh. It retained the study of *Islamiyat* and Arabic in the public school syllabi introduced during the Pakistan period. During the later part of his rule issuance of messages by the Head of State during religious festivals like *Eid-ul-Fitar*, *Eid-ul-Azha*, *Eid-e-Millad-un-Nabi*, *Shab-i-Barat* and *Muharram* became the practice.²⁴ The Islamic academy that had been abolished in 1972 was revived in March 1975, five months

²³ S.M Shamsul Alam, "Islam Ideology and the state in Bangladesh," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 28, No.1 (1993), P 95.

²⁴ Ministry of education, Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Syllabi and Curricular Committee Report part II, Lower secondary level April 1977, P 149. Cited is Syed Serajul Islam, "Islam in Bangladesh: A dictionary of 'Bengali' and 'Muslim' Identities," *Islamic quarterly*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, 1997, p. 223.

before his assassination, was upgraded to a foundation. He started attending religious gatherings and gradually dropped the use of the valedictory *Joy Bangla* (Victory of Bangla).²⁵

Another group of scholars see Mujib as a hard-line secularist and they do not acknowledge Mujib's program towards Islam. For them Ziaur Rahman was the first ruler after independence, who applied the Islamic values and symbols at the state level. Scholars like U.A.B. Razia Akter Banu, C. J. Gulati, S. R. Chakrabarty, O'Donnel and Baxter came under this category and they all regard Ziaur Rahman, who gave the constitution an 'Islamic character', as the initiator of 'Islamization' programme in Bangladesh. It was Zia, who abandoned secularism and gave Islam a significant role to play in the national scenario. He altered the secular nature of the constitution by inserting – "*Bismillah –al– Rahman –al – Rahim*" (In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, and the most Merciful) at the beginning of the constitution. He removed the secular content of the constitution by adding the words "Pledging that the high ideals of absolute trust and faith in the almighty Allah..." Zia also omitted Articles 38 which banned the founding and functioning of religious based political parties.²⁶ But scholars, who differ in the view of Mujib's 'Islamization' policies agreed that Ershad, who captured power through a bloodless coup d'état in 1982, continued the process of so called Islamization. Ershad actually went a step further by declaring Islam as the state religion.

²⁵ Syed Anwar Hossain, "Religion and Ethnicity in Bangladesh Politics," *BISS Journal*, Dhaka, Vol.12, No. 4 (October 1991), P. 428.

²⁶ S.R Chakrabarty, *Bangladesh under Mujib, Zia and Ershad* (New Delhi. Itar - Anand Publications, 1995), P. 178.

The culmination of this process was the 8th Amendment of the constitution, which declares, “The official religion of the Republic is Islam but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in the country.” Commending the amendment as an historic event, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Moudud Ahmed declared that ‘it recognised Bangladeshi nationalism and Islamic values which formed the natural culmination of the aspirations of the majority of the Muslim population of the country.’²⁷

The 1972 constitution’s insistence on secularism and ethnicity gradually eroded and was eventually replaced by an emphasis on Islam as the cementing factor.²⁸

For Gulati, Khondokar Mustaque Ahmed who came to power before Zia for a short period of time first introduced the Islamization process in Bangladesh. The manifesto of the Democratic League led by Khondokar Mustaque regarded religion to be the panacea for all ills affecting Bangladesh. Considering the impact of Islam on the social and spiritual life as natural and inevitable, it said, “We shall seek to translate into action the principles of equality, peace, justice, tolerance and respect to others as enunciated by Islam.”²⁹ It seems that Islam is a well-accepted religion in Bangladesh and none of the regimes so far have dared to ignore it completely.

²⁷ Chandrika J Gulati, *Bangladesh: Liberation to Fundamentalism* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1988), p. 231.

²⁸ Ibid. p.230

²⁹ ibid. P. 231

Although the three regimes mentioned introduced a few Islamization policies at the state level, none of them was interested in implementing Islam as a policy. However, the Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh, which had a great influence on all the regimes towards patronising the Islamic values sincerely desired to Islamize the state. The JIB is the most widely known and well-organised among Islam-based political parties. It is interesting to note that Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh, whose ideology is in line with the people's belief, failed to gain state power. According to Serajul Islam, the failure of Islamic political organisations in Bangladesh is due to factionalism. All of them are divided among themselves along the lines of personality conflicts and are fighting each other rather than against the secular forces.³⁰ Rashiduzzaman also supported the argument and stated that the Islamic forces in Bangladesh are likely to remain divided between those who would follow the Jama'at and those who would vote for centrist parties.³¹

Ahmad and Nazreen see Jama'at as a rising political party in Bangladesh. Of all the Islam based political parties in Bangladesh, the Jama'at-I-Islami Bangladesh is the most well knit and well organised, having a disciplined cadre among students and other youths. The Jama'at-I-Islami exercises influence over both young and old and the orthodox as well as the modern educated segments of the society. In Bangladesh its influence on that of Islami *Chattra Shibir* (ICS, Islamic Students Camp), the student wing of Jama'at-e-Islami is steadily increasing A few years ago

³⁰ Syed Serajul Islam, "Legitimization of Islam in the State of Bangladesh," An unpublished research paper, 1998, P. 13.

³¹ Mr. Rashiduzzaman, "The liberal and the Religious right in Bangladesh," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No. II (November 1994), p 987